


“As long as I live, I’ll hear waterfalls and birds
and winds sing. I’ll interpret the rocks, learn the
language of flood, storm, and avalanche. I’ll
acquaint myself with the glaciers and wild gardens,
and get as near the heart of the world as I can.”

- John Muir

Creative Expressions

<i>time</i>	Three Hours
<i>objectives</i>	To develop a deeper sense of awareness of the beauty of the Smokies; to creatively express an awareness and appreciation of nature; to challenge students to observe and to use their imaginations
<i>concepts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Nature can inspire us to express ourselves in many different ways. ✿ We can use creative expression to explain our feelings about the natural world. ✿ By exploring a variety of methods of expression, we can more fully explore the beauty and lessons of the natural world.
<i>methods</i>	Students will be encouraged to draw inspiration from their natural surroundings and use several mediums to express their feelings about themselves and nature.
<i>subject areas</i>	Language arts, music, drama
<i>materials</i>	Observation trail items, notebook and pencil, sheets of paper, <u>Everybody Needs a Rock</u> story
INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES	
<i>time</i>	<i>OBSERVATION TRAIL</i>
	Twenty Minutes
<i>lead-in</i>	<p>Teachers' Note: To prepare for this activity you will need to go out before the lesson to place observation trail items along the trail. Items should be located in plain view within ten feet of the trail. Make sure that some items are placed above head level and some where they can only be seen if students turn to look behind themselves on the trail. Check with staff to see if someone else has already set items out.</p> <p>Gather students in a circle near the start of the observation trail. Explain to them that for the next few hours they will be exploring the different ways in which people draw inspiration from nature and express themselves. Great Smoky Mountains National Park means different things to different people (Cherokees, mountaineers, lumber men, visitors, scientists, etc.), and these people express their feelings in a variety of ways.</p>

Creative Expressions

Ask the students to give examples of things in nature they find inspiring. What does it mean to be inspired? Tell them that to be inspired, one must be observant. People can learn a great deal about nature by being observant.

Explain that they will now be doing an activity that will test and help them develop their observations skills. Ask which of them are the kind of people who always spot things when no one else does.

Explain that on the trail ahead of them, objects have been placed that are not supposed to be there. They are objects that are out of place in a natural setting. The objects are not hidden and are within ten feet of the trail. Tell them that their job is to walk slowly down the trail, one at a time, being very observant.

They are not to talk, stop, or point at objects, but to count to themselves and keep track of the number of objects they see. They are not to touch anything. When they arrive at the end (where you are waiting or after they have passed something that marks where they are to stop), they are to sit down and do what you ask.

Teachers' Note: You need to have something for the students to do while they wait for others to finish. They might write down details about the things they saw or make an observation list of the forest where they sit. To do the observation list, have them make two columns on a piece of paper: in one column list observations and in the other reflections about the forest. (Reflections are ideas about the forest: how it makes them feel, what they sense about it, what it makes them think about, etc.)

wrap-up

Once everyone has finished, ask some of the students to volunteer to tell how many items they found. Try not to let the competitive aspect of this activity take over; instead, emphasize what it takes to be observant. Ask them what they had to do to be really observant.

Tell them how many items were laid out. It is rare that anyone sees all of the items. Emphasize that everyone can work on being more observant and that they should remember to use this skill throughout the lesson and during their stay in the Smokies.

If you did the observation list and there is still time, ask some of the students to share their observations and reflections. Explain that during the next activity they will need to continue to use their observation skills.

Creative Expressions

CENTRAL ACTIVITIES

CAMERA

Twenty Minutes

Teachers' Note: The following activity is a good one to do when walking from one place to another.

Ask the students to pair up, or pair them up yourself. Tell them that they will take turns being a camera and a photographer.

The camera will close his or her eyes and the photographer will *carefully* guide the camera around, looking for something to take a picture of. When the photographer finds a good picture, she or he will tap the camera's shoulder once as the signal for the camera to open his or her eyes. After a few seconds the photographer will tap the camera's shoulder twice, signaling the camera to shut his or her eyes.

It is important that the shutter is open for only a short time; otherwise the camera will take in things other than the desired image.

Remind the students that they can move the camera's head and body to get strange and unusual shots, but they must also be careful not to hurt the camera. You may restrict them to any number of pictures, but four to six is a good range.

When both partners have taken turns being the camera, and they have finished their "role" of film, then gather the group back together. Ask the students one at a time to describe what the experience felt like, and then ask them to describe or draw their favorite picture taken while they were the camera.

Teachers' Note: If you would like to spend more time on this activity, you may want the students to take time to draw their favorite picture.

