

DAY 1: GET OUTSIDE LIKE A SCIENTIST! (2 ACTIVITIES)

ACTIVITY 1: THINK LIKE A SCIENTIST Based on *The Beetles Project's* exploration routine "I notice, I wonder, It reminds me of..."



Hey there! My name is Diana and I'm a naturalist at YMCA Camp Seymour! While we're at home keeping our families and communities safe, I wanted to bring some of camp to you! One of the most important things we do at camp is **get outside!** We can get outside at home too! Each day, we'll do a different outdoor activity, using your outdoor space: your backyard, a local park, or any nature near your home. And please take photos as you go, and with a parent/guardian's permission, **post and tag YMCA Camp Seymour on social media!** We love to see what you're up to!

Today, we are going to get outside and start **thinking like a scientist.** To do this, we'll use phrases, words, and skills that scientists use every day. These skills and phrases will be important, because we will use them in all the other activities we do this week!

If you aren't already there, **let's head outside!**

The first step is to find an object from nature on the ground. This can be anything you want, although it is helpful if you already know what it is! We will use this object to practice our **observation** skills. I chose this leaf.

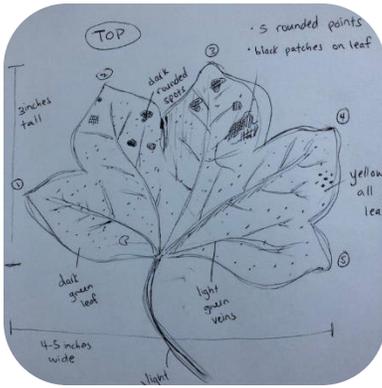


What is an **observation**? An observation is anything we can notice with our five senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, or tasting-but don't taste anything without checking with an adult first! When we make an observation, we use the phrase '**I notice...**' and then say what we observed with one of our senses. Think of it as describing something to someone who has never heard of your object before, and you have no way to show it to them!

Keep in mind a few common mistakes people make with observations:

- 1) 'I notice this is a leaf.' This is an identification, not an observation. I'm using past knowledge, not my senses.
- 2) Observations also do not express opinion like 'I notice it's awesome.'
- 3) 'I notice the leaf has been eaten by bugs' isn't an observation (unless you can actually see bugs eating the leaf). It is a possible explanation for why 'I notice the leaf has holes.'





Alright! Let's make some observations! Remember to write your observations down in the space below! Be sure to make at least **five** observations. If you get stuck, try observing your object with a different sense (smell) or looking at it from a different angle (underneath).

If you want to, you can even sketch your object and label it with your observations! There's an example from my nature journal here. (Note: I made my nature journal using

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)



We're going to move on to the next skill we will use frequently: **asking questions**. We'll use the same object for this skill.

Just like with observations, there's a phrase we use to ask questions: **'I wonder...'** and then say what you're wondering. These questions can be ANYTHING you are wondering about your object...there are no right, wrong, or silly questions!

For my leaf, I wonder what kind of tree it came from and I wonder what caused the spotted pattern.

Now it's your turn! What are you wondering about your object? Write down at least **three** questions, using 'I wonder' in the space below.

1)

2)

3)

The final tool we use to make quality observations is thinking about making **connections** to what we already know, or what something **reminds us of**. This could be what the object looks like, an experience you had, or information you learned. For example:

Hmm. The veins on my leaf remind me of an open hand and the smell of my leaf reminds me of a time I jumped in leaves at my grandma's house.

What about you? What does your object remind you of? Write **two** connections in the space below.

1)

2)



Awesome job! You just practiced three big skills scientists use every day to think about the natural world: **observations, questions, and connections!** We will continue to use these skills to explore the nature outside our homes and in our neighborhoods throughout the week!

SECTION TWO: INVESTIGATE LIKE A SCIENTIST!



Alright, now it's time to apply those skills and start investigating! I'll lay out the steps below:

- 1) Find an object from nature. It is best if you **DO NOT** know what it is. (I found this green hairy stuff with sticks in it!)
- 2) Use "I notice" to observe the mysterious object. Write a few observations down.

3) Use "I wonder" to ask some questions about the object. Write a few questions down.

4) Use "It reminds me of" to make some connections. Write a few connections down.

All the observations you just made are now your **EVIDENCE**. Using this evidence, make one or two **CLAIMS** about what your mystery object. Use the following phrase to show you're making a claim and backing it up with evidence that you observed. "I think (claim) because (evidence)." See the example below.

"I think (the object came from a tree), because (I noticed it was on the ground underneath many trees, it had small sticks woven into it, and it was a greenish color, reminding me of the tree's needles.)"

Once you've written a few claims and supported them with evidence, check in with the adult you live with to see if you can research and identify your mystery object and check if your claim(s) was/were correct!