



# Discover, Create, Thrive

Expanding Social-Emotional Learning Through  
Outdoor Education and the Arts

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Teachers' Book

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## Preface

This book was born from the belief that school should be a place where the whole person is nurtured – not only the mind, but also emotions, relationships, creativity, and a sense of connection with the world around us. In today's rapidly changing world, where children and young people face constantly changing challenges, social and emotional competencies are just as important as academic achievement. Nevertheless, in many schools, these essential abilities are often overshadowed by tests, assessments, and examinations. Arts and outdoor education, as forms of living and experiential learning, offer powerful ways to restore balance. They help students better understand themselves, foster empathy, critical and creative thinking, and develop collaboration skills – all of which are vital not only in the classroom but throughout life.

The activities presented in this book are easily implementable in a school setting or can serve as a source of inspiration for teachers wishing to experiment. Although they are designed with upper-grade students in mind, many of the suggested methods can be easily adapted to any age group. This book aims to demonstrate how teachers can enhance students' emotional well-being, engagement, and intrinsic motivation by integrating daily education with artistic expression and activities in the natural environment. We believe that such education allows for the creation of meaningful connections – with oneself, with others, and with the world.

I am sincerely grateful to my colleagues Stina Lindblad, Lotta Carlegård, Anna Aldén, Mursel Koca, Burak Delier, Mindaugas Kazlauskas, Akvilė Girdzijauskaitė, Laura Stašaitytė, and Mamerta Ralytė, whose knowledge, experience, and creativity were an invaluable contribution to this project and to the writing of this book.

*Project Manager Sigita Girdzijauskienė*



## Social and Emotional Competencies

Families, educators, and communities strive to foster children who are educated, responsible, caring, and socially competent, aiming to prepare them to become responsible family members, active and ethical citizens, and productive participants in the labor market. There is a broad consensus that contemporary schools should provide more than just academic education to adequately prepare students for life and work.

In other words, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the ability to recognize and regulate emotions, effectively solve problems, and establish positive relationships with others—skills that are essential for all students. According to J. E. Zins and M. J. Elias (2007), this definition serves as a foundational framework, widely accepted by other scholars who continue research in this field (Durlak, J. A. et al., 2015; J. E. Zins & M. J. Elias, 2006, among others).

In 1994, scholars established the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to ensure that schools not only impart academic knowledge but also foster students' social and emotional skills. CASEL identified five core groups of social and emotional competencies that are fundamental in shaping well-rounded individuals:

### Self-Awareness

1.

The ability to recognize one's emotions, values, and thoughts that influence behavior. Self-awareness includes understanding personal strengths and weaknesses, self-confidence, and levels of optimism.

### Self-Management

2.

The ability to effectively regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in various situations. This encompasses stress management, impulse control, self-motivation, and discipline in pursuing personal and academic goals.

# 3.

## Social Awareness

The ability to empathize with and understand the emotional states of others, recognize diverse cultural, social, and ethnic norms, and appreciate behavioral differences. Social awareness fosters a sense of responsibility toward others.

# 4.

## Relationship Skills

The ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with various individuals and groups. Relationship skills include collaboration, constructive conflict resolution, resistance to inappropriate social pressure, and the ability to provide support to others.

# 5.

## Responsible Decision-Making

The ability to make constructive and ethical decisions regarding personal and social behavior. This also involves taking responsibility and the ability to identify and resolve problems effectively.



## Development of Social and Emotional Competencies

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. The SEL process helps both young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to develop their identity, regulate emotions, pursue personal and collective goals, experience and express empathy, maintain relationships, and make responsible and compassionate decisions (Weissberg et al., 2015).

Joseph A. Durlak and colleagues (2011) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of 213 schools involving 270,034 students of various ages to examine the

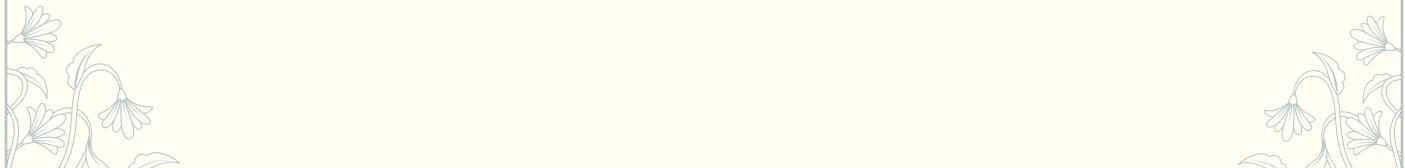
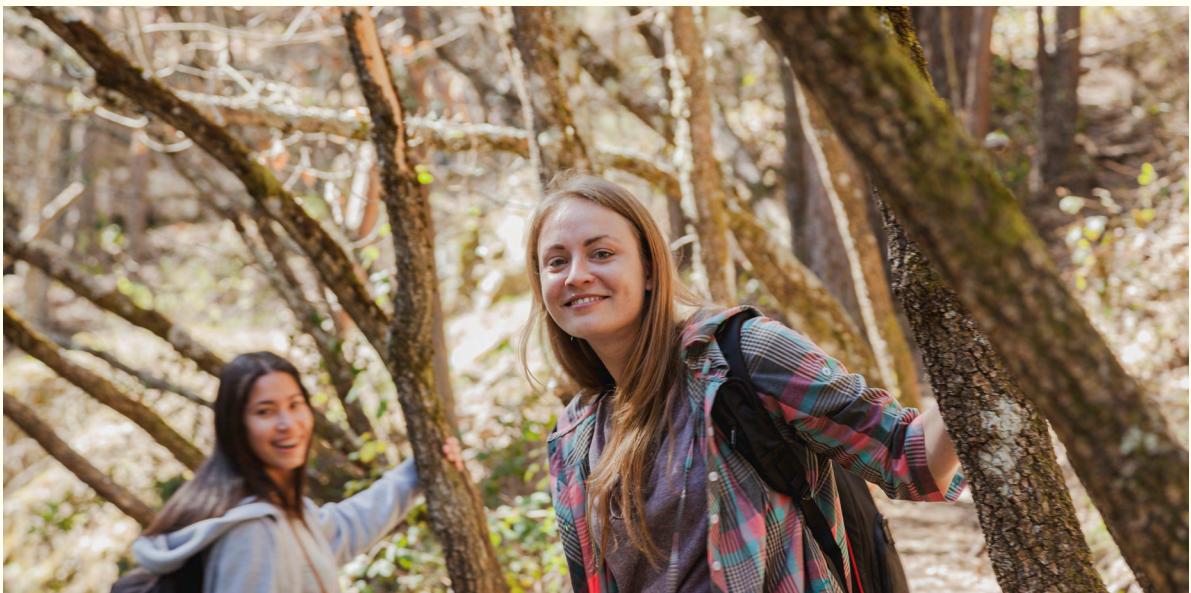
impact of SEL programs. The findings revealed that, compared to control groups, participants in SEL programs demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, behavior, and academic performance. In another meta-analysis, Durlak, Weissberg, and Pachan (2010) examined informal education programs aimed at enhancing children's and adolescents' personal and social skills. The results showed that, compared to control groups, participants exhibited significant increases in self-esteem and engagement in school activities, improved academic performance, and reductions in problematic behavior. Developing SEL skills in children is of critical importance as school-based SEL interventions have resulted in positive outcomes for various indices of mental health, relationships with peers and family, school attendance, graduation rates, college attendance, safe sexual behaviors, and arrests (Taylor et al., 2017).

A particularly significant finding of these studies was that SEL programs were implemented by the schools' own teachers. This indicates that developing children's social and emotional competencies does not necessarily require external specialists, as regular schoolteachers can effectively carry out this task. However, to ensure the successful integration of SEL into educational practice and classroom culture, teachers must be provided with appropriate training and ongoing support.



Additionally, SEL programs should meet specific criteria: they must be **sequential**, incorporating interconnected and coordinated activities that progressively build SEL skills; **active**, providing students with regular opportunities to practice new skills; **focused**, ensuring that SEL competencies receive adequate attention within the curriculum; and **explicit**, targeting specific social and emotional skills through clearly structured lessons, exercises, and activities designed to facilitate learning.

In summary, the successful integration of social and emotional learning into school curricula can enhance students' academic achievement, behavior, and emotional well-being while fostering a more supportive learning environment. Teachers play a crucial role in implementing SEL programs, as they interact directly with students and can help them develop essential social and emotional competencies.





## Introduction to Outdoor Education

Outdoor education is a pedagogical approach that is increasingly recognized as beneficial for children's developmental health and well-being (Becker et al., 2017; Gustafsson et al., 2012; Mann et al., 2021, 2022; Mygind et al., 2019). Children who do not spend time in nature miss the benefits of engaging with nature such as a stronger sense of place, improvements in physical and mental health, greater environmental knowledge, and pro-environment attitudes as an adult (Gill, 2014).

Outdoor education is an approach that is based on the interplay between experience gained in authentic situations and consequent reflection. Setting, content, methodology, and reflection are key to learning.

### Setting

We like to be outdoors in nature as well as in the park, school playground, or town.

### Content

Activities are based in real life. They develop from what can be found in real settings, what is current, and what can be both experienced and performed in an outdoor setting.

### Methodology

All students are actively involved. They will each gain experience through the activity and be encouraged to cooperate with their peers.

### Reflection

Experience alone is not enough to build on knowledge: reflection and review are necessary.

Many students need more physical activity in their lives than they currently have. Outside, it is easier to involve physical movement, creativity and play in the activities. Klingberg (2011) describes how fitness training has a positive effect on learning because it stimulates growth factors that affect nerve cells. This influences cognitive ability. Klingberg also shows how fitness training affects

our working memory positively and helps us sleep better. Researcher Nina Nelson from Sweden's Linköping University describes how time spent in natural surroundings helps us work together and communicate better. Students activate the whole body and all senses, leading to them understanding and remembering better. Gärdenfors (2010) states that when we see patterns and structures, we can apply knowledge to solve new problems. If we have understood and seen the pattern, we can figure out what we need to do using previous knowledge. With the help of patterns, we can generalize from one situation to the next. Finding new approaches on learning builds motivation and awakens interest. Being able to complete concrete assignments builds self-confidence and good self-awareness. When students are both working alone on a problem and discussing and comparing various ways of solving the problem with others, they often prove to strengthen communication and social awareness.




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## Social and Emotional Competencies and Outdoor education

Researchers are beginning to explore the benefits of outdoor learning for children's social and emotional development, and how it may be employed to support social and emotional learning (Lohr et al., 2020). Teachers have perceived contact with nature to improve children's self-confidence, sense of achievement, stress relief and stress management, freedom and creativity, connectedness to other people, and care and nurturing of people (Maller, 2009). Further analysis will explore how distinct social-emotional competencies correlate with outdoor learning.

### Teamwork and Cooperation

This aspect aligns with relationship skills, a core element of SEL. Outdoor learning activities encourage children to collaborate, communicate, and work effectively in teams. Frequent social interactions in outdoor settings help children understand the value of teamwork and cooperation (Park Academy Childcare, 2017). One key benefit of outdoor learning is that children can develop a sense of

responsibility for their surroundings. By engaging with nature, they foster a feeling of ownership and belonging, reinforcing their commitment to teamwork.

### **Self-Confidence and Resilience**

Outdoor learning supports the development of self-awareness and self-management. Engaging in outdoor challenges allows children to take on activities that suit their abilities, boosting their confidence upon successful completion. Additionally, outdoor learning nurtures resilience. When children encounter difficulties, they are encouraged to persist and try again, strengthening their ability to manage setbacks and develop a growth mindset.

### **Independence and Risk Assessment**

This aspect connects to responsible decision-making and self-management. As children engage in outdoor challenges, they build independence and develop the confidence to tackle tasks on their own.

Risk assessment plays a crucial role in outdoor learning, helping children learn to evaluate potential outcomes before taking action. According to Park Academy Childcare (2017), risk-taking is essential for child development, as it fosters self-awareness, self-regulation, and a sense of responsibility for personal actions, ultimately boosting self-esteem and self-belief.

### **Psychological and Emotional Well-Being**

Outdoor learning significantly contributes to psychological and emotional well-being by fostering a strong connection between children and nature. Outdoor environments allow children to focus on activities, immerse themselves in experiences, and reduce stress levels. Studies suggest that spending time in nature can lower stress and increase vitamin D absorption, benefiting mental health (Park Academy Childcare, 2017).

When thinking about the five key elements of social-emotional learning, the development of self includes “the process of gaining self-awareness, self-esteem, and developing an ever-deepening understanding of others”. Other competencies which can be related to self can be positively linked to outdoor education or learning. Self-regulation involves the skill to maintain focused attention. Research has been done about attentional disorders and has shown that children that learn through and with nature or natural environments tend to have better attention span.

Outdoor learning is a powerful tool for fostering SEL competencies. By integrating nature-based activities into the curriculum, educators can support children's emotional, social, and cognitive development in a meaningful way.



## Social Emotional Learning Through Arts

Art and music have a significant impact on the lives of children and youth. By integrating artistic education into daily school life, it is possible to effectively strengthen students' social and emotional competencies (Farrington et al., 2019). Through various artistic activities, teachers help students develop self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, communication skills, and responsible decision making – these are the key areas of SEL competencies.

**Art education helps achieve this through several essential directions:**

### Through self-expression to self-awareness

1. Artistic activity is a safe space for children and youth to explore their inner world. By creating, they learn to recognize, name, and express emotions – joy, sadness, anger, fear. A drawing, a dance, or a musical improvisation becomes a bridge to self-awareness.

### Through collaboration to social skills

2. By co-creating – whether it's a theater exercise, a group drawing, or a musical performance – abilities such as listening, empathy, respect for others' ideas, and seeking compromise are cultivated. Art projects become a laboratory for social emotional learning.

### Through artistic reflection towards emotional literacy

3. Analyzing works (one's own or others') encourages the ability to articulate feelings, situations, and interpersonal relationships. Artistic reflection aids in the development of emotion recognition, acceptance, and appropriate expression.

# 4.

## Through role-playing towards empathy

Role-playing games, improvisations, or theatrical methods enable individuals to immerse themselves in another being's situation, cultivate empathy, and understand different perspectives – this is especially important in the formation of social maturity.

# 5.

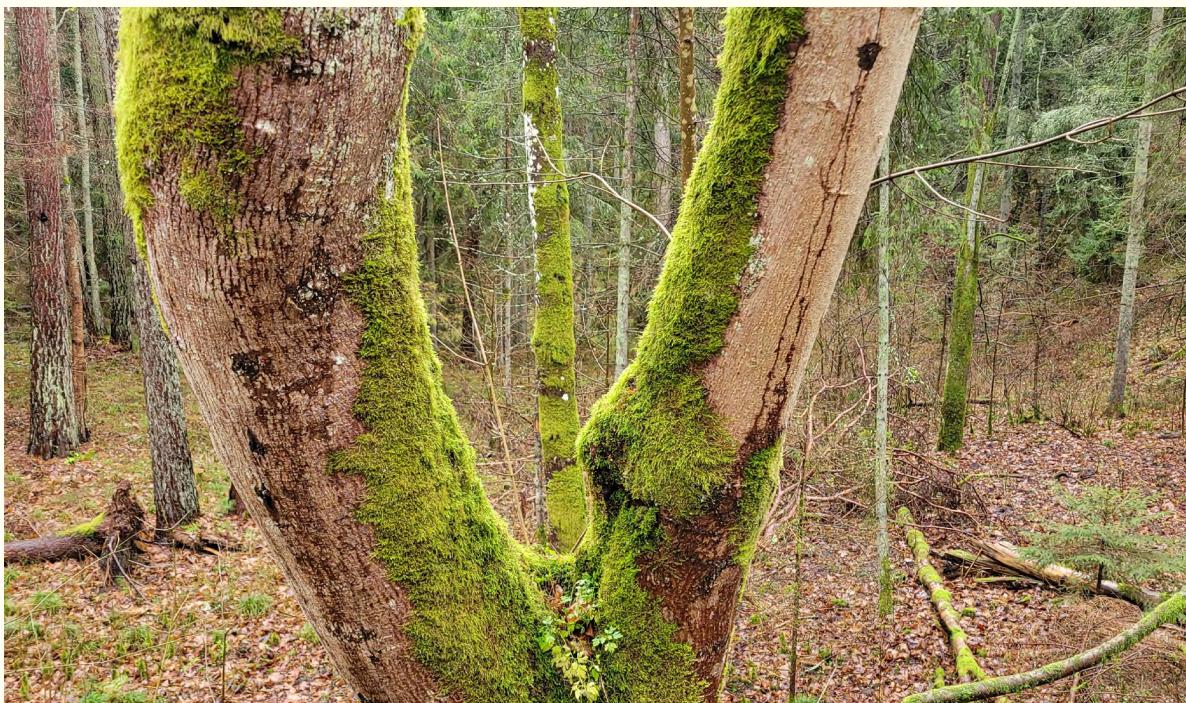
## Art as a mirror – understanding identity and values

When creating art, children and young people explore their identity, their relationship with the world, and reflect on justice, friendship, and self-worth. These topics naturally encourage dialogue about values, responsibility, and the consequences of behavior.

A study conducted by Farrington et al. (2019) showed that experience in learning the arts can promote children's social and emotional growth. They explain this connection by stating that, on one hand, the integration of the arts enables teachers to use simple yet purposeful activities that directly foster empathy, communication, or self-regulation. On the other hand, arts education encourages engagement, which strengthens relationships in the classroom and enhances social skills.

However, it is important to note that social-emotional education through art does not emerge on its own. According to Omasta et al. (2021), achieving tangible results requires conscious planning and purposeful structuring of activities. They emphasize that artistic education should not merely be viewed as a means to achieve other goals, such as improving academic achievements, reducing behavioral issues, or enhancing social skills. They stress that the true value of artistic education lies in the creative process itself and its impact on children's personal growth. According to Karkou and Glasman (2004), artistic education helps students develop creativity, problem-solving skills, collaboration, self-confidence, and independence. New (2007) emphasizes that art allows children to discover their authentic selves, express cultural identity, and develop their worldview. Based on the research by Catterall et al. (2012), students who consistently engage in artistic activities throughout their school years become more well-rounded individuals and achieve better academic results than those who do not learn through art.

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<https://www.parkacademychildcare.ie>



## How Does an Outdoor Lesson Work?

To ensure that outdoor education is relevant, it should complement regular classroom teaching, follow the curriculum, and build on students' prior experiences. A common way to structure a short or longer session is as follows:



### Theoretical Foundation

Decide what you want to work on during the outdoor session and determine the appropriate level of instruction to suit the group of students.



