



GRADE LEVEL 4th - 12th

TIME FRAME ~ 2-3 hours

MATERIALS

- Solo hike cards
- Andy Goldsworthy photos (optional)
- Journals & writing utensils
- Whiteboard/marker

LOCATIONS

- West Prong/Cemetery loop
- Marks/Lumber Ridge
- Buckeye Trail

IDEAL SEASONS

Any season

THE RIVER & REFLECTIONS BASICS

Each River & Reflection lesson may be different because the lesson is created to address the specific group needs. This lesson plan reflects one version of River & Reflections and several other optional activities. The goals of each River & Reflections are:

- Spend time enjoying nature and the company of peers
- Reflect on the Tremont experience and how it may impact them in the future.

LESSON SUMMARY





Students reflect on their adventures at Tremont and in the national park as well as express and share these experiences and emotions through writing and art.

Guiding question: What have you gained from your experiences at Tremont?

KEY LESSON CHARACTERISTICS

WHAT LEARNERS DO	SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL ABILITIES
Hike individually	Create & interpret meaning in artistic work	Social Awareness Respect for others when sharing experiences
Create art	Express & convey ideas concisely when writing and sharing	Relationship skills Work with peers to create nature art
Write in journals		Self awareness Identifying emotions
Listen & share with peers		

LESSON FLOW

- ➔ SOLO HIKE 
- ➔ NATURE ART (NART) 
- ➔ 3 DO'S JOURNAL PROMPT 
- ➔ CLOSING CIRCLE 

INVITE

EXPLORE

WONDER

CREATE

REFLECT

SHARE



RIVER & REFLECTIONS

ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

Already done a solo hike?

Try this:

- Silent hike to next location
- Tell a Tremont story emphasizing stewardship or connection to place. (Girl Scout Rock / Creation of GSMNP)
- Silent sharing walk

SOLO HIKE LOCATIONS

- Cemetery/West Prong Loop
- Marks/Lumber Ridge
- Buckeye Trail

TIPS & TRICKS

- To avoid clumping up on the trail, have the co-teacher send faster students toward the beginning and avoid sending good friends one after the other.
- Students may get nervous about seeing wildlife while alone. Remind them they are only a couple minutes apart. Also, seeing wildlife is an experience that should be enjoyed and encounters are likely to be brief. Reiterate safe distances and best practices if you feel it is necessary.

ANDY GOLDSWORTHY

It can be beneficial to bring out examples of Andy Goldsworthy's work to show different ways natural materials can be used in art.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Remind students to help care for the environment they are in by not picking plants, carving into things, etc.

SPECIFIC PRAISE VS. GENERAL PRAISE

Students will be sharing compliments of each others' work, so take some time to discuss the importance of specific praise. Ex. Instead of "It looks cool" say "It looks cool because..." or "I like that you used ____ to show/represent ____."

SOLO HIKE

1. Introduce the solo hike. Tell students how the solo hike works: Each student walks the same section of trail following the Tremont naturalist. Teachers help space students on the trail by having them leave 1- 2 minutes apart.

Things to consider/mention about solo hikes:

- There are no junctions in the trail, students will just need to stay on the trail.
- Students should stay spaced out. They might see someone in front of them, if this happens, they should wait until they can't see that person anymore.
- Students should find a comfortable pace that isn't too fast nor too slow.
- If the naturalist uses solo hike cards, students can look at the cards but must leave them on the trail. Teachers will collect them at the end.
- Solo hike is a really special thing that ends up being many students favorite part of Tremont, so it's important to take it seriously.

2. After the whole group has finished, take time to debrief with turn and talk questions.



- *What was the coolest thing you noticed on your solo hike?*
- *How did it feel to get to walk in the woods on your own?*
- *Is this something you would do again?*

NATURE ART (NART)

1. Split the students into small groups (2-4) or allow them to work as individuals to create some nature art (Nart). Nart is simply art made from natural materials. If they are working in groups, explain that their Nart should be a collaboration and everyone should contribute ideas and work.

Your Nart is should be a creative project made from the natural materials in this area. Your Nart can represent a memory, emotion, or an experience you had during your time at Tremont. Be thoughtful and take your time, and if you feel like you've finished, consider what else you could add to your Nart.

2. After they have been given time to create their Nart, allow the students time to walk around and share their art. This can be done as a whole group or by allowing the students to freely look at Nart "gallery style." Encourage students to ask questions and offer compliments to their peers.

RIVER & REFLECTIONS

NART (CONTINUED)

3. Once you've seen students' Nart, gather the group back together for some reflection. A few possible questions are listed below.