ZOOM

Fifteen Minutes

Continue along the trail. After hiking five to ten minutes, explain that they are going to continue to work on being more observant but now work on transferring what they observe to paper. Explain that many famous naturalists used journals to write down descriptions or to make drawings of what they observed in nature.

time



lead-in

procedures

wrap-up

time



lead-in

Creative Expressions

procedures

Ask students to choose an object (i.e., boulder, tree) approximately one hundred feet away from them. (It can be on or off the trail.) Have them write observations about the object or draw the object in their notebooks (i.e., size, color, texture, etc.). Allow them five to ten minutes to do this.

Tell students to walk halfway to their object and again write or draw observations for five to ten minutes.

Continue hiking until the object is reached, and again record observations.

If there is time, ask the students to write something about their object and/or the forest they are in. They may be able to incorporate some of the observations and reflections that they wrote earlier. If they are hesitant, read one or two of the writings at the end of the lesson that other children their age have written.

wrap-up

Explain that perception plays an important role in how people express themselves. Using their objects as examples, discuss how their perceptions differed when viewing the objects distantly and viewing them up close. How did they describe their objects? Also, if two students observed the same object, their perceptions might be different, even from the same distance. Take a few moments to share some of their writings.

time



lead-in

WRITING WARM-UP

Fifteen Minutes

After hiking a bit further, stop along the trail and tell them that you will again do some writing as a group. Writing is an important way to express yourself, and there are no right or wrong answers.

procedures

Find a natural object that everyone can see. Give students five minutes to write down as many words as they can to describe that object on small pieces of scratch paper. They should write down one word per piece of paper. Tell them to try to think of ten words.

After the time is up, put all of the words in a pile in the middle of the group and mix them up. Ask the students to pick out seven or eight words from the pile.

They must now arrange those words in any order they like in order to form a poem. They may trade in two of their words for new ones if they choose. If they want to add a few words to their poem they may. Ask them to think of a title for their writing.

wrap-up

When they are ready, let them volunteer if they would like to read what they have written.

Creative Expressions

Remind them that no one should laugh at anybody else's poem; it came from the whole group. Discuss the variety of adjectives they used. What are some words that they could have added if they had been able to touch or smell the object?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

CYCLE DRAWING

Twenty Minutes

Ask students to describe ways that some parts of nature, such as rocks, plants, animals, water, and air, go through cycles.

Gather the students in a circle and explain that they will be creating a drawing together. (Make sure they all have paper, pencil and a drawing surface.)

Explain that they are going to draw a story as papers are passed around the circle. The picture should somehow reflect a cycle within nature. Each student has a minute to begin their own drawing.

When everyone is ready, begin passing the papers around the circle. Give them a minute to add the drawing they have received. Each drawing should rotate around the circle until it returns to where it started.

When drawings are finished, ask each student to explain how his or her cycle drawing began and how it changed.

SOLO SIT

Thirty Minutes or More

Explain that now that they have practiced both observation and expression skills, they will have some time to really put them to use.

Explain that as you walk down the trail, you will spread them out at intervals to have some solo time to observe their surroundings and to create a writing, drawing, or both that reflects something that they have learned from nature. If they need ideas, tell them that they might choose an object in nature and write about what they think it would say to them if it could speak.

time



lead-in

procedures

wrap-up

time



lead-in

procedures

Creative Expressions

They are to stay where you tell them to sit and not move until you return. They should remain silent and focus on their task. They are not to talk to others or move to another person's spot.

Explain that they will be sitting for at least twenty minutes, so they should enjoy the silence and their solo time and work on their drawing or writing.

Teachers' Note: An easy way to place them along the trail is to ask another adult to be at the end (give them the first place on the trail) and then place students at reasonable intervals until you have them all in place. Give them a good fifteen minutes and then return to pick them up. If you want them all to have equal time, have the other adult pick them up after an agreed time as they walk toward you. Depending on time, you may want to spread them out on the way back to Tremont.

Gather the students together and ask for volunteers to share what they created or discuss how it felt to be alone for that amount of time.

wrap-up

CONCLUDING ACTIVITIES

EVERYBODY NEEDS A ROCK

Fifteen Minutes

Tell the students that they will now head back to Tremont, where you will do one last observation/expression activity. When you arrive, lead them to a place by the river and sit in a circle.

Explain that many people have written about nature and that those stories can teach us about nature and also about ourselves. Tell them that you are going to read them a story and that the story contains their instructions for what they will do next. They must listen carefully. After you finish reading, they are to follow the rules outlined in the story.

Read Byrd Baylor's book *Everybody Needs a Rock*, which outlines ten rules for finding a rock. When you have finished the story, tell the students to go and find their special rock.