### Gathering

Bring the students together in a tight circle before you begin so that everyone is included and can see each other. Start with a simple, positive activity to engage the group.



### Inspiration

Show your enthusiasm for the task and give the students short, clear instructions so they can get started quickly.



### Independent Activities

Let the students work in smaller groups and solve problems together. Support them by acting as a co-discoverer rather than a traditional instructor.



### Knowledge Check and Reflection

Start with a simple activity and follow up with a more advanced one later in the session. End with a joint reflection to see what knowledge the students are taking with them.



### Follow-up

Outdoors, students get to apply their theoretical knowledge in an authentic environment. Follow up and deepen the learning indoors in preparation for the next outdoor session.

## Practical Tips for Outdoor Teaching

### Accessibility

Use the school's nearby surroundings. It's not about finding the perfect spot — the important thing is that outdoor teaching happens.

### Break up lessons with short outdoor sessions

Use brief lessons outside to recharge energy or calm down between longer indoor lessons.

### Make use of the walk

Turn the walk to and from the outdoor location into a learning opportunity — for conversations, observations, or simple activities.

### Create routines to build security

Make outdoor lessons a regular habit. Familiar routines help students feel just as safe outside as they do in the classroom.

### Gather in a circle

Always start by gathering the group in a circle so everyone can see and hear each other.

### Give one instruction at a time

Provide one task or instruction at a time to help students focus on what they should do right now.

### Work in small groups

Divide students into groups of three to five so that everyone gets a chance to participate and stay active.

### Use what's available

Make use of natural materials you find on site or simple equipment like paper slips, strings, or ropes.

### Group presentations

Let groups present their work to each other instead of having every group present to the whole class. It keeps more students engaged and active.

### Clear ending signals

Use a clear sound — like a call or a whistle — to gather the students when it's time to wrap up.

### Reflect together

End with a reflection, either spoken or written, about what the students learned, and which school subjects were connected to the activity.



## Activities

Often, the step across the threshold into the outdoor classroom can be made easier if you, as a teacher, have knowledge about the local environment as well as what you can do outdoors that corresponds with the subject you are teaching. During the project, we have therefore developed a number of activities based on SEL and linked to subjects in the later years of primary school, with different environments as a starting point. As a teacher, you choose where, when and how the activities are carried out based on your needs and possibilities. Some of the activities are already well known to outdoor educators, while others are completely new. We have aimed at focusing more on social sustainability, which makes the material useful in most subjects, as all forms of sustainability should be part of today's lessons. And with an increased sense of wellbeing, learning becomes easier, more fun and long-lasting.

### The importance of play and learn

Many of the activities below can be perceived as games, which is correct. Because research tells us that play is just as important for older students and that it provides various educational and developmental benefits. The activity Create a game provides more information about why play is important from a learning perspective, but always remember that playing games:

- can increase students' engagement and understanding of the content
- stimulates problem solving and creativity
- prepares us for complex challenges in the real world
- helps us manage stress and regulate emotions
- promotes social contact and improves our ability to cooperate
- facilitates active learning and critical thinking
- contributes to increased motivation and sense of well-being

### The importance of reflective learning

Conscious reflection is necessary for transforming experience, activities and play into lasting knowledge. That is why each activity is followed by ideas of reflective questions to conclude the activity or to develop it further. As an additional suggestion for reflection, use a picture of a hand, an apple and a heart which can summarise the activity . The hand describes what you did, the apple stands for what you learned, and the heart symbolises what was special, valuable and what the students will take with them in their hearts.





# This is me!

## Aim

To enhance self awareness, self management, social awareness. To develop a feeling of unity and understanding and make people talk to a whole group. Often used as a starter to make people talk freely and express feelings, when talking about an object it gets less private. Maybe after a holiday or with a new group.

## Time

15 - 25 minutes.

## Subjects

Biology, Languages, Physical Education and Health, Art.

## Location

A place outdoors where there are various loose objects that you can pick up. These could be sticks, leaves, stones, gravel or anything growing on the ground.

## Implementation

Gather the group in a circle. Introduce to the students that they will search and look for natural objects that represent themselves in one way or another. The natural object could, for example:

- resemble me in any way, in appearance or characteristics and abilities.
- show something about how I feel right now.
- represent an interest that I have.

Students are then asked to wander around the site to look for a natural object that represents themselves and bring the object back to the group.

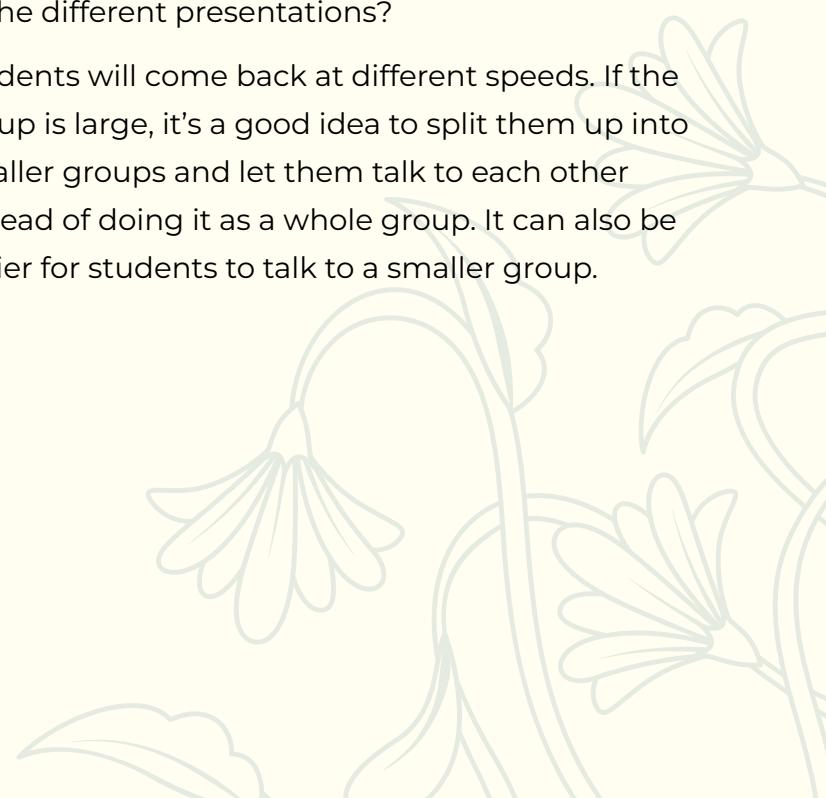
Gather in a circle again, when everyone is back. Each person shows their object and tells why they chose it. What are the similarities between me and the natural object?

## Tips and ideas

Before going off to look for the objects, ask the students to come up with suggestions and examples of different feelings, abilities or characteristics that one might have.

Does the group need to be prepared on how to react to the different presentations?

Students will come back at different speeds. If the group is large, it's a good idea to split them up into smaller groups and let them talk to each other instead of doing it as a whole group. It can also be easier for students to talk to a smaller group.





Once the group has finished, they can go on to create a work of art from their shared objects, either freely or based on one of the emotions that the objects represent. For example in a circular pattern, a mandala or make an artwork that is opposite to their presented feelings.

The activity can also be used while travelling from one place to another. Let students collect objects along the way.

### Reflection

Did everyone dare to say what they wanted to say? How can we make sure that everyone feels able to share their thoughts and feelings? Is it easier to describe a feeling through an object than without? What is positive about telling a bit more about yourself? Is there anything negative about talking about yourself?





# Where do I live?

## Aim

To enhance self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, Teamwork and Cooperation.

## Time

30 min.

## Subjects

Geography, History, Social studies.

## Equipment/material

One long rope, about 20 metres, or several short ones tied together. Possibly pea bags or cones, different coloured ropes.

## Location

A slightly larger area where everyone in the group can fit on the map being created.

## Season

All year.

### Preparation

Look at a map image of the country you are in. Ask students to look carefully at the borders, rivers, lakes, mountains and roughly where the big cities are, if they don't already know.

### Implementation

With the help of your students, lay out the outline of the country you are in with a rope. You can also draw the outline of the country in sand or snow or with street chalk. Divide the students into groups and have each group mark different important places in the country, such as lakes, rivers, towns, mountains, roads, places to visit, etc.

Divide up pea bags or cones so that all students have the same number each, the same number as the questions you will ask. Then the students can mark the different places and it will be a clear picture that can be reflected and discussed.

Then ask students where you are right now. Stand on that spot on the map. It is also possible to mark with a ball, pea bag or in another way. Then continue asking questions to the group and let them answer by moving around the map, for example:

*Where were you born?*

*Where is your mum from?*

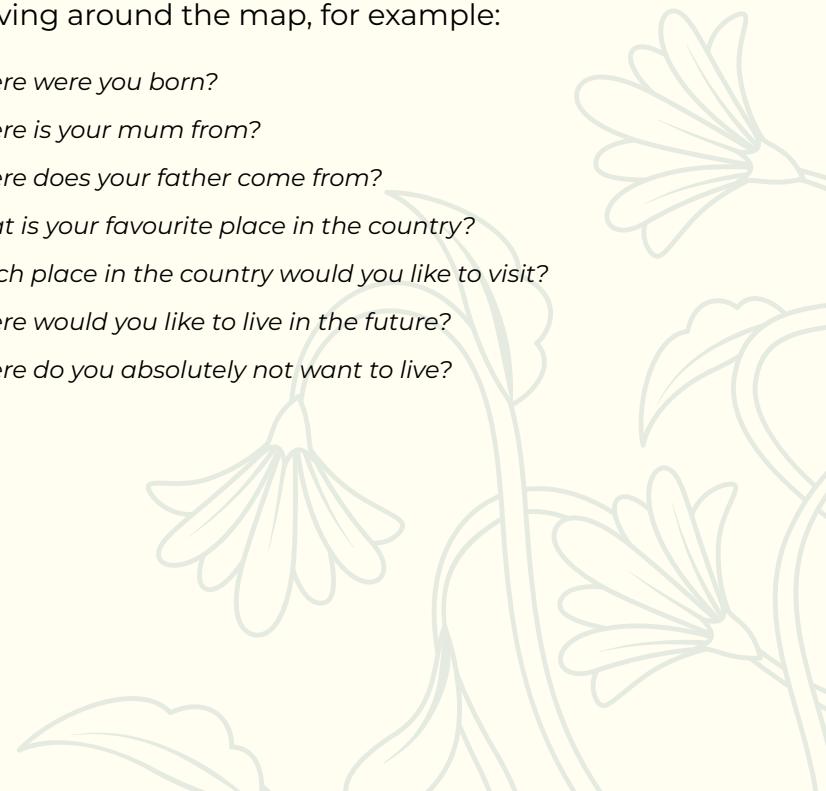
*Where does your father come from?*

*What is your favourite place in the country?*

*Which place in the country would you like to visit?*

*Where would you like to live in the future?*

*Where do you absolutely not want to live?*





### Continue

Can you identify a place through gestures or maybe a song? In small groups, choose one place in the country and visualise the place by making a charade, gestures, drama, quoting or singing. Then the others will guess what place it is.

### Tips and ideas

Maybe your locations are outside the country's border? Then the group can help each other to assess how far away they should stand. If it is very far away, it may be enough to stand in the direction of the location.

### Reflection

Are all the students from the same place?  
What are the pros and cons of this?  
Do they have the same dream location  
in the future? Why is it different?  
Ask students to justify!

Continue to work on some of the places that students are connected to or want to learn more about.





# Stump sitting

## Aim

To feel the rhythm of nature and yourself by being on your own for a short time. Build a connection with nature. To enhance self awareness, self management, social awareness.

## Time

30 min.

## Subjects

Language, Physical Education and Health, Art.

## Equipment/material

Seating mat, possibly paper and pen or crayons.

## Location

A place outdoors where there is space for a whole class to sit with some distance. For example, a park or a forest.

## Season

Works best during the time of year when it is nice to be outside and when it is not raining.

### Preparation

Tell the students that they are going to sit alone for a while in a place in nature. They are going to reflect in silence. Give them the task of visualising their thoughts or experiences in some way. For example, they could write a poem, paint something they see or hear, or describe a feeling they get in the place.

### Implementation

Distribute seating mats, paper and pen/chalk to students. Then gather them and go for a silent walk through a quiet area. Drop off one student at a time at different places in the area, some distance apart. They may be able to see one or more people from their seats. Let the students sit in their place for 10-20 minutes and then gather them together by doing the same walk again. Gather when all students are back and share reflections, poems or pictures. Another way to share, where each student is less exposed, is to hang all the poems and pictures using, for example, clothespins on a lengthy line. Then go to the art opening!

### Tips and ideas

Feel free to do the activity several times. It can be difficult for many students to just sit down and reflect. Therefore, try a short time on the first occasion and extend the time gradually.

### Reflection

When is it quiet around you? How do you feel when you are not allowed to use your mobile phone? What senses did you use during the time you were alone? How did it feel to be quiet for a long time? Was it safe to see your classmates or would it have been better to sit by yourself?



## Links

**Mental Health Benefits of Nature:** This article from NAMI California summarizes research linking nature experiences to improved mental health, including reduced depression and anxiety. ([namica.org](http://namica.org))

**Nature-Based Therapy in Individuals with Mental Health Disorders:**

A pilot study examining how nature-based therapy impacts mental health and individuals' sense of connection with nature. ([pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov))

**Associations between Nature Exposure and Health:**

This review article discusses evidence of the links between nature contact and improved cognitive function, brain activity, blood pressure, mental health, physical activity, and sleep. ([pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov))

**Nature and Mental Health: An Ecosystem Service Perspective:**

This article in Science Advances explores how nature experiences are associated with mental health benefits from an ecosystem services perspective. ([science.org](http://science.org))

**Healthier Cities Will Require a Strong Dose of Nature:**

An article in Wired discussing how access to green spaces in urban environments can improve both physical and mental health. ([wired.com](http://wired.com))



# Dyeing yarn

## Aim

To enhance self awareness, self management, relationship skills, teamwork and cooperation, self-confidence and resilience and psychological and emotional well-being.

## Time

Preparation is about 1.5 hours.  
Activity: 45 minutes - 1.5 hours.

## Subjects

Biology, Crafts, Art, Chemistry, Technology, Physics, Physical Education and Health.

## Equipment/material

Undyed, white or possibly light grey wool yarn in a loose skein, a few pieces of cotton yarn or other thin string, alum, water, a large pot and a stove or a fire, empty tin cans.

## Location

A place where you can pick loose things on the ground or from plants. A fireplace or stove.

## Season

All year

### Preparation

Pre-prepare the yarn with alum (potassium aluminium sulphate,  $KAl(SO_4)_2 \cdot 12H_2O$ ), so that the dye sticks to the yarn. For every 100 grams of yarn, you need 25 g of alum. Pour water into a large pot and dissolve the alum. Tie the yarn in a few places with cotton twine - this will make it easier to pick up the yarn without it tangling. Put the yarn in the pot. Heat the water, and leave the yarn in the really hot water, continuing to heat so that it doesn't cool down, preferably for a whole hour. Rinse and dry the yarn.

### Implementation

Divide the class into pairs or groups. In groups, let them look for and collect natural materials that they think can provide colour. Talk about what natural objects they can take. What restrictions are there on the site? Put pieces of yarn in the bottom of an empty tin can, put the natural objects on top and pour water. Build a fire. Place the tins next to it, near the fire, and let the water get really hot. Leave the tins on the fire for at least 15 minutes, preferably longer. You can also colour in a pan on the stove or use an outdoor kitchen.



### Advice to consider when implementing

- Thick gloves for handling the hot tins are a good idea!
- If each student gets four one-metre pieces of the wool yarn, you can continue with the activity Weaving slings.
- An easy way to get the right length is to cut the whole skein of yarn in one place.
- Different plants, lichens and fungi produce different colours. The same plant in different seasons also produces different colours.



### Tips and ideas

If you want to have a challenge, give each group a colour to aim for: Green, yellow, brown, orange, grey. Depending on the plants and berries growing in the area. Then discuss how close you got to your aimed colour.

### Reflection

What colour did you get from the different natural objects? What was it that gave the yarn its colour? How did you choose which natural objects to collect?

What have you discovered about this place? Did you learn anything you didn't know - about each other in the group? Were you surprised by anything?

### References, links

Learning in the outdoor classroom, Carlegard et al 2015, Dye some yarn, p. 145.



# Weaving slings

## Aim

To enhance self management, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, teamwork and cooperation.

## Time

30 min.

## Subjects

Crafts, Language, History, Physics.

## Equipment/material

Yarn, weights to use as handles in the form of wooden sticks or other weights such as small plastic bottles filled with water, possibly a long rope.

## Location

An open space and a branch or a rope set up between two trees or poles.

## Season

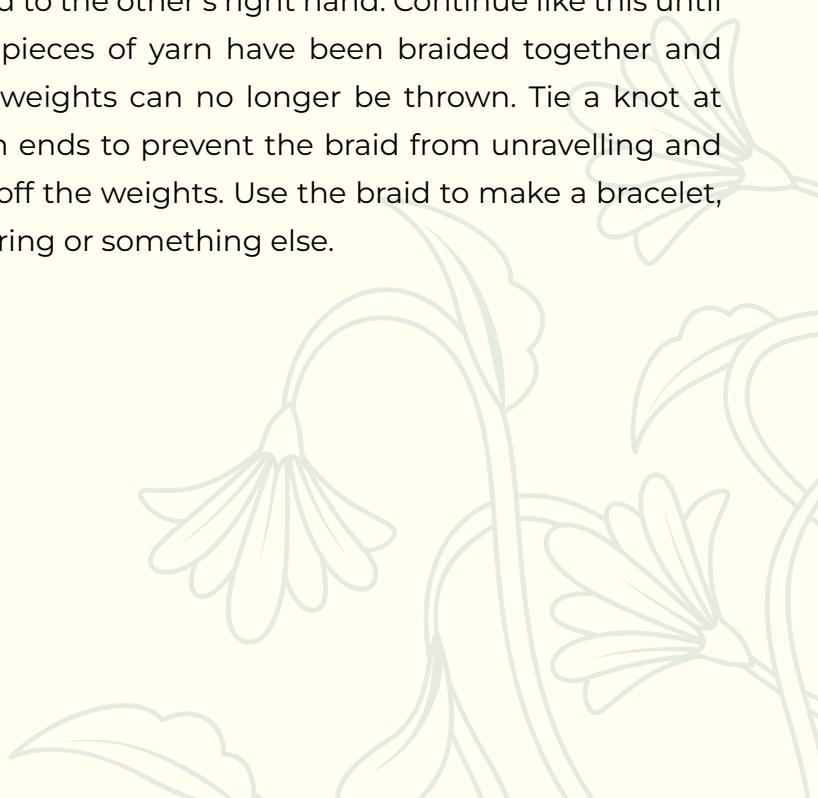
Can be done in any weather and in any season.