- *How was creating Nart similar to working through a scientific investigation?*
- *Read quote: "If you knew where the poem was going to end when you started it, why would you even bother to start it?" - Kay Ryan*
 - *How do you feel about this quote after creating Nart?*
 - *Did you know how your Nart was going to end up?*
 - *Did it change as you were making it?*
- *How would your Nart be different if you made it during a different time of year, or in a different place like back home? What is your canvas back home like? What materials are available?*
- *If your Nart was able to stay up, how would it look/change in three months? Where will you be and how will you have changed in three months?*
- *Next we're going to think about how we change over time and what goals we can set for ourselves*

* **Before leaving the location, be sure to have the students take down their Nart***

THE 3 DO'S

1. Have the students get out their journals. Introduce this prompt as a Solo Sit where everyone finds their own spot at least 10-15 ft away from the nearest person. Get out a whiteboard and write out the 3 Do's for students to see. The 3 Do's:

- **Little Do** - Something small, pretty immediate, not much planning
- **Big Do** - Takes more planning, maybe involves other people
- **Dream Do** - A goal with no limitations (time, money, etc.)

▶ *You've just spent a chunk of time learning and living at Tremont and in the National Park. Based on these experiences what are things you would like to do when you leave here.*

2. Call everyone back and allow anyone a chance to share their Do's if they would like.

✂ *Our time at Tremont is coming to an end, so we're going to take some time to share and wrap up this experience with a closing circle, which is a tradition here at Tremont.*

LEAVE NO TRACE

Help your whole group understand why their work needs to be taken apart and why this is an important part of LNT. Ask this:

• *If our creations are made of only natural materials found from this area, why do you think they need to be taken apart? What did you see when you first arrived in this place?*

CO-TEACHING OPPORTUNITY

Have co-teacher introduce and lead this journal prompt, but also have the teacher reflect on this prompt in regards to their classroom.

ACTIVITY ALTERATION

If the group has already done a lot of solo work, introduce 3 Do's as a group planning session. Have students in small groups think of the 3 Do's in relation to their school or community.

RIVER & REFLECTIONS

CAMOUFLAGE

Students LOVE this game. Try to squeeze in another round or two before the end of class.

OBJECT OF POWER

Have the students pass an object around the circle as they share. The one with the object has the power to speak and everyone else has the power to listen. This helps make it very clear who is sharing and when they are finished. Use natural objects like antlers, turtle shells, leaves, sticks, etc.

CLOSING CIRCLE

1. Sit in a circle with the whole group. Introduce how everyone is going to share about their time at Tremont. Some ways to share:

- Finish this sentence: "Because of this week at Tremont I..."
- Rock, Stick, Leaf: Have everyone grab a rock, stick, and leaf and place them in the middle as they share.
 - Rock: what rocked?
 - Stick: what will stick with you?
 - Leaf: something you will leave behind?
- What was your favorite moment?



Take this time to share a meaningful experience and use your best words. It is tempting to be silly or share inside jokes, but I'm challenging you to really think about your experiences and how this week has affected you.



Remind students that this national park is their park and that they can always return to Tremont with family and friends or with summer camps.



BRING IT HOME

Before or after sharing their own experiences in a closing circle, have the students brainstorm ways they can continue to have experiences outside. Many times there are outdoor spaces in communities that some students/teachers know about that others do not.

- What are some places you go to or know of where you can spend time outdoors?
- Where do you go to feel relaxed or find a sense of peace/calm?
- Is there anything you want to do or continue doing after your time at Tremont?

4th - 5th

AGE RELATED TEACHING TIPS

- Include more solo hike cards with actions (ex. listening, feeling, crawling, etc.).
- Expect solo reflection and stationary activities to take less time. Spend more time exploring and creating Nart.

6th - 8th

AGE RELATED TEACHING TIPS

- Include more solo hike cards with quotes and questions. Try additional quote discussion activity.

9th - 12th

AGE RELATED TEACHING TIPS

- Include more solo hike cards with quotes and questions. Try additional quote discussion activity.

RIVER & REFLECTIONS

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

TELL A STORY

1. Tell the group a story. There are a number of Tremont stories in the "Stories" document related to Tremont. Many of these stories can deepen connection to place.

ANT NATIONAL PARK

1. Show students a map of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the surrounding area. Allow students time to make observations of the map and find things that they recognize. If the students don't find and outline the boundaries of the park, show them where the boundaries are. Identify any landmarks they might know.

? *What are some differences between the outside of the park and the inside of the park on the map? What about in real life?*

2. Divide students into small groups in which they will use natural materials to create a mini national park for ants in the area. Each group should think of:
 - A name for their national park.
 - A reason that the land is being preserved; that is, how does it align with the national parks mission (culturally or naturally or both)?
 - Something that the ants do when they are at the park (trails, campgrounds, etc).
3. Go on an ant national park tour. Students are "rangers" for their national parks and will share the name, reason land is preserved, and things ants do in the park, along with any additional information they want people to know.

