



<p><i>Help students see how any one of the things they found to be important or interesting might suggest a writing focus:</i></p> <p><i>“squirrels live in my tree”... could become a report on all the ways squirrels use trees;</i></p> <p><i>“baby pine cones are growing on a branch” could lead to an informational text on pine cones, or to a comparison of a pine tree and a maple;</i></p> <p><i>“there are no leaves on my tree....” could lead to an explanation of how trees change through the seasons;</i></p> <p><i>“the bark is peeling off” could lead to a guide to identifying a trees by their bark.</i></p>	<p>your notebook and leave the rest blank to sketch your tree;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on the right-hand page make a T chart, labeled “interesting” on one side and “important” on the other. <p><i>Circle up outdoors, and identify the tree(s) students can observe.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get to know your tree. Look at it from a distance and up close. Look at it from the perspective of an ant, or a bird, or a human. Touch it. Look at how it is similar to the trees around it and how it is different 2. Make a quick sketch of your tree. Sketch the whole tree, and a tiny part of the tree. 3. Talk to your partner about what you think is most interesting about your tree (something weird, or surprising, or familiar?) and write down the <i>most interesting</i> things to you. 4. Talk with your partner about how your tree is important; write down what you think is most <i>important</i> about your tree(s). <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Back indoors (or outdoors in good weather)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Use one item from your list of interesting and important things as the focus for writing a short piece about your tree. <p><i>Share Out</i></p> <p>Have students share their writing.</p> <p><i>Note how many different ways they chose to write about the same topic, and how much more interesting it is if an author has a narrower focus that is important to her.</i></p> <p><i>Applying the skill</i></p> <p>Writers are good at noticing what interests them. When you first start thinking and learning about a topic try making notes about the things that really stand out to you. Which of those things are most interesting, or important to you? Try choosing <i>one</i> of them as a focus for your writing.</p>
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