## Preparation

Dye the yarn according to the activity Dyeing yarn or use yarn that is already dyed. Cut pieces of yarn about one metre long, preferably in different colours. Saw and carve weights/handles that are 15 cm long and 3-5 cm in diameter. You can also use bottles (33 cl) filled with water as handles.

## Implementation

Divide the students into pairs. Give each pair four pieces of yarn of the same length, about 1 metre long and preferably of different colours. Tie a weight to the end of each piece of yarn. Then ask the students to tie the four pieces of yarn together at the other end. Make sure that all weights hang at the same distance from the knot. Then hang the yarn and weights by placing two of the weights on either side of the branch or rope. Or get a third person to hold the knot above the weaving pair. Have the students in the pair stand opposite each other and hold a weight in each hand. Ask them to throw the weights diagonally to each other, back of hand to back of hand. First from one's left hand to the other's left hand, then from one's right hand to the other's right hand. Continue like this until the pieces of yarn have been braided together and the weights can no longer be thrown. Tie a knot at both ends to prevent the braid from unravelling and cut off the weights. Use the braid to make a bracelet, key ring or something else.





### Tips and ideas

Make sure that each pair has enough space.

### Reflection

What questions can you work on afterwards?

What can you reflect on?

How did the co-operation work?

Can you make slings with more than two people?

Weaving slings is an old technique, what do you think slings were used for historically?





# My Little Finger – Your Little Finger

## Aim

To enhance self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making.

## Time

20 - 45 minutes.

## Subjects

Maths, Art, Physical Education and Health, Biology.

## Equipment/material

A bag of sticks, 2- 20 cm long, all of different lengths. The sticks must be at least as many as the number of groups.

## Location

A place outdoors where there are loose materials such as sticks, cones, leaves, or snow to build with.

## Season

All year.

### Preparation

Prepare sticks of different lengths.

### Implementation

Divide students into groups of about five students each. One student from each group draws a stick from the bag. The group's task is to build a model of the person in the group who pulled the stick. They can use loose materials found at the site, such as twigs. Build the model on the ground. The scale of the model is determined by both the stick you drew and the person you will depict. The length of the stick represents the length of the student's little finger. For example, if the stick is 2 cm, and the student's little finger is 4 cm, the scale is 1:2 (1= model, 2= reality). The model will then be half as tall as the real person. If the little finger is 20 cm, the scale is 5:1 (5= model, 1= reality). The model will be five times as tall.

When all groups have finished, they can walk around and look at each other's models and reflect on the scale at which the other groups have built their models.

### Tips and ideas

If there is snow outside, you can draw on the snow with pre-mixed watercolour from a bottle with a spout.

Talk about what natural materials are allowed to be collected and used.

Make the activity more of an artwork that is based on "proportional drawing"; in drawing classes while working from the "live model" the students use their pencil to measure correct lengths. Then you need a fixed model, like a person but also you can use a flower, rock, or a bush. Then you concentrate more on the aesthetics and scale of a natural object.



### Reflection

Was it an easy or challenging task? In what way?  
How did you distribute the tasks? Did anyone take more initiative than the others in your group? Why do you think this might be? How could you make sure that everyone is involved?  
Did you have enough prior knowledge to solve the task?

### References, links

*Learning in the outdoor classroom*, red Carlegard et al 2015, My little finger, your little finger page 30.





# Create a game!

## Aim

To enhance social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making and self-control. To develop an ability to cooperate and communicate, to master turn-taking, rules and consensus, and our ability to build relationships.

## Time

40 minutes - 2 hours. Can also be divided into several sessions.

## Subjects

Physical education and Health, History, Crafts, Art, Social studies, Technology.

## Equipment/material

Paper, pens and writing pads for each group. Preferably seating mats. Any other materials to get you started.

## Location

Preferably an outdoor location with some loose materials that can be used in the game, such as sticks, stones and leaves. Or solid materials such as asphalt, gravel, trees and grass. The possibilities of the place can determine the content of the game.

## Season

Good weather so that you can sit outside without getting cold, wet or too hot.

Playing games with rules is not really playing, but many aspects of games with rules are similar to what we can practise in free play. For example, motor skills, concentration and perseverance. Games with rules are easier to understand – they have clear guidelines for what to do, how long to play and who is involved.

Play is often not considered necessary, but it is a fundamental and vital part of childhood; play is a crucial part of physical, social, cognitive, emotional and spiritual development.

Read more in the Convention on the Rights of the Child  
<https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>

## Preparation

Think about how you will share your games when they are 'ready'. Is there a school with younger students they can introduce the games to? Also decide on the target audience it will be suitable for.

## Implementation

So, what do we call a made-up, pre-determined play? A game! The task is to invent an outdoor game together as a group.

Let the students tell you about the different games they know. Encourage everyone to share, so that they all start thinking about what a game could be.

**Examples of follow-up questions you can use when talking about the games the students know:**

- *How long do you think people have been playing this type of game?*
- *Why do people play? Why do you play?*
- *What is the difference between a game and play?*
- *What is important for a game or play to be fun?*

Divide the students into groups of about 5. Each group chooses a place where they can sit relatively undisturbed by the others. Let them work on their own for about 15 minutes.



The groups share their suggestions with the other groups. Give each other feedback and constructive suggestions for development, simplification or improvement.

**Some ways to get the discussion going in the groups could be:**

- Each person writes down a few suggestions for content that could be included in a game. Write each idea on a separate piece of paper and put them in a jar or bag. Draw three pieces of paper, read them aloud and discuss how they can be combined with each other in a game.
- Show and have some extra materials on hand that could be included in the game, such as balls of different sizes, street chalk, a string, a rope, paper, stiff cardboard cards, coloured pencils, crayons, sitting mats, cones to mark places, dice, buckets, etc.
- A 'secret bag' with objects that can symbolise something in the game. Let the groups use one, several or all of the objects.
- A 'secret bag' with slips of paper with suggestions for different 'game ingredients' – each group chooses some of the suggestions, for example at least three, to include in the game.

**Suggestions for symbols – to be distributed in a small cloth bag:**

- Seven small stones
- A notepad
- A pen
- A forked stick from nature
- A dead and a living bunch of pine needles
- A piece of string
- A pine cone
- A piece of moss
- A dry leaf
- A small piece of wood
- A blade of grass
- A white cloth
- A bag



## Suggestions for different contents of a game, 'game ingredients':

- Everyone playing the game must be quiet
- Everyone playing must close their eyes
- A dice
- Three teams
- A paper aeroplane
- Having to choose one of two possible options
- Someone who runs
- Several colours
- Gentle physical contact
- Some form of comparison
- A bag

### Tips and ideas

Let two groups give feedback only on each other's suggestions, so they can stay focused. Emphasise that the first draft is a sketch; you have to try things out and see how they work. Nothing is perfect on the first try.

Encourage all groups to dare to try something they have come up with!

Give the students a fairly short time to try – less stress to get it right!

Continue to develop the game after they have tested their prototype.

### Reflections

When you tried out the games, was it what you had imagined – playing them for real? Was there anything difficult about this task? The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child writes in its comments on Article 31 of the Convention, on the right of children to rest, leisure, play and recreation, and to participate in cultural and artistic life, that the key characteristics of play are pleasure, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productivity. Can your game be developed to achieve more of the essence of play?

### Adaptation for students of other ages

Younger students may find it easier to invent games for children of their own age.

### References/Links

#### Harvard Graduate School of Education

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/usable-knowledge/23/05/embracing-learning-through-play>

#### Frontiers

<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/education/articles/10.3389/feduc.2022.751801/full>

#### Brookings

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-play-is-serious-work>

#### TeacherVision

<https://www.teachervision.com/blog/morning-announcements/integrating-play-based-learning>





# Water picture

## Aim

To enhance self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills. To understand the material in the environment and feel the qualities of materials.

## Time

20 min.

## Subjects

Art, Geography, Social studies.

## Equipment/material

Brushes, jars of water.

## Location

Dry and sunny place, preferably with a solid surface.

## Season

Best done in spring and summer (northern countries).

### Preparation

Discuss the water cycle and then investigate in practice how water evaporates from the ground when you paint with it.

### Implementation

Have the students create perishable artworks on hot asphalt or concrete by painting with water. Give the students a limited amount of water. Let them think about how long the water will last. Divide the water equally between students and give each student a brush. Everyone has the same opportunity to express themselves.

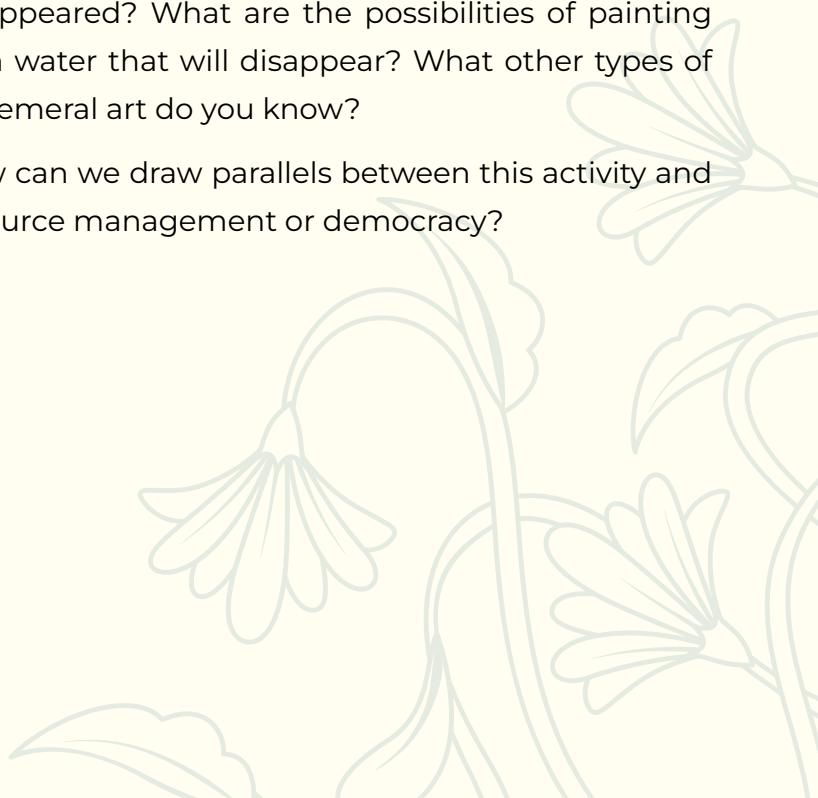
### Tips and ideas

Have students paint several artworks, alone or together, without instructions on what to paint.

### Reflection

How long did the artwork last? Is there any point in making art if it disappears? Is it important for art to be seen by someone other than the artist? How did you feel when you were painting and when the artwork disappeared? What are the possibilities of painting with water that will disappear? What other types of ephemeral art do you know?

How can we draw parallels between this activity and resource management or democracy?





# Water of the World

## Aim

To enhance self awareness, responsible decision-making, social awareness. To Visualize the limited resources on the planet by conducting an experiment with water and salt.

## Time

10 min.

## Subjects

Science, Social studies, Biology, Geography.

## Equipment/material

Litre measure, decilitre measure, water and salt. Possibly a small globe.

## Location

Do not matter.

## Season

Do not matter.

### Preparation

Tell the students that the Earth is actually a water planet. 70% of its surface is covered by water and 30% by land. There are 1400 million cubic kilometres of water on Earth, of which 35 million cubic kilometres are freshwater, so 97.5% is saltwater and 2.5% is freshwater.

How much water do we use per person, per day?

### Implementation

Start by asking students to estimate how much of the planet's surface is covered by water. Show a globe and come up with a reasonable answer together. Continue by asking how much water each person in our country uses daily? How much water is there in the world? That's what we'll find out in this activity.

In Sweden, we consume an average of 140 litres of water per person per day. Here are some key figures.

*60 litres for personal hygiene*

*30 litres for toilet flushing*

*15 litres for washing up*

*15 litres for washing*

*10 litres for food and drink*

*10 litres other*

Explain to students that a model of the Earth's total water resources can be illustrated using a one litre water jug. Pour 2.5% of the water, i.e. 1/4 dl (= 2.5 cl), into a decilitre measure. Then pour salt into the water left in the litre measure. Ask students what you are illustrating and explain that it shows how much of the world's water is salty.

Then take the decilitre measure with 1/4 dl of water and pour away  $\frac{2}{3}$  of it. The water that was poured away is the water that is bound in glaciers. Only the water left in the decilitre measure is the water available to humans.



Now pour the rest of the water out of the decilitre measure but save a drop. The water that was poured away is groundwater. Some of the groundwater lies deep in the ground and is therefore difficult for humans to use. The small drop of water that remains is the freshwater we see in lakes, streams, creeks and rivers. This water is used by plants, animals and humans and keeps us alive!

If the world's water was equivalent to 1 litre, 0.6 dl is fresh water, of which 0.2 dl is bound water (e.g. glaciers) and 0.4 dl is groundwater and soil bound. Dip your finger in the water and put 3 drops on the top of your hand, those drops correspond to streams and rivers, lakes and atmospheric water. This is the water that we have access to and that we see.

Discuss with each other in pairs for a few minutes. What thoughts do they get? Then they have a joint class discussion where the pairs share some of their thoughts with the class. How can we save water where it is available? How will there be enough water for everyone? Where does water come from? How can we purify water?

### Tips and ideas

Let the students taste the salt water. Is it possible to drink? What happens in the body if we drink salt water?

What questions can you work on afterwards? What can you reflect on?

### References, links

<https://www.wwf.se/utbildning/uppgiftsbanken/jordens-vatten-i-en-liter/>

(Give an Hour for Earth: World Water Day youth art gallery | Pages | WWF)

<https://www.svensktvatten.se/om-oss/verksamhet-och-strategi/fakta-om-vatten/dricksvattenfakta/>

<https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>



# Picture this

## Aim

To enhance self awareness, self management, relationship skills, teamwork and cooperation, psychological and emotional well-being, social awareness, cultural awareness. Gaining visual awareness by focusing on something in the environment and then communicating the chosen view or picture within a frame. Pointing out that even though we see, hear or experience the same thing we interpret it differently.

## Time

20 min.

## Subjects

Art, Language, Biology.

## Equipment/material

Frames without glass. You can, for example, cut out a frame from a cardboard box.

## Location

Any place in nature or in the city.

## Season

The activity can be carried out in any season.

## Implementation

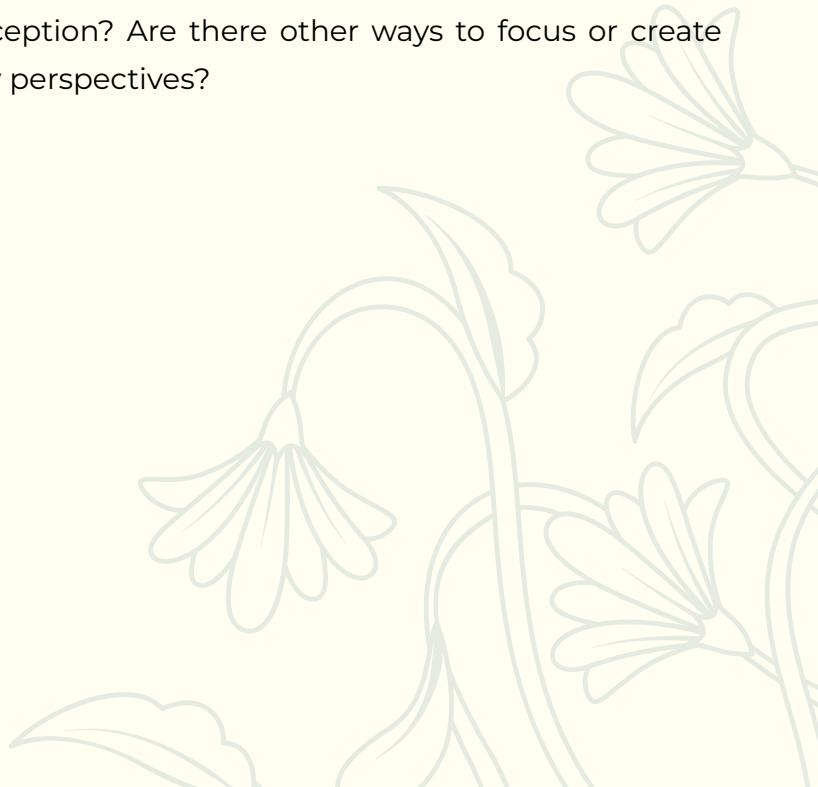
Divide students into pairs or threes. Give each group a frame. Ask students to look around the site for about five minutes and try to find something they want to show to the other students. It could be something very small like a plant or a particular structure. It can also be something much bigger and further away, like a landscape or a building. Then ask students to place their frame where they want the viewer to stand to see the same thing they have seen. Once all the students have placed their frames, the group goes to each of them to look through the frame at each other's pictures, like at a vernissage. Encourage the students to name their artwork and explain why they have chosen the object and subject.

## Tips and ideas

The task can be to find a picture of their own choice. Students can also be given a specific theme to work on, such as "The city", "Something I've never seen before" or "Something that makes me happy."

## Reflection

How did having a frame around the motif affect the perception? Are there other ways to focus or create new perspectives?





# Get to know a tree

## Aim

To enhance self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, communication. Strengthening links with nature by using all the senses. Discovering the uniqueness of trees and their importance to the environment. Promoting social sustainability by getting to know and respect nature.

## Time

20+20 min or more.

## Subjects

Language, Biology, History, Geography.

## Equipment/material

Blindfolds, e.g. tube scarves cut into smaller pieces  
 Magnifiers (to examine the trees up close)  
 Character chart (questions to help you create a character)  
 Optional: Species keys, books about insects, camera.

## Location

A site with more trees than participants. In a forest with similar trees, e.g. planted pine forest, it will be more challenging. Likewise, if the terrain is hilly or densely wooded.

