

Plant Journals Over Time

By getting to know one particular plant over time, students develop an intimate sense of connection to that plant and the natural environment surrounding it, while increasing scientific knowledge and inspiring inquiry.

GRADES: 2nd Grade

INTENDED OUTCOMES: Feet, Head

SUGGESTED SUPPLIES:

- Journals for each student
- Pens or pencils
- Markers or crayons
- Magnifying glasses (optional)

SUGGESTED STEPS*:

- Explain to students that they are each going to get the chance to pick a special plant that they will watch and learn from for the next number of weeks or months.
- Give them time to explore the outdoor space and find a plant that they are drawn to. You could even tell them about the project far ahead of time, so that they can be on the lookout for “their” plant ahead of time. (It is likely okay if multiple students choose the same plant, as long as there is space and you feel like they can focus.)
- Once everyone has chosen a plant, set an expectation for the amount of time that they will spend with the plant (ideally 10 minutes or so) and pass out Journaling supplies. Knowing how much time they have can help students understand that this activity is about detailed observation. If they say they are done before the time is up, suggest other angles and details that they may have missed. Encourage them to get close and use all of their senses (except taste)!
- If possible, you can help students annotate their drawings with written notes explaining the details that might get lost in the artwork.
- Gather together at the end of the time, and allow students to share both their plant and their drawings. (They can walk the group over to the plant to show them. Don’t pick it or it won’t be there next time!) Discuss what details they noticed – what makes their plant unique and different from other plants?
- Do this activity on a regular basis, for example, every Monday afternoon. Build in time for students to reflect on and share how their plant – and the environment around it – has changed since the last time they visited. Can they make predictions about what it will look like next time?

*For more detail on the grade-level focus for natural and social concepts and sense of place, please refer to the Guidelines

TIPS AND TRICKS:

- Prompt inquiry and connections to classroom lessons with specific prompts for each journal session such as:
 - What insects do you see on or around the plant? What do you think they are doing there?
 - How has the plant changed since you last visited it? Can you guess why it has changed in that way?



Relevant Standards

SC09-GR.2-S.2- GLE1, SC09-GR.2-S.3-GLE1v