

Outdoor Writer's Workshop



OWW 2.2 Gathering information about a topic through close observation

Learning Objective: *Students will return to the outdoor classroom to gather information on a topic using close observation*

Mentor Texts: *“Look to the North”, Jean Craighead George.
“Pumpkins”, Gail gibbons;
“Spinning Spiders”, Berger;
“Sharks”*

Connection: As a class we have been looking at all-about books and finding that authors give us a great deal of information in these books. One way authors get this information is by observing.

Teaching: Jean Craighead George spent six months living outside watching a family of wolves to write her book. How do you think we might use our outdoor classroom to get more information about plants, trees, small animals or insects. That’s right, we can be observers and record our findings.

“Try It” *Let’s choose something from the list we have already generated from our outdoor classroom and go outside to gather information. We can use words to gather this information and we can also use drawings to support what we are describing. Close observation means we may have to use our magnifying glasses to get very close to get details.*

Instructions to students for Independent Outdoor Writing:

1. Before we go outside, write the topic you will be gathering information on.
2. Write any questions that might guide your work: What does it look like? Where is it? How big is it? What color, shape, or other details do you notice?
3. While outside try to answer your questions by recording your observations under each question.
4. You may want to make a sketch to support your writing.
5. Depending on weather conditions, students may write more when they return to the classroom.

When you come back to the classroom you will be asked to share your

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observations and have the class guess what you have described.

Share Out :

Have students share their observations, and guess the topic they have described. They may then share any illustrations they have included with their descriptions.

Applying the Skill

This is one way you can find information to add details to your writing, in addition to the information you can get from books on the topic. Close observation can also be used on subjects outside the outdoor classroom. You can use close observation to gather information about the behavior of animals in your home or at the zoo or details about objects or activities such as cars or kinds of games.