## Preparation

Emphasize that this is a collaborative exercise and that it is a chance to experience what it is like to be blind, showing how to hold each other for support. Go through words and concepts that might be useful to use, especially if the activity is to be carried out in another language.

## Implementation

- Divide the group into pairs. One closes their eyes or is blindfolded and can't see anything, and the other has to choose a tree to visit. It can be interesting, beautiful, strange or appealing in some way.
- How to support your peer: Stand next to each other and the blind puts his forearm on top of the leader's forearm, then it acts as a support and it can also be used for steering like a rudder.
- The leader uses the voice and arm support to guide the blind student to the chosen tree. Describe the ground carefully and walk towards the tree, preferably in a circle! It is up to the leader how difficult it will be.
- The blind student gets to know the tree with all senses except sight: How does the trunk, the bark, the ground around it feel? Does it smell something special? What does a tree taste like?
- Tell in words how the tree feels and smells like, what adjectives can be used? Like rough, smooth, hard, soft, sharp, round. Can you feel a color?
- When the blind student is satisfied and knows the tree, it is time to go back to the starting point again. The leader guides back to the starting point, via a different route to add a little extra challenge.
- At the starting point, the blind student takes off the blindfold and then the challenge is to find the way back to the tree. If it becomes too difficult, give clues! After finding the tree, change roles and try again with another tree.



# Create a character!

Choose one of the trees you have learnt about, or both if there is time. Examine the tree together, what lives here? Look for signs of life: insects, bugs, birds' nests... With the help of a magnifying glass, examine the tree a little more closely. Using the character chart, create a character, a personality from any living thing you find on or near the tree. In colder seasons, the tree itself can be the character or look for traces of something living.

The scheme can then be used for further storytelling and writing. Creating a character de-dramatizes and personifies insects that might otherwise be perceived as unpleasant and scary. Species keys, bug books are a good complement. Or take pictures of the insect and learn more inside the classroom!

## Tips and ideas

Remember to be careful and respectful of nature.

Help each other and have fun!

## Reflection

- How did you feel about not being able to see?
- How did it feel to be dependent on someone else?
- What was it that made you recognise your tree?
- How did the cooperation work, what was most challenging?
- Use the characters as inspiration for writing

stories or dramatising.

- Make an exhibition about your trees and characters.

## Character chart

Use the chart to create a personality from something living in or beside the tree, many of the questions can also be used for creating a personality of the tree itself!

My name is...

I am a...

### Physical Appearance:

- Number of legs:
- Wings:
- Eyes:
- Length:
- Shape:
- Gender:
- Age:

### Personality:

What am I like? Who am I? Describe my personality and characteristics. For example: talents, weaknesses, strengths, interests

### Needs:

- What do I need to live?
- What do I eat?
- How do I communicate?
- How do I live, where do I find shelter?

### Social Life:

- Family, friends, enemies, neighbours



## More About Me:

- *Important events in my life*
- *Future dreams*
- *Secrets*
- *What do I do in winter/summer/spring/autumn?*
- *Do I lack something?*
- *Do I have an excess of something?*
- *The worst thing that could happen to me*
- *The best thing that could happen to me*
- *My self-image*
- *My job*
- *Habits, good or bad*

## References, links

Learning in the Outdoors series, The series  
“Learning in the outdoors” Outdoor teaching,  
<https://www.outdoorteaching.com>





# The microphone

## Aim

To enhance self awareness, self management, responsible decision making, self-confidence and resilience, independence and risk assessment, psychological and emotional well-being. Students get to practise their associative skills, sharing their knowledge, expressing themselves orally and listening to each other. The microphone, a stick to hold and speak to, provides support and makes it easier to speak in front of the class. The microphone also serves as support with turn-taking and showing who has the floor.

## Time

15 minutes

## Subjects

Language, History, Biology, Social Studies

## Equipment/material

A stick from the forest or something else that can act as a "microphone". A bag of fact sheets on the theme or topic.

## Location

The time of year or location is chosen according to the topic. The whole group needs to be able to gather in a circle.

## Season

It can be done at any time of the year.

## Preparation

If the group does not have much prior knowledge of the topic, a bag of small factsheets can be useful. Write a fact on each note. It is a good idea to have at least as many notes as participants in the group.

## Implementation

Gather the group in a circle. Stand close to each other so that everyone can be seen and heard even if it's windy or other noises that can interfere. Start by telling the group what topic you are going to talk about, it can be about a single species, a geographical location or something you have experienced together. It is particularly good if the actual place you're at has a connection to the topic. For example, you are talking about the birch tree where birches grow or talking about a historical event in a place connected to the event.

Choose a stick or another object to use as a 'microphone'. Only the person holding the microphone are allowed to speak. Give the microphone to the first person who says a sentence about the chosen topic. Then pass the microphone to the next person who can share facts or a reflection on the topic. Continue until everyone has said something. If the group finds it difficult to start speaking or if they have little knowledge of the topic, you can use a fact sheet drawn from the bag. Let the students draw one note each and read it out loud.

## Tips and ideas

Let everyone speak to the point without being interrupted or questioned.

Facts can be very simple, such as something that is visible to the eye on the spot, or something more sophisticated. All perspectives are valuable!



### Reflection

Did you learn anything new today? Was this a good way to approach today's topic? How would you like to continue working on the topic?

What is it like to listen while waiting for your turn? Would it have been just as good to talk and listen without the microphone?

### References, links

The series "Learning in the outdoors", Outdoor teaching <https://www.outdoorteaching.com/>





# The 36 game

## Aim

To enhance relationship skills responsible decision-making. The activity can be used to rehearse and consolidate knowledge, or as a test of students' knowledge in the area covered by the questions. However, the activity can also give students the opportunity to discuss and listen to each other's thoughts.

## Time

30 minutes +

## Subjects

All of them!

## What ages/grades is the activity best suited for?

Suitable for anyone who can read.

## Equipment / Material

36 cards with questions or tasks. Pegs or strings for hanging the cards, you can also place them on the ground. One or two dice and a surface to roll the dice

## Location

An area for activities and where it is possible to hang or lay out the cards, for example behind trees or rocks. It should be possible to define the area with natural boundaries like paths, bushes, creeks or trees. A suitable size can be about 40-50 metres wide.

### Preparation

Print the 36 questions or tasks on paper, if laminated they will keep for long. Make sure that the tasks are numbered. Cut it apart so that each question is on a separate piece of paper. It may be helpful to also have the 36 questions on a piece of paper - for the teacher.

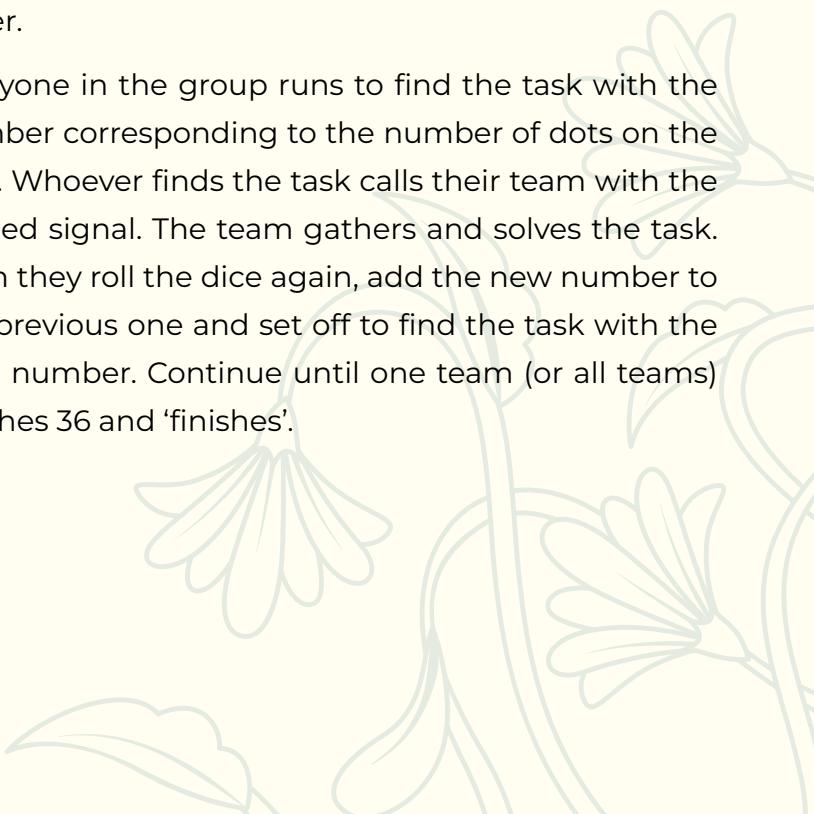
### Implementation

Let the students help to put up the cards, share them between the students but tell them to spread the cards over the whole area.

Divide the class into smaller groups of three to five students. Before starting, the groups need to decide on a call-out, which they can use to call their group together when one of the groups has found a task. If part of the task involves the group collecting objects, they also need to build or otherwise mark a 'nest' where they collect their objects.

Each group has to roll a die, and the number of dots gives the number of the task they have to solve. The dice should remain in the assembly area, where the teacher stands throughout the activity. It is also possible to have several dices to get all groups going faster.

Everyone in the group runs to find the task with the number corresponding to the number of dots on the dice. Whoever finds the task calls their team with the agreed signal. The team gathers and solves the task. Then they roll the dice again, add the new number to the previous one and set off to find the task with the total number. Continue until one team (or all teams) reaches 36 and 'finishes'.





### Tips and ideas

Use one dice at a time if you have plenty of time or fewer than 36 tasks. If groups roll two dice at a time, there will be more spread between groups and fewer tasks for each group.

### Reflection

Did you perceive the activity as a competition? How did it affect your discussions in groups?

Which task or question did you have the most discussions about? Is there any task you still do not agree on the answer to?

### References, links

The series “Learning in the outdoors”, Swedish Nature School Association and Outdoor teaching, <https://www.outdoorteaching.com/>



## Suggestions for questions and tasks

- Trees get energy from the sun. As a team, hug a tree and share one thing that gives you energy or makes you feel good.
- Trees release oxygen. What do you think we “release” emotionally when we’re stressed or happy? Share a thought with your team.
- Trees take in carbon dioxide through tiny openings. Show where you think these are, then talk about one way you “take in” positive things from your surroundings.
- Does the sun rise in the north, south, east, or west? Point the way — then discuss how where you’re from affects how you see the world.
- Does the sun set in the north, south, east, or west? Point the way — and reflect: What helps you “reset” after a tough day?
- Find a leaf, flower or a stone. Show it, then share a memory connected to nature.
- Show one of the four emotions with your bodies: calm, excitement, frustration, joy.
- Collect 10 things that show what you spend time on or care about. How many of them are good for your wellbeing, and how many are just distractions? How much of your energy do you think goes to the things that really matter?
- What’s the difference between a temporary feeling and a long-lasting trait?  
How do you feel today?
- What’s been your longest emotional day this year? How did you handle it?
- What’s been your lightest, most effortless day recently? Why?
- Name the four seasons in order. Name an emotion you connect to each.
- Discuss how too much negativity affects us.
- Find something to represent how you protect yourself emotionally. Share why you chose it.
- Where do your emotions come from? Share a recent experience.
- Why does it feel good to share something you’ve held inside for a while?
- Why do we need positive people like we need the sun? Give two examples.



## Suggestions for questions and tasks

- Think of a pinecone and one seed. Compare it to the tree.  
How do small acts grow into big effects?
- Name a song with “sun” in it and name a positive sunshine memory.
- Name a song with “air” in it - and take a deep breath and say one thing you’re grateful for.
- Hold hands in a circle, pass a squeeze. Name three things that make people feel emotionally “warm.”
- Rub your hands together. What actions warm your heart?
- Run 15 steps together. How do you release stress physically?
- Find three things around you that boost your energy.
- Find something here that represents personal strength or motivation.
- Name something that could weigh on your mind.
- How have you traveled this past week? Which way made you happiest or most connected?
- Give a genuine compliment to someone.
- Find something that represents how you cooperate in this game.
- Mention three ways people waste emotional energy — and how to avoid it.
- Mention three things you need to grow emotionally strong?
- Listen to the sounds around you. How do you act as a good listener?
- Gather in a circle. Say one word each about your friends great work in this game.
- Hug the biggest tree and feel the power of nature.
- How long does it take for you to process a strong feeling?
- All together shout: “We are the future!”





# Owls and ravens

## Aim

To enhance self awareness, self management, relationship skills, teamwork and cooperation, responsible decision-making, social awareness.

## Time

15 minutes.

## Subjects

All subjects!

## Equipment/material

Four ropes, sticks or drawn lines - to mark the boundaries of the playing field.

## Location

Open space where you can run.

### Preparation

If you need to: formulate statements, preferably 20 of them, in the subject area you are working on. Both true and false!

### Implementation

Divide the class into two teams. One team is owls, and the other is ravens. What characterizes these birds? Quite clever and smart, aren't they?

The teams have their settlements at either end of the playing field. Mark the boundaries of the settlements with lines or ropes. Behind that border you cannot be caught. Also, make two lines in the center of the playing field about 2 meters apart.

Line up the teams against each other along the two center lines, each team on its own side of the playing field. The teacher says one statement at a time. Students should decide whether the statement is true or false.

If the statement is true, the owls will hunt the ravens. If the statement is false, the ravens chase the owls. The bird that is caught will cross over to the other team and will then become the other bird. If you have managed to cross the border to your own nest, you cannot be caught.

### Tips and ideas

Feel free to start with statements that are easy to assess whether they are true or false.

If the statements are about what you have just worked on, then the game serves as a summary of the topic. If you use the game at the beginning of a new subject area, the game can be used to draw attention to the students' prior knowledge. It can then become a bit more chaotic as the students do not know the answers. Similarly, if a statement can be both right and wrong, but it provides a good basis for further discussion.

## What questions can you work on afterwards? What can you reflect on?

- Were there any facts in these statements that were surprising?
- Were there any statements that were difficult to decide whether they were right or wrong?
- Give an example of this!
- How can you think about that statement?
- Outside the game, what usually happens when you have different opinions on an issue?
- How can you get better at not dismissing what the other person thinks?
- How can you know if a statement is true or false?

## References, links

The idea for the activity originally came from Joseph Cornell <https://www.sharingnature.com/sharing-nature.html>

## Suggestions for true or false statements (with teacher's key with comments)

- It's okay to feel angry sometimes.

**True** — All feelings are natural, it's what we do with them that matters.

- You should always hide your feelings from others.

**False** — It's healthy to share how you feel with people you trust.

- Good friends help you feel safe and accepted.

**True** — Supportive friendships make life easier and happier.

- You can control every feeling you have.

**False** — We can't always control feelings, but we can choose how to respond.

- Taking deep breaths can help you calm down when you're stressed.

**True** — It's a simple and powerful tool to manage stress in the moment.

- Social skills are only important for little kids.

**False** — Everyone needs good social skills, no matter their age.

- It's easier to solve problems when you listen to others' ideas.

**True** — Teamwork and listening help us find better solutions.

- You can choose how you react to your feelings.

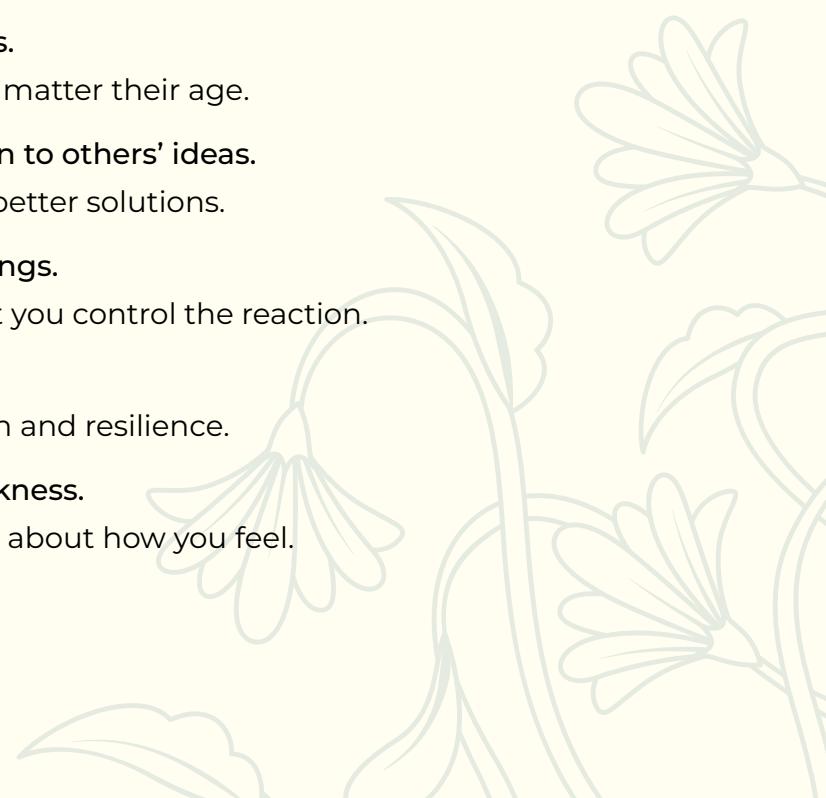
**True** — You might not choose the feeling, but you control the reaction.

- Being kind to yourself doesn't matter.

**False** — Self-kindness improves mental health and resilience.

- Talking about your feelings is a sign of weakness.

**False** — It's a strength to be open and honest about how you feel.



## Suggestions for true or false statements (with teacher's key with comments)

- Empathy means understanding how someone else might feel.

**True** — Empathy helps build strong, kind connections with others.

- You never need help from others when you feel sad.

**False** — We all need support sometimes, and that's okay.

- Taking care of your mental health is just as important as physical health.

**True** — A healthy mind and a healthy body go hand in hand.

- Everyone feels nervous or worried sometimes.

**True** — It's a normal part of life for everyone.

- Ignoring problems usually makes them go away.

**False** — Problems often grow if we avoid them — better to face them.

- It's possible to practice and get better at handling tough emotions.

**True** — Emotional skills are like muscles — they get stronger with practice.

- If you make a mistake, it means you're a failure.

**False** — Mistakes are chances to learn and grow, not signs of failure.

- Saying “thank you” can make both you and others feel better.

**True** — Gratitude boosts mood and strengthens relationships.

- It's normal for friendships to change over time.

**True** — People grow and change, and friendships sometimes shift too.

- How you treat others doesn't affect how you feel.