VIDEO BLOG

Students and teachers work together to create a video blog or video diary about their Tremont experience. This takes considerable input both during the lesson and back at school from the co-teachers.

1. Have students brainstorm what they might want to tell themselves in the future or something they might want to tell future Tremont students.
2. Using video recorder from the visiting school teachers, record the students reflecting on their experience in different areas around Tremont. Possible prompts are listed below.
 - What did you enjoy about Tremont?
 - What are some of your favorite places around Tremont? Why?
 - Finish the sentence. "Because of Tremont I..."
 - What do you hope future students at Tremont know before they come?
 - How do you feel on the last day of your Tremont trip?
3. Once the students have filmed what they wanted to, the rest of the video editing and review should take place at school.

NATIONAL PARKS TOUR

The tour of ant national parks can happen "Discovery Swap" style. This is when half of the group stays at the national park and presents it while the other half of the group circulates and visits other national parks.

EXTENDED VIDEO BLOG

With advanced planning, some groups might include some time to film a small video diary each day that can be compiled at school.

CO-TEACHING

Making a video blog works very well if it is driven by the students and teachers. Lots of the impact from the video will come at school, so the teachers need to be invested in making time for it.

RIVER & REFLECTIONS

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

"MUSEUM" EXHIBIT

Students visit the Walker Room and consider what might be in an exhibit about their Tremont experience.

1. Have students explore the Walker Room. Allow them time to examine artifacts, books, maps, and pictures. After exploring, move to a location with more space.

- *Turn & Talk: What was the coolest thing you saw or learned in the Walker Room?*
- *What did the Walker Room show you about the people/community that lived here?*
- *Why do you think the items in the room were chosen to be there?*

2. Split students into groups of 4-6. Explain that they are tasked with creating an exhibit to represent their week at Tremont. Have students draw their plan and items in their exhibit in their journals and/or white boards.

- *What would you want someone to know about your time at Tremont? Think about the layout, objects, words, and pictures that would represent what your life was like while you were here.*

3. Share the exhibits "Discovery Swap style". See sidebar on page 5 for how to facilitate.

SHELTER BUILDING

1. Split students up into teams. Tell each group to find a good, safe spot in the area to build a shelter. This generally should not be framed as a competition.
2. Once all of the groups are feeling close to finished with their shelters, gather back together. Instruct student that you will go on a tour of all the shelters and each group should share: 1) their plan and how they built, 2) any roles that team members played, 3) what they would do if they had more time. Give teams time to discuss before beginning the tour.

QUOTE DISCUSSION

1. Lay out several quote cards. Give students time to read them. Split the students into pairs or small groups to have them discuss these questions.

- *What was a quote that stood out to you? Why? What did you like about it?*
- *What does the quote mean to you? Does it relate to your life?*

RAINY DAY ACTIVITY

Visiting the Walker Room is a good activity for a day with poor weather or if you are pushed for time and are unable to travel far for class.

GOOD, SAFE SHELTER BUILDING SPOT

Groups should understand to look around for hazards like dead trees and limbs. They should be made aware of any other site specific hazards (ex. yellow jacket nests, slippery spots, etc).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY

Before or instead of group discussions, have students pick a quote to copy about. Have them write the quote and answer your prompts, or have them write whatever they feel about it.

QUOTES AND SOLO HIKE

This quote discussion can also happen with the quotes used during a solo hike once all the students finish.

RIVER & REFLECTIONS

River & Reflections: Field Card

Solo Hike

1. Students will hike spaced out along the trail with Tremont naturalist at the front and the teacher as the sweep.

The solo hike can be a powerful moment of the Tremont experience and often is one of people's favorite experiences.

- Listen and notice what is going on around you and take the time to read the solo hike cards that will be left along the trail (just be sure to leave them where they are).

- Turn & Talk: What was the coolest thing you noticed on your solo hike?

- ? How did it feel to get to walk in the woods on your own? Is this something you would do again?

Nature Art (NART)

1. Students will use only the natural materials around them to create art in small groups or as individuals.

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2. Allow students to visit others' Nart and offer compliments and ask questions. Then come back together and debrief.

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River & Reflections: Field Card

3 Do's Journal Prompt

1. Solo sit with the journal prompt. Write out 3 Do's on whiteboard for students to transfer into journals. 3 Do's:

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You've just spent a chunk of time learning and living at

- ? Tremont and in the national park. Based on these experiences, what are things you would like to do when you leave here?

2. Call everyone back and open it up for anyone to share their Do's if they would like.

Closing Circle

1. Sit in a circle with the whole group. Introduce how everyone is going to share about their time at Tremont. Some ways to share:

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