



Title: Natural Object Memory

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Theme: Diverse plant parts and objects are part of the natural world.

Objectives:

- Students will recognize that there is a wide variety of things that can be found in nature.
- Students will learn the purpose of different objects in nature.

Duration: 10-20 minutes

Age Range: Kindergarten-8th Grade

Materials:

- piece of fabric or bandana
- 5 unique natural objects
- tarp or large, shallow box (if indoors)
- 5-10 natural objects per student (if indoors)

Background:

This activity has students look closely at objects from the natural world, increasing their awareness of the variety that exists in nature. This will help to prepare them for future learning about ecosystems.

Preparation:

It is easiest to conduct this activity in an outdoor place with easy, safe access to a variety of natural objects (leaves, seeds, rocks, shells, flowers, etc.) Open forests and beaches work very well.

If you choose to conduct it indoors, you will need to collect a large number of natural objects. Students are going to try to match the 5 objects you reveal, so if you are going to reveal a clamshell, it is best to have at least one clamshell per student in your collection. Also include objects that are somewhat similar to what you reveal. For example, if you will be revealing a clamshell, you may also want to add some mussel shells, egg shells, or other objects similar to clam shells to the collection. Your goal is to make sure that every student could find objects to match your 5 teacher objects but that there are some other objects in the mix to keep it interesting. Spread these objects on the tarp or large shallow box. Secretly place

your 5 objects underneath a piece of fabric at the front of the class. If you are not familiar with your objects, use books or the internet to learn more about them.

Introduction:

Have students brainstorm some of the coolest objects they have found in nature. Ask them if they have gone beachcombing before, or looked for leaves in the forest in fall.

Activities & Procedures:

Tell your students that you have gathered 5 very special natural objects. You will reveal these objects for a few brief seconds (5-15 seconds works well, depending on your group), and then they will set out to find similar objects, one for each of the 5 shown. They will have two minutes to look for these objects in nature if you are outside or one minute to look for it on the tarp if you are inside. Be sure to warn them of any hazards, like not picking stinging plants, etc.

With a great flourish, pull back the piece of fabric and reveal the natural objects for the designated length of time. Ensure all students are able to see before you recover the objects. Send students out to collect objects as similar to yours as possible.

Once students have finished collecting their 5 objects, have each student sit in a circle around you with his or her natural objects arranged in front of the student.

Dramatically pull one object at a time out from under the fabric. Hold it up for everyone to see, and have students hold up their parallel objects. Explain how you can identify the object (i.e. it is white and chalky, curved, with ridges on the outside), what it is used for (i.e. this shell keeps clams protected from waves, drying out, and getting eaten) and how it came to be (i.e. this shell was created by the clam). Identify and describe some of the other objects students found that didn't quite match yours. Then pull out and discuss the second object. Repeat this process until you have revealed all five of your objects.

Wrap-up:

Discuss with students how there are many similarities and differences in nature. Some parts of plants or animals may look very different but exist for the same purpose (i.e. leaves & needles, cones & acorns, different types of shells, etc.) and some parts may look very similar but have different purposes (i.e. ferns & feathers, acorns & shells, etc.)

Evaluation:

Use student observations of their objects as a formative assessment. Note student behavior during the activity to assess their following of directions.

Object Memory Standards

Concepts of Life Science: Students develop an understanding of the concepts, models, theories, facts, evidence, systems, and processes of life science.

SC1

Students develop an understanding of how science explains changes in life forms over time, including genetics, heredity, the process of natural selection, and biological evolution.

The student demonstrates an understanding of how science explains changes in life forms over time, including genetics, heredity, the process of natural selection, and biological evolution by:

[3] SC1.1 sorting Alaskan plants and/or animals using physical characteristics (e.g., leaves, beaks)

[3] SC1.2 describing how some traits (e.g., claws, teeth, camouflage) of living organisms have helped them survive as a species

SC2

Students develop an understanding of the structure, function, behavior, development, life cycles, and diversity of living organisms.

The student demonstrates an understanding of the structure, function, behavior, development, life cycles, and diversity of living organisms by:

[3] SC2.1 sorting animals and plants into groups based on appearance and behaviors

[3] SC2.2 observing and comparing external features of plants and of animals that may help them grow, survive, and reproduce