**False** — Being kind to others often makes you feel better too.





# Shadow images

## Aim

To enhance curiosity, creativity, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, teamwork and cooperation, responsible decision-making, awareness of light.

## Time

60 - 80 minutes.

## Subjects

Physical education and Health, Art, Physics, Language.

## Equipment/material

Street crayons, sticks or some loose material such as long strings - to mark the outlines of the shadow pictures. Paper and pencil for each student.

If there are no loose natural objects at the site, each student will need something to make shadows with, such as a piece of paper.

## Location

Sunlight is enough to create clear shadows outdoors. An open space like the schoolyard or a park.

### Preparation

Bring up stories, proverbs, artwork and traditions about shadows.

Or choose to continue working with shadows in culture and nature after the outdoor activity.

### Implementation

Start by inviting everyone to pick up an object found in the surroundings – a stick, an ice cube, a stone, a leaf. If there are no loose objects available, provide each student with a plain sheet of paper.

Let the students spend a few minutes experimenting with their object by creating shadow images on the ground.

Gather everyone back into a circle and reflect briefly together:

- How are the shape of the object and the shape of the shadow related?
- What else can affect the shape of the shadow?

Ask the students to stand in a line with the sun at their backs. Divide them into pairs. The teacher calls out different shapes one at a time – geometric forms, letters, numbers, tools, vegetables, vehicles, pieces of clothing, and so on. The students use their whole bodies – arms, legs, heads, and torsos – to create a shared shadow that resembles the given shape.

To increase energy and engagement, turn it into a light competition: who can create the shape the fastest? Sometimes, a playful challenge is a strong motivator.

Next, divide the students into small groups. For example, combine two pairs into a group of four, or three pairs into a group of six. Ask each group to find a shape or object in the environment that they want to replicate with their bodies. They work together to cast a shadow on the ground that resembles their chosen shape.

Encourage groups to experiment with several different forms and interpretations. Suggest trying the same shape more than once – but from a different angle, in a different formation, or with changed positions.

Once every group has had time to try out a few shapes and methods, bring everyone together into a common circle.

Let the large group dissolve again, and have each small group work separately.

Each group now chooses one shape to create using their combined shadow. This shape can represent something real or be entirely imaginary.

When the group is satisfied with the shape, they mark its outline. On hard surfaces, sidewalk chalk can be used. One group member can temporarily step out to draw part of the outline, then return while someone else continues.

Take a photo of the group and its shadow if possible.

The outline can remain as it is – or the group can develop it further. They might fill the shape with loose natural materials found nearby, or use crayons to add color, texture, or detail.

Photograph the finished shadow images to preserve the moment and support later reflection.

Organize a small vernissage or open-air exhibition! Let all the students walk around, observe, and reflect on the different shadow artworks.

To finish, offer an individual writing task. Ask each student to write down what associations or feelings the images evoked for them. Each person folds their note and places it anonymously in a shared box.

### Reflection

How did the different groups solve the task?

What was it like to use your body in this way?

How did it feel to use your body as part of a group? What was easy? What challenges did you encounter?

What is a shadow, how is it created?

Were any shadow images difficult to recognize the shape of? Did it matter where you were standing and looking from? Did it matter if it was a large or a small image? Would the shadow images be perceived differently if they were on a wall instead?

Can shadows be used more than creating shapes?

Are shadows good or bad?

Compile the associations in a common document so that the different notes are anonymous to the students. Use the text as a basis for further work in some way.

### Tips and ideas

What time of day is suitable for you to do this task? When is it warm enough? When is the place where you will be 'free'? Will the sun be shining when you can go outside? It is time to take advantage!

If it is a cloudy season, try to do a version indoors with artificial lights, beamers, projectors etc. Then you can compare the light/shadows outdoors and indoors.

## References, links

### Masters of Light and Shadow in Art History

- Caravaggio (1571–1610) – Known for his dramatic chiaroscuro technique, using strong contrasts between light and shadow to create depth and drama.
- Rembrandt (1606–1669) – A master of tenebrism, using light and shadow in portraits to enhance emotions and realism.
- Georges de La Tour (1593–1652) – Used candlelight in his paintings to create a mysterious and intimate atmosphere.

### Modern and Contemporary Artists

- James Turrell (born 1943) – Works with light installations that manipulate perception and create illusions of space.
- Olafur Eliasson (born 1967) – Creates large-scale installations where light, shadows, and reflections play a vital role.
- Kumi Yamashita (born 1968) – Produces artworks where shadows form portraits and figures through light projection on everyday objects.
- Tim Noble & Sue Webster – Use trash and scrap materials that, when lit correctly, cast shadows forming detailed portraits.





# The sense of time

## Aim

To enhance self awareness, social awareness, relationship skills.

## Time

In total about 75 -90 minutes.  
 15 minutes - and a *break of at least 30 minutes, longer breaks are fine but preferably continue on the same day* - and 30 - 45 minutes after the break.

## Subjects

Physical education and health, biology, physics, math, languages, history.

## Equipment/material

Something that can cast a shadow. Either something that cannot be moved, or something loose whose location on the ground you mark before removing the object.

Something to mark the position of the shadow, such as rope, street chalk, lines in the gravel.

A clock.

Paper and pencil.

A small box.

*If you want to talk about how a sundial works in the activity, you can have use for a long tape measure, a string of about 2.5 meters, a string of about one meter, a protractor, 24 sticks of the same length, stubs of string, pens or similar. In order to easily implement the students' suggestions.*

## Location

Sunlight enough to create clear shadows. An open space like the schoolyard or a park.

## Implementation

Choose a sunlit place and an object where you will mark the position of the shadow at regular intervals - to visualise the passage of time. The object providing the shadow can be, for example, a lamppost, a pencil or a stick. It is good if the shadow has both a beginning and an end, so that the shadow of the whole object is visible on the ground.

### Step 1. 10 minutes:

Draw or mark the boundary between shadow and sun, along the entire length of the object. If you are using a loose object, also mark the point where the object meets the ground.

Have each student hypothesis how the shadow will move or change? For simplicity, you can think about the change that occurs in one hour. Students write on a piece of paper and put it in their back pocket.

*Leave the site for a while and do another activity. Preferably for at least 30 minutes.*

### Step 2. 3 minutes:

Then come back and see how the shadow has moved. Mark the new position of the shadow along its entire length.

### Step 3. 12 minutes:

Have a reflection session, individually, in pairs and all together.

Individually - look and think - does your hypothesis match how it turned out? If not, how does it differ? Does the result create new questions?

Pairs - share your thoughts and discuss them. The pair takes notes about their thoughts or concerns. Put the notes in the teacher's box.

Everyone - Be free to share thoughts and reflections. The teacher can also draw one note at a time, and read to the group for common reflections.

#### Step 4. 10 -15 minutes:

If you want to talk about measuring time using the sun, now is a good time to do so, when everyone is gathered in a circle around the shadow and the markers.

Ask the students if they have any suggestions for using the shadow of the sun as a clock. Try what is easy to try right away! How would you do it? (Have in mind the sun's shadow moves one revolution in 24 hours, not 12 hours as on a clock with hands).

#### Step 5. 15 minutes:

Then let everyone choose their own spot nearby, sit down with paper and pencil, and reflect on questions about time:

*How do you perceive time?*

*What is the time for you?*

*Does your life so far feel long or short?*

*Is time important? When and why?*

Collect the notes anonymously and save them if you want to continue working on the ideas later.

In this particular task, everyone finishes a little bit at a time, and it might be a good idea for them to come and leave their note and then leave.

#### Reflection

Work on your written reflections about time. Weather patterns in nature - does it matter for plant growth?

What would the shade you looked at today look like in a month, in three months - will there be any difference?

Instead of trying to make a sundial together, you can turn it into a longer activity of its own, which students can do in small groups. Let them create sundials from loose materials from the site.

Find out more about historical or contemporary measurement of time, stories, proverbs, artworks, traditions about time. What are the differences in the way we think about and relate to time between different times and different countries?

#### References, links

<https://varmlandsmuseum.se/om-tiden-runstavar-solur-och-andra-foremal-ursamlingarna/>

Edukacinės programos vidurinių ir vyresnių klasių mokiniams | Lietuvos nacionalinis dailės muziejus





# Create a forest!

## Aim

By building the forest you get to understand the complexity of the eco systems in nature and how dependent we are on each other. To enhance self awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making, psychological and emotional well-being, co-operating.

## Time

30 min or more.

## Subjects

Art, Geography, Biology.

## Equipment/material

Natural material.

## Location

Forest or park where you can pick loose material.

### Preparation

Mark a frame with branches or rope, about one square metre. One frame for each group.

Explain the values of forests, that forests look different in different countries and are used in different ways. Climate, geology and soil affect what grows in the forest and what lives in it. Everything that exists and lives in a forest is interdependent in a cycle. Just as we humans are dependent on each other and the environment we live in. Forests are important for many countries' economies through forestry, but they are also a place for recreation, activity and adventure. A place where we have room to be and feel good in a peaceful environment.

What does your forest look like? What would you like it to look like? Is there an ideal forest where people, plants and animals can live together?

### Implementation

Divide into groups of 3-4 students each. They then have to think about how they want to build their forest. Should it be a functioning ecosystem and what is needed? Or does the group want to create a fantasy forest that they would like to visit!

Together, the group creates a multi-dimensional forest that becomes a work of art in the marked frame. Then, visit each other's forests and the groups can present what they created and how they thought.

### Tips and ideas

Encourage creativity and co-operation. If someone wants to build something that the others don't agree with, argue or let the different students build their own part and see if the different parts can then be brought together or linked to each other.



If possible, return to the forest boards at another time and develop them further. You may have learnt more about what a forest looks like and what it needs, then the forest can grow and change.

For making an indoor version, see “We are the Forest and the Forest is us.”

### Reflection

What are our nearest forests like? What ecosystems are there?

What other forests exist and what do they look like?

How do we depend on forests? How much do forests affect the climate?





# The Crime Scene

A detective's job is to solve crime and mysteries, and to discover facts about events and people. There are a number of famous fictional detectives: Sherlock Holmes, Monsieur Poirot, Precious Ramotswe.

## Aim

Whether real or fictitious, to solve a problem the students must have an open mind, a good imagination, and an ability to work in a structured manner. Using strategies and their senses, students find clues that can lead to solving a case. To enhance social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making, problem solving.

## Time

30 min.

## Subjects

Language, social studies.

## Equipment/material

5-6 ropes, about 1-3 meters long. "Spice up the area with, for example, cinnamon, coffee, an old shoe or other objects.

## Location

Schoolyard, park, forest.

### Preparation

To prepare for this activity, the teacher lays down rope in various places (one for each group) in a natural setting or in the school grounds. The teacher forms a shape with the rope of something that may have once lain there: for example, a dog, bird, person, or fantasy figure.

### Implementation

Divide the class into groups of three to five. The students are now detectives and stand beside the ropes. They have about 10 minutes to describe the area using all their senses and from this must determine a believable scenario that explains how the body (or object) came to be there. What the students see, hear, feel, smell, and taste become clues in the story. The groups then explain to one another at each rope what they have determined. The teacher takes on the role of a chief detective who wants a quick explanation as to the crime at-hand.

### Tips and ideas

Make this activity into a role play for older students. The students take the role of crime inspector, crime assistant, or medical officer. A follow-up activity could be the writing of a report.

Where the ropes are placed determines how each group will describe their scenario. Therefore, it is a good idea to choose places that are different from one another so that the stories become more varied and therefore more interesting. A crime scene at the bottom of a steep cliff allows for a scenario that is quite different from the one beside a bench beneath a large tree or in the flowerbed beside the school canteen!

## Reflection

Could this really happen? Where and when?

Have any of you ever found something mysterious outside? What did you do then?

How did it feel to be a detective? What skills did you have to use?

How did you solve the task?

There is a tendency for us to become more anxious and afraid of being in nature and going into the woods, why do you think this is?

## Adaptation for students of other ages

For the younger students, call this activity The Mysterious Place. At the activity area, use picture signs showing the five senses as they can be useful aids. Introduce the activity by showing a rope to the whole class so that they know what to expect. Also provide an example of a short story.

## References, links

Learning in the outdoors series, The series “Learning in the outdoors”, Outdoor teaching, <https://www.outdoorteaching.com/>





# In the eye of the beholder

## Aim

The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to view and consider art in such a way that they get inspired to be creative and use their imagination. To enhance self management, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, self-confidence and resilience.

## Time

30 min.

## Subjects

Art.

## Material

10 laminated art cards; paper and pens.

### Implementation

Divide the class into groups and each group receives an art card. Then analyze what the picture on the card portrays. Give each group about five minutes, and then proceed with one of the following:

*1-2 groups depicted the picture with their bodies - a drama sketch or a sculpture.*

*1-2 groups develop several sounds to fit the art card and present these (or music) in chorus.*

*1-2 groups create a continuation of the art card using objects from nature.*

*1-2 groups collect objects from nature with colors/huances that match those on the art card.*

After ten minutes, the groups describe what they saw in the pictures, what their group task involved, and what the results of the task were. The final step is to lay out all the art cards, after which the students create a large display using them all (almost like putting together a jigsaw puzzle).

### Tips and ideas

Continue this activity by talking about sustainable development. Do they notice anything that has to do with the environment or the climate? Suggestions?

Based on the art cards and the surroundings, the students can also write a poem of five to seven lines. Use one thought to name and begin the poem. To finish, the students show their art cards and read aloud their poems.

#### Example:

“The Stormy Forest” (heading)

The black-bodied bird swooped through the dark trees.



# Food outside

## Aim

Exposing students to different food cultures can help them reflect on their own food. By sharing meals, you strengthen the bonds in the group as a social entity. To enhance initiative, creativity, self awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, teamwork and cooperation, self-confidence and resilience.

## Time

40 minutes - 2 hours.

## Subjects

Home economics, history, geography, math, languages, physical education and health, biology.

## Equipment/material

Ingredients and utensils for cooking. Organize so you can take care of your own rubbish, maintain hygiene, and work safely.

## Location

Almost anywhere you can be. Do you want tables to work at - or is it fine to sit on the ground? It's nice if it's not raining, or very windy.

Sharing a meal, sharing bread, is an act of communion and caring for each other. We eat together when we have something to celebrate or mourn. Food involves a lot of time and labor, traditions and hope for life! But food is also becoming increasingly standardized across the world and no longer needs to be based on the conditions that exist in different places.

And when being active and outdoors you get hungrier, and the food tends to taste better!

### Preparation

Planning and purchasing of raw materials. Possibly doing some of the preparation indoors in advance, such as rinsing raw materials or making dough.

### Implementation

Let the planning be part of the implementation. Set the limits for what you can prepare: How much time do you have? What can it cost? What tools can you use? Can you make a fire or cook in an open-air kitchen?

Divide the class into smaller groups of 4-6 students. Decide whether to divide the work between the groups or whether each group will cook its own food.

Present the equipment that the students are allowed to use and if there are rules on how to handle it. Present what needs to be done, when it needs to be done and what the students should do when they have finished the task (e.g. ask the teacher for a new task such as: helping the other groups, tidying up, setting the table, resting while they wait...)

One suggestion that doesn't require a fire or a stove is to make a hearty salad for lunch, or a fruit salad for a snack.

Baking bread on a griddle is a method that has been used for a long time and is still used across much of the world. The Indigenous Sami people of Sweden have Gahkku, a flat, chewy, crumb-free bread that can be packed for travelling (Gahkku is the Sami word for bread). It is baked with wheat flour, yeast, water, salt, cooking fat and something sweet like honey. It is often baked on flat stones by the fire but can also be baked on a griddle over the fire or in a frying pan. Roll out the dough or flatten it by pressing the dough between your thumb and other fingers. Flour the flattened dough all around to prevent the bread from burning. The hotter the griddle, the thinner the dough must be to ensure that the loaves are cooked through without burning. Eat them freshly baked with a knob of butter!



### Tips and ideas

Cooking outside is a good opportunity to work across subject boundaries. For example, it could include students speaking only English throughout the activity.

### Reflection

Are there any dishes that are only eaten outdoors? How do you think they would answer this question in Lithuania and Turkey?

Is this bread like any other bread you have eaten? Can you look for more recipes and bake other flat breads - from various parts of the world? Have people on all continents baked similar flat breads?

When should people start taking responsibility for preparing the food they eat?

What do you think?

What is the environmental impact of the food we eat?

How can we make the food we eat more sustainable, with a smaller carbon footprint?

### A sensory recipe, make belly bread!

About 10 pieces

6.5 dl (390 g) wheat flour

5 dl (325 g) graham flour

1 bag of dry yeast (equivalent to 50 g fresh yeast)

0.5 dl (45 g) sugar

1 tsp of salt

Bread spices (fennel, aniseed) to taste

Mix all the ingredients in a large bowl, then divide into smaller plastic bags, one for each student. Measure 1.5 dl of flour mixture into each bag. When it is time to bake, pour in 0.5 dl of hot water (about 50 degrees) and knead the dough in the bag, it will be quite "dry" and that's ok.

Tie the bag together and place it inside your jumper against your stomach and leave the dough there to rise for at least 25 minutes. The belly bread rises using body heat, does it have to be warm for the dough to rise?

Once the dough has risen, knead your dough in the bag lightly. Take the dough out of the bag and flatten it so that it is about 1 cm thick. Bake on the hob or in a frying pan, without fat.



# Make a mandala!

## Aim

By collecting material and learning to know the place by searching for varied materials with the same shapes or colors. To enhance self management, social awareness, relationship skills relationship skills - teamwork and cooperation. responsible decision-making. psychological and emotional well-being.

## Time

30 min.

## Subjects

Art, language, math, biology.

## Material

Natural material and a white canvas 1x1 meters.

## Location

Windless place with loose natural material.

