

Title of Lesson: One Small Square
Subject area: Science/Observation skills

Time needed: 55 minutes
Grade level(s): K-3

Goal for lesson: Introduce and increase student observation skills.

Lesson outcomes/objectives: Students will observe one small square outside and record those observations in science logbooks.

Oregon State standards addressed:

2.3.1 Observe, measure and record properties of objects and substances using simple equipment and tools (e.g., rulers, meter sticks, thermometers, hand lenses, and balances) to gather data and extend the senses.

2.3.3 Make, describe, and compare observations.

Student assessment plan: Using words and/or pictures students will describe/show at least three different elements of an area of the playground. These recordings will include at least 2 of the 5 senses.

Materials:

- 8"x8" frames cut from tagboard with the center cut out. 
- Book – One Small Square – Backyard
- Student science logbooks or paper & clipboards
- Chart paper

Appropriate field setting: grassy area or any area that gives easy access to a variety of objects to describe and make a record of

Lesson Plan:

In the classroom –

1. Teacher reads aloud the book One Small Square - Backyard
2. Teacher leads a discussion about interesting items that students noticed in the book, while making a chart that uses key words or phrases students say. (This will support them when they write about their own observations – the vocabulary will be established and in written form for them to use as a reference.)
3. Turn and talk – students talk to “an elbow buddy” – What would scientists need to know before they could observe and make a recording of “one small square” of our playground?
4. Make a “T” chart with students to establish behavioral expectations and scientific behaviors. One side – What will others see you doing? Second side – What will you be using to make observations?
5. Distribute tagboard frames, logbooks, and pencils. Briefly demonstrate the use of squares and possible recordings in logbooks. Define expectations for recording observations (i.e. using the five senses to enhance observation, recording only what you actually see).
6. Students go outside and find their own space to begin observations. Teacher also models observing and recording with a tagboard square.

7. Students return to classroom. Teacher gives opportunity for them to enhance their recordings with colored pencils and labels drawn from the chart made earlier.
8. Students are given the opportunity to assess their own work to see if it meets the standard set using the “T” chart.

Appropriate homework or extension assignments: Mystery square – students would take home their square and logbook and observe “one small square”. From their recording, the class could try to guess where the observation took place.

Suggestions for children with special needs, ESL needs or challenge activities for students with advanced skills: Students with special needs and those with limited English are able to draw instead of write. They are also supported by the visual charts that give them vocabulary to copy and use. TAG students could research and label their drawings with the scientific names for the items they observed.