When they return, ask them to sit in a circle. Suggest that they might want to carry their rock with them for the rest of the time they are at Tremont to remind them to be observant. Remind them that there is one more rule because they are in a national park. That rule is that *everything* is protected, even the rocks, and must not be taken from the park. They should put their rock in the river or another special place before they leave,

time

lead-in

procedures

wrap-up



Creative Expressions

*lesson
wrap-up*

time

lead-in

procedures



and perhaps another time they can return and look for “their” rock.

Ask if anyone would like to share what he or she created during the solo sit.

Teachers’ Note: We always like to have creative writings or drawings from students. If you will give drawings to staff, we may be able to post them or print them in our newsletter. Please include the name, age, and school of the student.

Review the types of expression the students used during the lesson. Do they feel more observant or expressive? How can good observation skills aid, and be aided by, creative expression? How can they use these skills in the future? What types did they enjoy the most? Can they think of examples of people using creative expression to convey messages?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

MAKING MUSIC

Twenty Minutes

Keep students in a circle. Explain to them that they have listened to the sounds of nature. They will now try to imitate the sounds.

To start their creativity flowing, show students how to imitate a rain-storm. Have everyone sit cross-legged. Explain that in order for the activity to work, each person must do his or her own part in the proper order.

Start by snapping the fingers of one hand. As soon as you start, the person on your right should start, and so on around the circle. When everyone is snapping, start snapping with both hands, then clapping hands, slapping one thigh, slapping both thighs, stomping feet. To have the storm pass over, reverse the order.

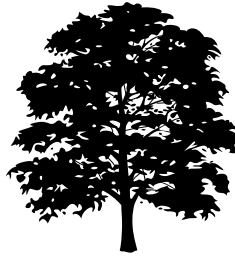
Now encourage students to make their own instruments using objects they find on the ground. Caution them not to pick anything that is alive. “Instruments” can be sticks hitting together, two stones, a stick used as a flute or whistle, etc.

Try to recreate the rainstorm using their new instruments. How about the sound of the wind blowing in the trees? A leaf gently falling? Birds waking up in the spring? (Explain that they should not just make noise, but use their instruments to respond to what the other instruments are saying. Practice by letting one person make a sound and letting another respond to it.)

Creative Expressions

wrap-up

Ask the students: Were they creating music? Discuss how music is a form of expression. What type of music does nature make? Were they communicating? Do any animals communicate in this way?



STUDENTS' WRITINGS

In the Forest

In the forest it is nice and quiet
I take a seat beside the stream
I listen as the waters glisten,
singing
a beautiful song as I listen I
hear a bird
there she is over head
she looks so peaceful just like
me

- Prescott Middle School student

*Special Place
Mountains
Outdoors
Keeping Nature Beautiful
Yes I love the Smokies
Spectacular*

- Heather Drew
Holy Comforter Episcopal School

Bugs

The bugs are buzzing all around,
Up in the air
and down on the ground.
There are fireflies, dragonflies,
and butterflies too,
Even ants and beetlebugs, they
aren't much like you.
I really like bugs.
I hope you do too.

- Robin Voorhis,
Blount Co. Home Schoolers

**River
clean cold
running flowing moving
amazing wild
water**

- Rosie Barger,
Sycamore Middle School

Creative Expressions

Mountain Magic

Mountain magic
Mountain breeze
Softly blowing
Through the trees.

Smoky Mountains
Rising tall
Misty sunshine
Waterfalls.

Mountains' grandeur
All around
Mysterious trails
Weaving round,

Upon the mountain,
Time stands still,
Worldly troubles
Disappear.

Mountain streams
Rushing fast
Sounds of laughter
From the past.

Mountain hiking
For one's health
But the soul
Receives the wealth.

Mountains rocky
Mountains tall
Mountain magic
For one and all.

- Ann Lendley,
Jones Elementary

Stream

I see all around me the
stream
it circles around and turns
to deep waters where I see
salamanders, crawdads, a
plenty
it sits quiet and still
only the chirping of birds
and the whispering of the
waters are surrounding me
I see the water moving ever
moving never slowing and the
salamanders come out to
play, silent but still and
happy

- Prescott Middle School student

How I long to live in the Smokies
That beautiful land of my dreams.
Mountains and valleys and forests,
Animals, bright rushing streams.
Oh, the wonderful sound of the Smokies,
The crickets and leaves in the trees.
The water and chattering chipmunks,
The birds and the whispering breeze.
Oh, the breathtaking sights of the Smokies,
The haze floating softly on the wind.
The rocky crags, flowers and rivers,
Are truly a beautiful blend.
How I long to live in the Smokies,
That beautiful land of my dreams.

- David Wendorf, age 12

SALAMANDER

*Swimming in a cold mountain stream
Slippery, sliding through your fingers
Back in the stream with a splash*

- Bonnie

Holy Comforter Episcopal School