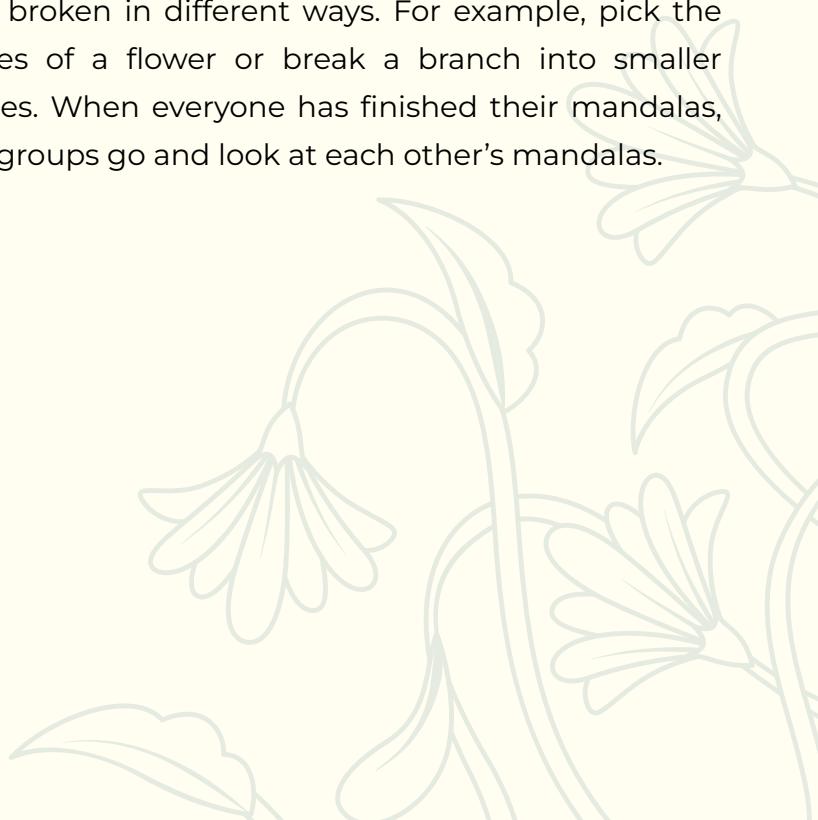
### Preparation

Discuss how and where you can collect natural materials in the place you are visiting. Describe what a mandala is. It is an image, often symmetrical, that symbolizes harmony and wholeness. The word mandala comes from Sanskrit and means circle.

### Implementation

Divide students into groups of three to five students. Task all students to collect at least three different types of natural materials, at least five of each. Distribute a white tablecloth or something else to put on the ground to build on. If there are several tables or benches, you can build directly on them. Give the groups the task of creating a symmetrical pattern together using the natural objects they have collected. It is possible to build a mandala asymmetrically or just to take a picture out of natural materials if the group wants to. The important thing is the creative group work.

If the group needs to collect more natural objects than those collected in the introduction, this is fine. Encourage students to use the objects both whole and broken in different ways. For example, pick the leaves of a flower or break a branch into smaller pieces. When everyone has finished their mandalas, the groups go and look at each other's mandalas.





### Tips and ideas

Let your mandalas come to life! Divide into pairs and then the pairs separate from each other into two teams. Each team decides on a pattern and the students become part of half a mandala which the other team is copying. Mark the line of symmetry (with a rope, a mark in the gravel or sidewalk chalks on asphalt).

The pair should find the same spot as their partner on the other side of the line. Follow the symmetrical pattern in the mandala. Then change rolls and let the other team lead another pattern.

### Reflection

Did your mandalas turn out the same? Why is that since everyone had the same natural objects available? How did it feel to build a mandala together? Would it have been easier to build it yourself? Did you discover anything new on the site by picking natural objects? If so, what?





# The scent pot

## Aim

Learning about the place and nature by using other senses than vision, sound, and touch. The scent triggers memories and helps us to learn and the scent is one of the most important senses but that we rarely depend on nowadays. To enhance self awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, teamwork and cooperation, responsible decision-making.

## Time

30 min.

## Subjects

Biology, language.

## Materials

Jars or cups and natural materials.

## Location

Place where there is loose natural material that is allowed to be picked. Works best in a slightly warmer season.

### Preparation

Discuss how and where you can collect natural materials in the place you are visiting.

### Implementation

Divide students into pairs and give each pair a mug. Ask them to fill the cup with natural materials. They can choose to pick only one kind or to mix. No other pair should see what they put in the cup. Ask the pairs to hold their hand over the cup and come back to the starting point when they have finished. There, the pairs swap cups with another pair who closes their eyes and smells the natural material. The pair is asked to describe what it smells like, whether they recognize the smell and whether they associate the smell with any place, event or person. Finally, have the pairs guess what is in the cup and see if they were right.

### Tips and ideas

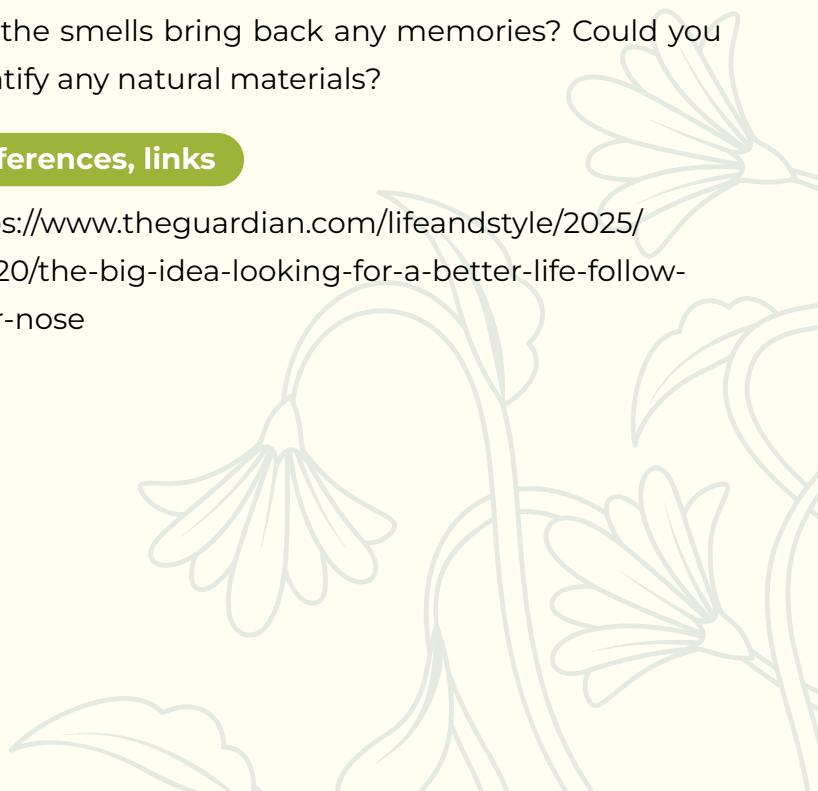
Everything smells! It's not just the scent of flowers that we recognize and associate with.

### Reflection

Did anything smell differently than you thought? Did the smells bring back any memories? Could you identify any natural materials?

### References, links

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/jan/20/the-big-idea-looking-for-a-better-life-follow-your-nose>





# Where in the body can you feel emotions?

## Aim

This activity focuses directly on our emotions. When we talk about how we feel, it becomes clearer that they exist, and that they affect both our bodies and our minds. Putting our feelings outside of ourselves can make it easier to talk about them. To enhance self awareness, social awareness, relationship skills.

## Time

30 min.

## Subjects

Biology, Swedish/Language, Physical Education and Health.

## Equipment/material

A piece of string about 8-10 meters long and a set of cards with emotions - one set for each group. For example: When I am sad, When I feel guilty, When I feel happy. **Cards with emotions are provided at the end of the book.**

## Location

Space enough for each group to lay out and gather around their figure.

## Season

All year round.

## Preparation

Choose which emotion cards to use - which ones do you think would suit your group?

## Implementation

Divide the class into groups of about four people.

Have one person in the group lie down on the ground. The others put a string around, close to, the person. When the outline is complete, have the person stand up.

Stand around the figure on the ground and take one of the cards out of the bag. Take turns reading aloud.

Where in your body do you think that feeling is?

Discuss and agree on where in the body that feeling belongs. Put the note on the body part of your 'rope man'. Do the same with all the patches.

## Continuation

Go round and look at the others' suggestions. Do you find any differences from how your group thought?

Let students find out more about different emotions.

How can we use difficult emotions to understand ourselves and our relationships?

## Tips and ideas

Make sure that each group works at a distance from the other groups, so that everyone can focus on their own group.

Talk about how it will feel to be on the ground when the others are standing around to lay out the rope. How does that person want to be treated by the others? How can those standing around show care to the person lying down?

An alternative way is to let each student pick up a card, or one card for a pair of students. Then you can discuss and compare with the others if you agree to their physical emotions or not. What is the difference?



### Reflections

Which body part has received the most feelings?  
Can different emotions be felt in the same place but in different ways?  
Can one emotion be felt in several places in the body?  
Was any part of the body left without feelings?  
Do you think it is true that those body parts are without feelings?  
How can we help each other to feel good?

### Reference

Maps of subjective feelings. Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, 115 (37), 91-98-92-03.



# The Thought Path

## Aim

When walking along the Thought Path we walk in silence. The silence allows us to be alone with our thoughts in quiet reflection. Yet reflection requires time and space, and the reality of the world we live in today does not often allow for these. In this activity, students are given time to reflect, to evaluate content, and then to express themselves actively through discussion. To enhance self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, psychological and emotional well-being.

## Time

60 min +

## Subjects

Language, Physical Education & Health, Psychology, Social Studies.

## Equipment/material

Laminated cards with quotations/proverbs or questions about life/existentialism/society and/or sustainable development. **Thought Cards are provided at the end of the book.**

## Location

Anywhere you can walk and think, preferably in a nature setting but urban areas can give other kinds of questions and quotes to reflect upon.

### Preparation

A Thought Path is a set stretch, about 500 to 1000 metres long, where Thought Cards are hung up. On the Thought Cards are thought-provoking quotations and proverbs that reflect on life and our lifestyle. . Put the Thought Cards along the path. Give enough space in between for reflection and thinking. Fewer cards on a shorter distance. The activity requires two adults for start and goal, unless you come back to the starting point.

### Implementation

Divide the class into three large groups of 7 to 10 students. The teacher gathers one group at a time at the start of the path. Here, they talk about “silence”. The teacher can ask questions such as

- *When are you quiet?*
- *Do you think when you are quiet?*
- *What are you scared of?*

After the introduction a Thought Card is shown and the teacher reads the text and discusses it with the students. What do they think about the message on the Thought Card?

One by one the student then set off down the path where more Thought Cards are positioned. The way in which the teacher lets them begin is significant: the area must be as quiet as possible to get in a mindset for reflection and for thinking. They must walk the Thought Path one by one. However, being able to see the next student ahead can be reassuring. If you get closer to the next student stop and wait until you have some distance in between.

At the end of the path, another teacher meets each student and asks such questions as:

- *How do you feel about the Thought Path?*
- *Which Thought Card did you like the most?*

Each student then sits down in a circle and waits quietly until everybody has finished the walk. When they are all seated, they discuss the final Thought Card, which says "To live is to choose".

### Tips and ideas

A more confident student can go first and another confident student can go last; the less confident student can go in the middle.

Walk in pairs, try to walk together in silence. Is it possible and how does it feel?

How do you experience the place, the nature when you walk in silence? If you are walking along a route that is already familiar or a new route, how does it feel?

### Reflection

Depending on the questions, the age group and what was discussed and reflected during the activity, the discussion continues inside the classroom or outside at the next session. Were there common ideas to work on?

Feel free to use <https://www.gapminder.org/> as inspiration for questions along the path if you want to focus on sustainability, society and living conditions in the world today, historically and in the future.





# The Photographer

## Aim

Learning about the place and nature by using the sense of vision. What do we see and how is that interpreted or described? The aim is to be able to describe what we see and emphasize how we interpret what we see differently. To enhance social awareness, relationship skills, teamwork and cooperation.

## Time

10-30 min.

## Subjects

Art, language.

## Equipment/material

Blindfolds (not necessary).

### Preparation

What descriptive words can be of use when making a detailed description of an object or a view. You can prepare in the classroom by describing art work or pictures with as many adjectives as possible.

### Implementation

Students form pairs. One shuts her eyes and represents a camera. The other becomes the photographer who will choose a motif that can be interesting, beautiful or maybe represent an emotion. The photographer then leads the “camera” to a place where the motif can be seen. When they have stopped, the photographer takes a photo by pressing the button on the camera, for example the other student’s shoulder. Push the button again and the “camera” closes the eyes, this will take just a second or two.

Turn the camera around and face each other. The photographer can see the object behind the camera and now the camera will tell what the picture was as detailed as possible. Did the camera see the same as the photographer had in mind? How many details can we see in just a glimpse?

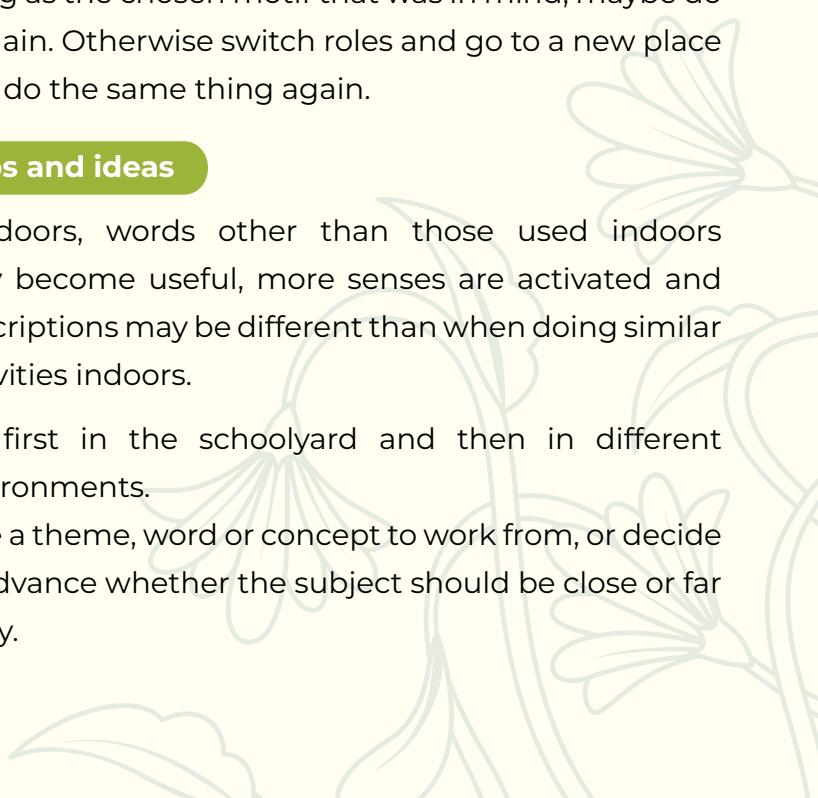
If the photographer wants the camera to see the same thing as the chosen motif that was in mind, maybe do it again. Otherwise switch roles and go to a new place and do the same thing again.

### Tips and ideas

Outdoors, words other than those used indoors may become useful, more senses are activated and descriptions may be different than when doing similar activities indoors.

Try first in the schoolyard and then in different environments.

Give a theme, word or concept to work from, or decide in advance whether the subject should be close or far away.



## Reflection

In the huge flow of impressions that surround us daily, what do we actually see? How much of a snapshot do we register and what do our brains choose to see? When the photographer chooses a subject that is interesting or moving, the recipient may see and interpret it in a completely different way.

Did the camera see what the photographer aimed for?

## References, links

### The Senses: Vision - Dana Foundation

Vision is one of the most crucial human senses, playing a central role in how we perceive and interact with our environment. Here are key aspects highlighting its importance:

#### Primary Source of Information

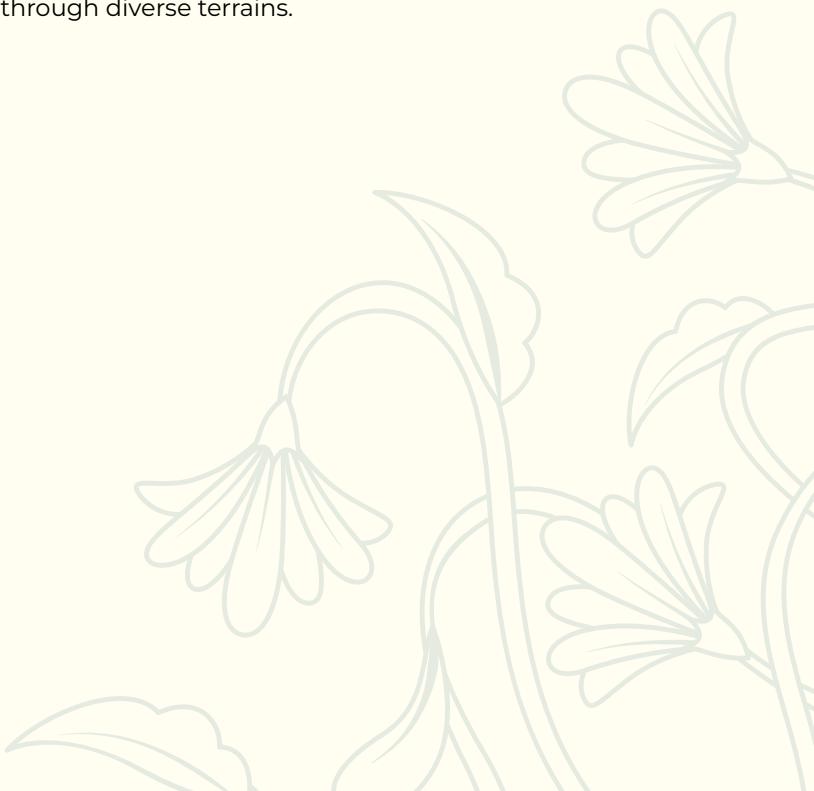
Approximately 80% of the information we receive from the world around us comes through our sense of sight. This enables us to:

- *Focus on Objects: Direct our gaze toward specific items of interest.*
- *Track Movements: Follow moving objects, essential for activities like crossing a street or playing sports.*
- *Perceive Details and Wholes: Understand both the big picture and fine details in our surroundings.*
- *Assess Distances and Directions: Depth perception allows us to estimate how far away something is and in which direction it lies.*
- *See Colors: Color vision enriches our experience and aids in identifying objects.*
- *Adapt to Different Lighting Conditions: Our eyes adjust to both bright and dim environments, ensuring clear vision in various settings.*

#### Evolutionary Significance

Vision has been vital for human survival throughout history, helping us to:

- *Identify Dangers: Detect predators or other threats promptly.*
- *Seek Food: Locate sustenance and distinguish between edible and toxic plants.*
- *Navigate the Environment: Move efficiently and safely through diverse terrains.*





# The Colours of Nature

## Aim

To combine science and art by gathering information about the nature and the environment. Get to know materials by their density and how they change and behave. The result then becomes a scientific art piece! To enhance self awareness, relationship skills, psychological and emotional well-being.

## Time

30 min.

## Subjects

Art, Language, Biology, Physics.

## Equipment/material

Fine-grained sandpaper (preferably with light background colour) and trays.

## Location

Works best when there is no snow.

### Preparation

Discuss what color is and how many different shades students think they can find in nature. Think about how you could color a sandpaper using natural materials. Is it best to drag natural objects against the sandpaper or is it better to push them against the sandpaper?

### Implementation

Divide the students into pairs. Give each pair a small tray with a piece of sandpaper on it. Ask the students to look for natural objects that they can drag against the sandpaper to create a picture with different colors on the sandpaper. Students can create a simple picture made only with stripes or patterns of different colors by scratching different natural objects on the sandpaper. They can also create a more advanced image. Only imagination sets the limits.

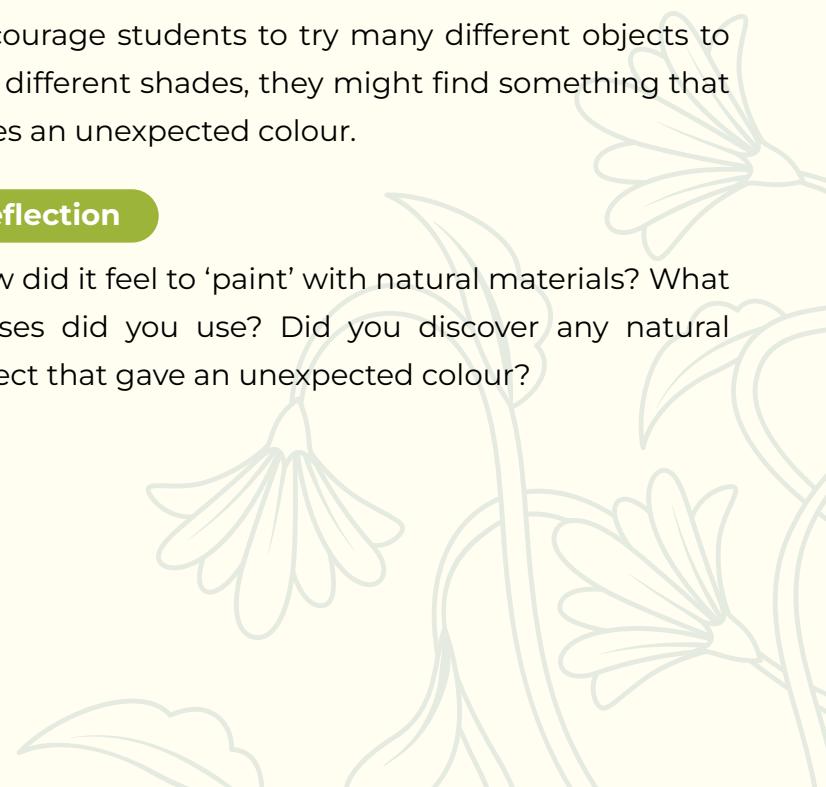
Encourage the students to use all their senses, how does it smell, sound or feel? How does the density and structure of the material affect the sandpaper?

### Tips and ideas

Encourage students to try many different objects to get different shades, they might find something that gives an unexpected colour.

### Reflection

How did it feel to 'paint' with natural materials? What senses did you use? Did you discover any natural object that gave an unexpected colour?





# My Nature Notebook

## The aim

of the activity is to stimulate feelings of curiosity and empathy through direct contact with natural elements. Throughout the activity, nature is experienced not as a static object, but as an expressive, lively, and dynamic subject. To enhance self awareness, self confidence and resilience, psychological and emotional well-being.

## Time

45 min.

## Subjects

Art, Language, Biology, Physical education and health.

## Equipment/material

10 sheets of paper for each student and crayons. A binding material such as a stapler or string.  
A first aid kit.

## Location

Forest or park.

## Season

All year.

### Preparation

The teacher gets to know about the place or forest they are going to. What lives and grows there, the ecosystems and cycles. Student examines a natural element of his/her choice and records the expressions of this natural element in a notebook that he/she produces.

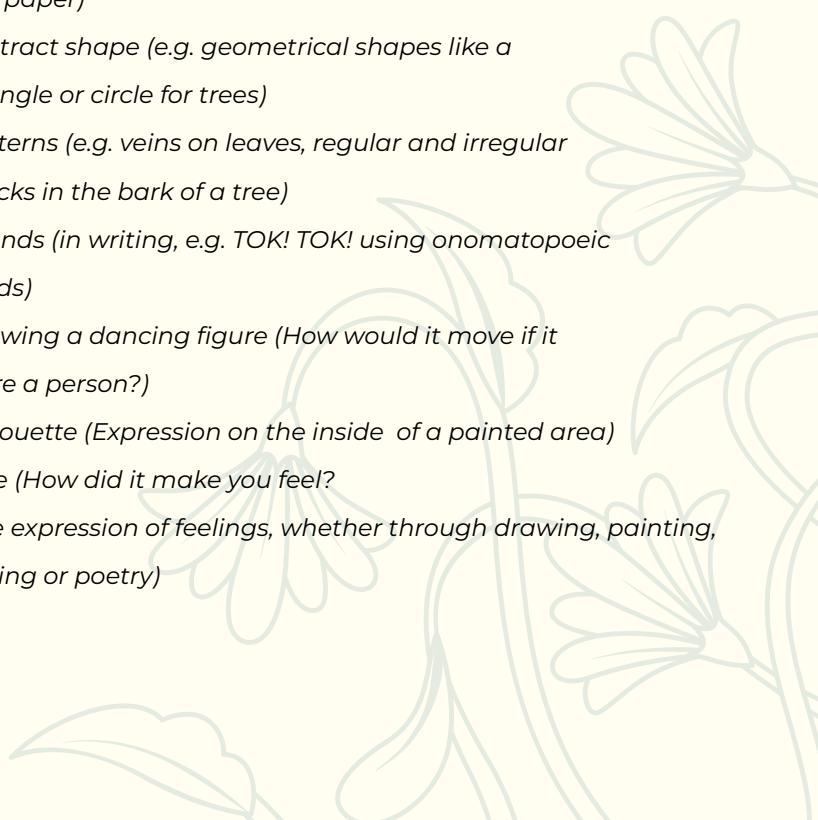
### Implementation

**Step 1, about 10 minutes:** Go to the forest and form a circle. The teacher gives an introductory talk about the flora and fauna of the forest.

**Stage 2, appx 30 minutes:** Spread out in the forest and choose an element each to focus on: a tree, a rock, a bush, a stream, a lake, etc. Create 10 expressions for the chosen element and write them down on paper.

**These 10 expressions can be:**

- *Name and describe the chosen object (the teacher helps to recognize the specific name if necessary).*
- *Picture (depiction of the chosen object)*
- *Colour scale (colours of the chosen object; for example, variety of greens and browns on a tree).*
- *Texture (transfer the texture by pressing the paper against the object or scan it with a pencil, if it is water, you can transfer the trace of the water onto the paper)*
- *Abstract shape (e.g. geometrical shapes like a triangle or circle for trees)*
- *Patterns (e.g. veins on leaves, regular and irregular cracks in the bark of a tree)*
- *Sounds (in writing, e.g. TOK! TOK! using onomatopoeic words)*
- *Drawing a dancing figure (How would it move if it were a person?)*
- *Silhouette (Expression on the inside of a painted area)*
- *Free (How did it make you feel?)*  
*Free expression of feelings, whether through drawing, painting, writing or poetry)*





**Step 3, appx 5 minutes:** Make a notebook by binding the pages with staples or string.

**Reflections** appx 10 minutes:

What did I learn?

How did it feel to be in direct contact with a natural element?

Why did you choose this particular element of nature?  
(rock, fallen tree, etc.)

Can you tell me more about this element?

**Tips and ideas**

The teacher introduces the different elements as much as possible in his/her speech and makes the students aware of the diversity of nature.

While explaining the task, the teacher shows how to construct one or two expressions.

A single sheet of paper can be used to prevent waste. In this case, one of the ten expressions listed can be omitted, and the paper can be divided into nine sections, with nine expressions placed in these boxes.



# We are the forest and the forest is us

## Aim

Develop a sense of curiosity, to emphasise the diversity of ecological systems such as forests and communities, and to develop social skills based on cooperation, to enhance social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making.

## Time

45 min.

## Subjects

Art, Language, Geography, Biology.

## Equipment/material

A bag or basket for each student.  
2 x 2 m thick cardboard or styrofoam  
Glue and wire  
First aid kit for the teacher in case he/she goes outside.

## Location

Forest and classroom.

## Season

All year.

### Description

In this activity, students design and create an ideal forest sculpture that includes differences and diversity, using materials they have collected, inspired by nature and society. Throughout the activity, an analogy is drawn between the community and the forest, emphasizing the importance of diversity.

### Preparation

The teacher should be informed in advance about the forest to be visited, the trees and rocks in the forest, the rivers and lakes, the flora and fauna of the forest. He/she should develop examples that highlight the similarities between the forest and the community.

### Questions to start with:

#### Step 1, appx 10 min:

The group forms a circle in the forest and the teacher tells about diversity and coexistence of differences, drawing an analogy between the forest and society. Point out the diversity of the forest and mention the trees and animals one by one. For example, migratory birds can be associated with migration in our society, seasonal workers 'going home' in the summer, or communication systems such as the internet with communication between tree roots themselves.

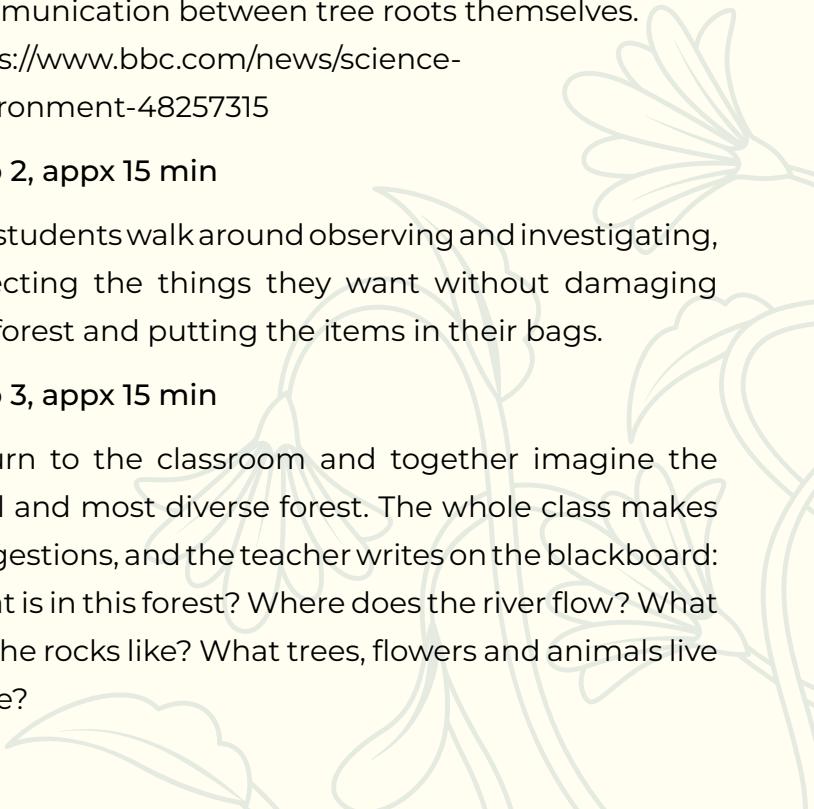
<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-48257315>

#### Step 2, appx 15 min

The students walk around observing and investigating, collecting the things they want without damaging the forest and putting the items in their bags.

#### Step 3, appx 15 min

Return to the classroom and together imagine the ideal and most diverse forest. The whole class makes suggestions, and the teacher writes on the blackboard: What is in this forest? Where does the river flow? What are the rocks like? What trees, flowers and animals live there?



#### Step 4, 20 min

In the classroom, on a 2 x 2 meter surface, make a forest out of polystyrene or cardboard, using wire, glue and recycled materials from the forest and the school.

#### Reflection 10 min

What have I learnt?

Which is more diverse and complex?

The forest or the community?

What would happen if there was no diversity?

#### Tips and ideas

Students explore the forest area and write down what they see, hear, feel and smell.

Introductory texts are very useful! They can encourage students to use all their senses, so poems by famous poets and writers can be used. Why not ask the language teachers to contribute with poems about nature?

The same lesson plan can be adapted to different elements of nature - bushes, flowers, different animals or even inanimate nature. It can also be adapted to different environments such as the sea, a stream, a garden, etc.





# Secret buddy

## Aim

The aim of the activity is to learn empathy and caring. Students will experience a form of relationship that is not based on direct reciprocity. In this way they learn to develop responsibility and generosity and are encouraged to see sociality as a complex balance of relationships. To enhance empathy, responsibility, and responsible decision-making.

## Time

45 min.

## Subjects

Handicrafts, Arts, Languages, Social Studies, Human Rights, SOC (The sense of coherence), Surveillance, Power and Justice.

## Equipment/material

Paper, pencil and a bag. Each student is given a binding material, e.g. string or wire.

## Location

Forest and classroom.

## Season

All year.

### Activity description

Students look after each other and nature in a forest or park. In this way, they become aware of the fragility of both nature and them and consider how they can develop actions in this regard.

### Implementation

**Step 1, about 5 minutes:** Stand in a circle the park or forest. The teacher gives a short talk about our interdependence in nature and the importance of looking after each other. What can we take from nature and what should we not take? How do we look after each other?

**Step 2, appx 5 minutes:** The teacher invites the participants to play a game where they have to take care of each other. Divide into groups of a maximum of ten students. The groups write their names on a piece of paper and put them in the bag for each group, then draw one name each. Once the names have been taken out of the bag, the teacher explains that they have to observe and care for the friend whose name is on the paper from a distance and without being noticed during the whole activity, without revealing who has drawn whom.

**Step 3, appx 10 minutes depending on if you do a walk or stay in the same area throughout the activity.** The task is to make a gift for your secret friend, start with collecting objects from nature that you can use for creating a gift, for example flowers, stones, leaves, or sticks. A gift could be anything from a beautiful stone to a nice spot in nature or even a mandala.

**Step 4, appx 15 minutes:** Return to the starting area and create a gift with the collected items. When everyone has made their gift, the gifts are passed from caring to the cared for, also say something positive you observed during the activity.

## Reflection

### 10 minutes, evaluation questions:

*How did I feel when I looked after my friend?  
How did I feel when my friend looked after me?  
What did I look for when I collected materials from nature?  
How can what I have learned affect my life?  
What challenges did I meet? Doing two things at the same time or someone observing me or making a gift?  
Being observed?*

**To consider:** Be in a place where you are allowed to pick and use loose items from the forest.

The teacher should be prepared to talk about our natural and social dependencies and interdependencies.

## References/links

This activity is inspired by Children in Permaculture by Lusi Alderslowe, Gaye Amus and Didi A. Devapriya.

<https://www.permaculture.org.uk/books/children-permaculture-manual>

The Sense of Coherence (SOC) is a concept introduced by sociologist Aaron Antonovsky, focusing on individuals' perception of life as comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful. Research in this field has highlighted several key aspects:

SOC comprises three central components:

- **Comprehensibility:** The extent to which individuals perceive internal and external stimuli as structured and predictable.
- **Manageability:** The degree to which individuals feel they have the resources to meet life's demands.
- **Meaningfulness:** The extent to which individuals feel that life has emotional significance and that challenges are worthy of engagement.

These components collectively shape a person's overall sense of coherence, influencing their health and well-being.

*Sense of Coherence - Health Promotion in Health Care – Vital Theories and Research - NCBI Bookshelf*

*Sense of Coherence and Health.* Research indicates that a strong sense of coherence is associated with better health outcomes. Individuals with high SOC tend to manage stress more effectively and report higher levels of mental and physical well-being. Studies also suggest that SOC correlates with self-esteem and quality of life.

*The relationship between sense of coherence and mental health problems from childhood to young adulthood: A meta-analysis - ScienceDirect*

**The Sense of Coherence in Various Contexts.** SOC has been applied in multiple domains:

- *Workplace: A strong sense of coherence in the workplace can lead to increased job satisfaction and productivity.*

*Frontiers | Positive mental health and sense of coherence among emergency medical service professionals*

- *Education: Studies have found associations between students' SOC and their academic performance. Low SOC can lead to feelings of alienation and negatively impact self-esteem.*

*A study on the examination of sense of coherence-related factors in Japanese junior high school students and their mothers | Scientific Reports*

- *Healthcare: SOC is used to understand patients' ability to cope with illness and recovery. Research is ongoing to examine how SOC changes over time in patients with various diagnoses.*

*The Sense of Coherence in the Life Course - The Handbook of Salutogenesis - NCBI Bookshelf*



# Our Monument

## Aim

This activity develops students' social awareness, responsible decision-making and ability to think and act together. Students will realize how to become active citizens and learn how to use waste materials in an artistic way.

## Time

90 min.

## Subjects

Craft, art, history, social studies, technology.

## Material

Recycled materials, tools. The students bring materials such as egg cartons, cardboard, tins, textiles, etc. Glue, paint, crayons, paper, scissors, craft knife

Found materials to be collected from school.

## Location

School ground.

## Season

All year.

## Description

Students create a temporary public monument, deciding on its content and production process in small or large groups. During the activity, students reflect together on what kind of message they would like to send to society if they had the opportunity, develop an idea together and realize it with the materials they have. In this way, they develop their decision-making and teamwork skills, as well as their ability to solve problems with limited resources by discovering the artistic potential of waste materials.

Usually, a monument is a public sculpture, other work of art, or building whose purpose is to commemorate one or more persons or a historical event with a material manifestation. But in today's world and art, there are also anti or counter-monuments that question the representational capacity and functioning of monuments. Anti- or counter-monuments challenge the power of traditional monuments to suggest completeness, or a false sense of closure or ideals like beauty by purposefully creating alternate public experiences and forms. The term counter-monument describes a more democratic ethos of engaging individuals subjectively rather than authoritatively instilling moral lessons.

## Preparation

The teacher should research different types of monuments in advance and prepare a short presentation explaining the purpose and context of these monuments. The monuments should range from familiar to more experimental forms, by artists such as Jochen Gerz, Olafur Eliasson or Maya Lin, and address, for example, more topical social and environmental issues.

Make an excursion in your neighborhood to see if there are any monuments close by. Do we know them and why are they there? Do we know any other monuments depicting other historic or modern events?



## Procedure

### Step 1, appx 15 min or longer.

The teacher gives the class a presentation about monuments. What is a monument? He/she explains what kind of message monuments send to the community and the students discuss what kind of message they would like to send to the community if they made a monument themselves.

### Step 2, appx 60 min, about 10-15 min per group.

Groups of 6 are formed. The groups draw and decide what to do, where, why, with what materials and how.

Then they present their ideas to the class and the teacher, also telling them what material is needed. Then they get feedback from the teacher and from class, also with ideas and help with collecting different material. The group then consider the feedback, and they improve if they find it necessary. Before next time they need to collect and find material, from their own sources or with help from others.

### Step 3, appx 45 min

The groups divide the tasks among themselves: they decide who will be responsible for collecting, assembling and placing the materials, and they make the sculpture and put it in the place indicated.

## Reflection

What message does our monument send to the community? Why this message?

Do I agree with this message?

What were the difficulties in the process of thinking together, making decisions and implementing them?

How can we overcome these challenges?

In what way can the materials or monuments be reused? Maybe take this into account already when planning the creation of the monument.

## Tips and ideas

The activity can last for several days and classes, like Day 1 with an excursion or talk about monuments, Day 2 with discussions and presentations and Day 3 with creating the monument. Maybe more time is needed and in the end, you set up an exhibition and show it to other classes at the school. If you want to do the whole activity in one day, then you need to collect materials beforehand.

The teacher can decide on different themes according to the subject or what's on the agenda, like "sustainability", "democracy", "friendship", "mathematics", "cooperation", "solidarity", "sharing".

The examples of monuments shown in the presentation will be indicative. It is important to show examples made by the public or by artists, as well as small-scale examples made with found materials.

The groups of students should not be disturbed too much during the process, but the process should be observed.

The same activity can also be done in such a way that the whole class creates a single monument, in which case the students are given the task of creating a monument proposed individually. The proposals for monuments are presented to the class, discussed and then a process is followed in which the whole class works together to create a single monument.

## Reference/links

Anti-monuments: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-monumentalism>

Monument against Fascism: <https://jochengerz.eu/works/monument-against-fascism>

Vietnam Memorial: <https://www.mayalinstudio.com/memory-works/vietnam-veterans-memorial>

Ice Watch: <https://www.wallpaper.com/art/olafur-eliasson-ice-watch-london>





# What does my friend want?

## Aim

To develop empathy self-awareness, social awareness, self-confidence and resilience, relationship skills and learn to work towards a common goal where students make plans and visualize each other's wishes to achieve them. The focus is on friends' wishes, not mine, and together we identify obstacles and come up with solutions. A concrete action plan is then created and visualized.

## Time

30-60 min.

## Subjects

Arts, Language, Social Studies.

## Equipment/material

Pencils and paper, a large sheet of paper (50x70 cm) given to each group. Crayons for each group.

## Location

School, Park, Schoolyard, Forest.

## Season

All year.

## Procedure

### Step 1, appx 5 min:

Start with a stump-sitting where everyone can think and answer the question "What do I want?"

### Step 2: appx 20 min:

Form groups of three, one student at a time gets the question "What do you want?". Have a conversation where the students discuss what they want and ask each other questions. The discussion will be richer if they discuss everyone's goals at the same time, rather than one at a time.

Based on the answers, they develop and draw different action plans together to achieve their wishes. The action plan should include a timetable.

Clarify the question if necessary: "What do I want to happen in 2 years?", "What do I want today?", "What do I want the world to be like when I am an adult?", "How do I want to feel at the end of the term? How do I get there?" "What would be the first step to get there?"

What possibilities, obstacles and challenges affect the wish to come true? If the wish is too abstract or impossible to achieve, can we adjust the wish to become a reality?

## Tips and ideas

Make the timeline as a picture script or comic strip? Use post-it notes that can be moved around the timeline.

Keep a secret bag of questions that students can use as a starting point if they don't have any of their own.

### Questions to use:

*What do you want? (To achieve, to accomplish, to get)*

*Why is this important to you?*

*What's the first small step you can take today?*

*Who can help you reach this goal?*

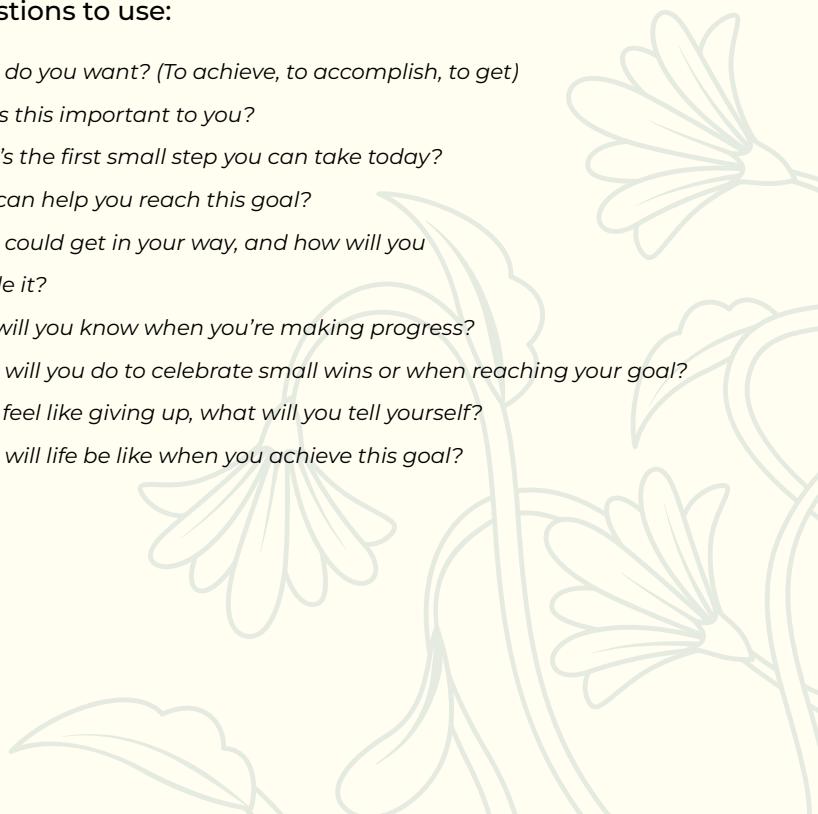
*What could get in your way, and how will you handle it?*

*How will you know when you're making progress?*

*What will you do to celebrate small wins or when reaching your goal?*

*If you feel like giving up, what will you tell yourself?*

*What will life be like when you achieve this goal?*





# Expressing emotion

## Aim

To develop an awareness of emotions and their differences, thus enabling the learner to develop a more tolerant and flexible attitude towards themselves and others.

## Time

25 min.

## Subjects

Art, Language.

## Equipment/material

Paper, pencils and paint.

## Location

School, Park, Schoolyard, Forest.

## Season

All seasons.

### Preparation

Before carrying out this exercise, the teacher could do some research on abstract art. Research on artists such as Wassily Kandinsky and Mark Rothko, especially Kandinsky's book 'On the Spiritual in Art', can be helpful in guiding the students.

### Description

Students externalise and identify their emotions using artistic means of expression. Throughout the exercise, which is based on establishing relationships between written expression, subjectivity and visual expression and activates students' abstract thinking skills, it is also realised that the same emotion can have different expressions and intensities.

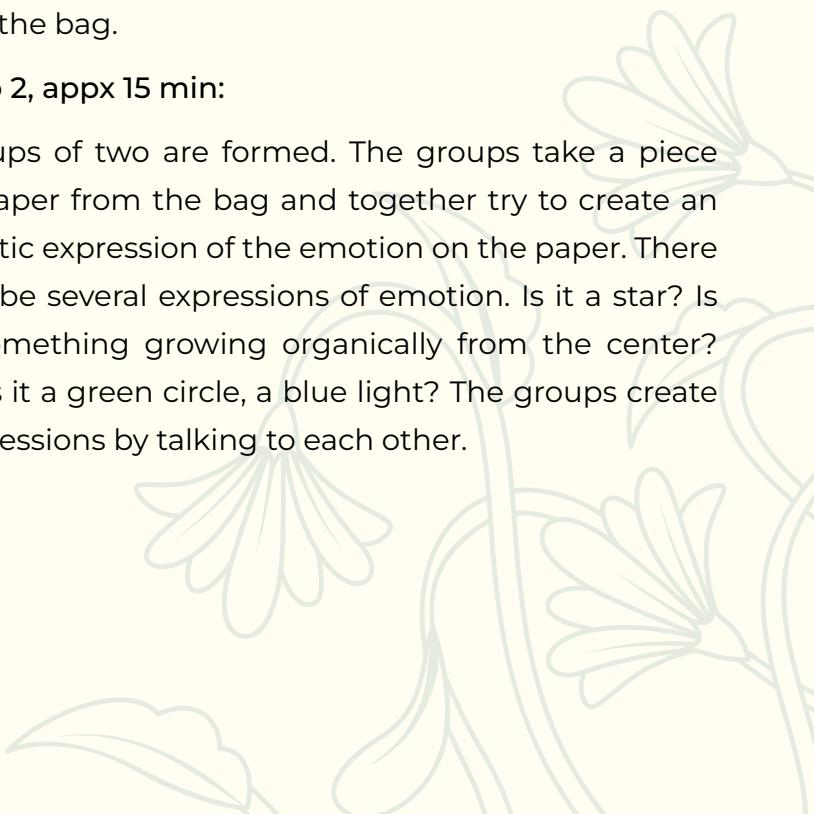
#### Step 1, appx 10 min:

Stand in a circle and ask the students to give examples of words describing strong emotions, let the words flow!

The teacher then asks – what strong emotions have you experienced in the last week? The students silently reflect and think. Then each student writes down one word/feeling on a piece of paper and puts it in the bag.

#### Step 2, appx 15 min:

Groups of two are formed. The groups take a piece of paper from the bag and together try to create an artistic expression of the emotion on the paper. There can be several expressions of emotion. Is it a star? Is it something growing organically from the center? Or is it a green circle, a blue light? The groups create expressions by talking to each other.



## Tips and ideas

Showing artwork that can be associated with emotional expressions before the exercise can make it easier to visualise the expressions. If doing this activity outside, find an object that expresses emotion and use it as the basis for creating the picture. For example, draw or mark the emotion on the ground or embody the emotion with gestures.

## Reflection

Do I know myself and my feelings better?  
Did the expressions and feelings match exactly?

How can changes be made?

What emotions were common in the group, what might be the reason?

Can emotions be understood differently when expressed in pictures?

## References/Links

Hilma af Klint <https://hilmaafkлинт.se/sv/>

Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis: Painting

MoMa page of Mark Rothko: <https://www.moma.org/artists/5047-mark-rothko>

[https://www.openculture.com/2020/06/an-introduction-to-thought-forms-the-pioneering-1905-theosophist-book-that-inspired-abstract-art.html#google\\_vignette](https://www.openculture.com/2020/06/an-introduction-to-thought-forms-the-pioneering-1905-theosophist-book-that-inspired-abstract-art.html#google_vignette)

Mübin Orhon: <https://www.galerinevistanbul.com/tr/artists/43-mubin-orhon/works/>





# Image Theatre

## Aim

To explore the relationship between nature and person by creating images and to gain insights by experiencing a collective and participatory process based on consensus. To enhance relationship skills, social awareness, responsible decision-making.

## Time

65 min.

## Subjects

Physical Education and Health, Arts, Languages (other subjects may be included depending on the performance).

## Location

Outdoor.

## Season

All seasons.

### Preparation

Take photos from nearby places or make text cards about a situation in nature or in society related to the themes like “sustainability”, “social welfare”, “deforestation”, “climate change”, “nature disaster”, “violence”, “drug use”, “animal abuse”, “fear of missing out” (FOMO) etc.

### Description

#### Step 1, approximately 15 min.

Divide the class into 4 groups and give each group a picture or card depicting a situation. For example, a forest fire. The group draws a picture of this situation using their bodies; for example, some represent natural elements, others represent people. During the activity, there should be as little or no talking as possible; those who have suggestions or want to correct the image should come to the front one by one and touch their friends' hands and arms to correct it. Once the group is sure they have the correct image, the first step is complete.

#### Step 2, approximately 45 minutes.

Groups pair up. Each group shows their live situation image to the other group, first they discuss what the situation depicts and make predictions. Then they demonstrate how the situation should change by altering the live image. For example, if the image depicts “deforestation,” what should the image showing the ideal relationship between humans and forests look like? Students come to the stage and show their suggestions by changing the live situation image. They gradually move from the situation image to the ideal image. What changes should be made? Without speaking as much as possible, or not speaking at all, each student makes suggestions by moving the students showing the situation image. What is the ideal image of the relationship between humans and nature? The two groups continue working until they are convinced.

Once a conclusion is reached, the other group creates and presents their own situation image. They repeat the process of moving from the situation image to the ideal image.

## Reflection

How did it feel to communicate using pictures? Is it more productive?  
Why did we choose this situation?  
What else could be done to make it better?

## Tips and ideas:

When choosing a situation picture, you can take inspiration from the Social Agenda/ Global goals/right to common access/code of conduct.

The participation of each student should be considered at each stage of the exercise, especially when proposing the transition picture. Are you allowed to touch each other or should the changes be made by oral instruction.

It can be performed indoors as long as there is enough space.

## References/Links

FOMO [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fear\\_of\\_missing\\_out](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fear_of_missing_out)

Augusto Boal “Theatre of the Oppressed”: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre\\_of\\_the\\_Oppressed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_of_the_Oppressed)





# Nature as a living sculpture

## Aim

To discover the similarities between human bodies and nature and experience a deep sense of presence, to get to know own bodies and discover their physical expressiveness. To enhance social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-confidence.

## Time

15 min.

## Subjects

Physical education and health, Art, Geography, Biology, Social studies.

## Location

Outdoors in a natural environment, preferably a quiet and peaceful forest.

## Season

All year.

### Procedure

#### Step 1: appx 10 min

Prepare by discussing how humans depend on nature and while we at the same time exploit and drain it. What do the students think about this? Can it be changed?

The students form a circle in the forest. Say aloud different elements in the forest and all try to make a body image or a gesture describing the object. In this way all have tried and got an idea of how it can be done, and maybe it's about to change?

#### Step 2, appx 5 min

The teacher tells each student to choose a natural element to observe, touch and reflect upon the life cycle of the element they have chosen. What does it look like in winter? What does it look like in summer? What does the texture of its surface feel like?

#### Step 3, appx 3 min.

Next, the students identify with the element they have chosen and mould their bodies to it, becoming it. They stay in this state of deep thought for a few minutes, transforming themselves into it.

### Tips and ideas

It is important that the students are spread relatively far apart so that they can concentrate.

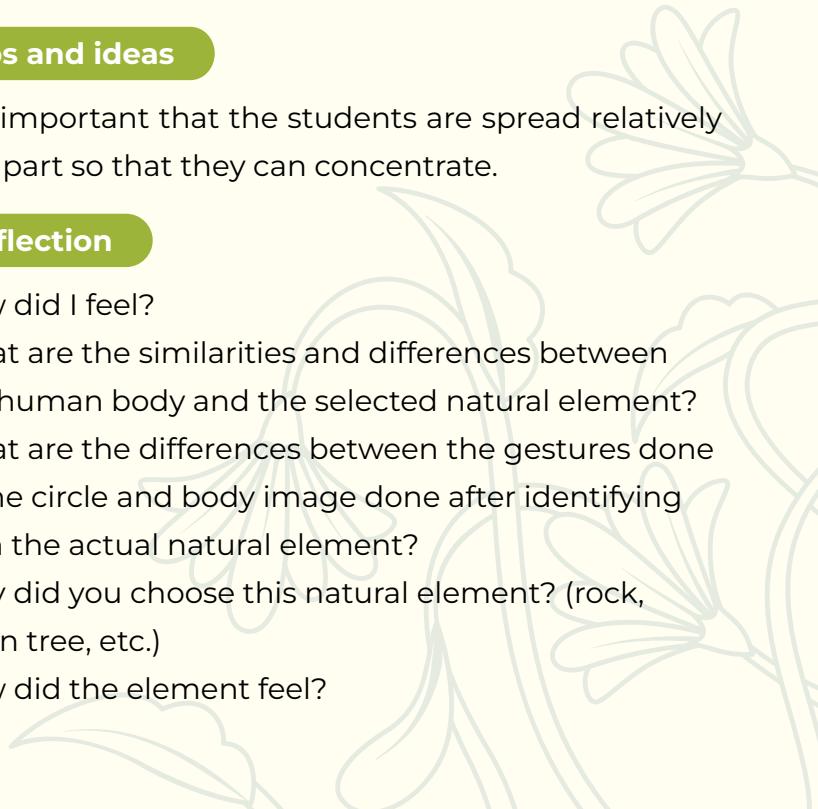
### Reflection

How did I feel?

What are the similarities and differences between the human body and the selected natural element? What are the differences between the gestures done in the circle and body image done after identifying with the actual natural element?

Why did you choose this natural element? (rock, fallen tree, etc.)

How did the element feel?



## Emotion cards

When I am  
**ANGRY**

When I **LIKE**  
somebody

When I am  
**SAD**

When I am  
**HAPPY**

When I am  
**CALM**

When I feel  
**GUILTY**

When I feel  
**ASHAMED**

When I  
**REGRET**

When I feel  
**KIND**

When I feel  
**EAGER**

When I feel  
**BRAVE**

When I feel  
**LUCKY**

## Thought Cards

Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns;  
I am thankful that thorns have roses.

*Alphonse Karr*

What the sun is to flowers, a smile is to humanity.

*Joseph Addison*

Yes, it hurts when buds burst.  
Otherwise, why would spring hesitate?

*Karin Boye*

You only get one journey through life,  
so don't forget to pause and smell the flowers.

*Unknown*

The Earth exists beyond our presence,  
yet our very existence depends on hers.

“Don’t wait to admire the cherry blossom - a storm may sweep it away before morning.

*Japanese proverb*

## Thought Cards

To live is to choose

Do not follow the path that leads somewhere - instead, forge a new one and leave a trail behind.

*George Bernard Shaw*

Strong trees do not grow only in gentle conditions; the fiercer the wind, the stronger the tree.

*J. Willard Marriott*

One generation plants the trees, the next sits in their shade.

*Chinese proverb*

Only when the bird leaps into open space does she realize she has wings.

*Unknown*

The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now.

*Chinese saying*

