

Incredible Insects!



Grade Level: K to 2



Developed by Susan Pelis, Sheffield Elementary School, Turners Falls, MA, and used in Grade 1

Community Partner: [Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center](#)

Overview/Rationale for Lesson: Children write and illustrate diamante poems to recall what they observed on a fall field trip to observe insects. This class visited Northfield Mountain.

Learning Objectives:

- Children will write a diamante poem and draw an illustration, including details of things they saw, heard and touched on their field trip.
- Children will experience insects first-hand and hone their observation skills in an outdoor setting.

Lesson Plan Procedure

Preparatory Activity:

Step 1. Pre-trip discussion. 10 minutes.

Ask children to predict, “What do you think you’ll see at Northfield Mountain?” List responses on chart paper.

Step 2. Class Trip to Northfield Mountain. From 2 hours to 1/2 Day.

Children participate in a facilitated session on “Incredible Insects” conducted on the edge of a meadow. Children look at insects through hand lenses and draw a sketch. You may reserve optional extra time for lunch and a walk in the forest.

Main Activity:

Time: 70 minutes (steps may be split into 2-3 writing periods).

Step 3. Make a Community List: “What We Saw, Heard, Felt.” 15 minutes.

Children generate a list of things they saw, heard and felt during a group discussion. Teacher records comments on chart paper. If available, photos from the trip help to stimulate conversation and spark interest.



Step 4. Each child completes a prewriting activity: “I saw, I heard, I felt.” 10 minutes. Children use the template to draw pictures and list items they saw, heard, and felt. (Student Handout available in Resources)

Step 5: Teacher models how to write a diamante poem. 10 minutes.

Teacher writes a sample diamante poem with the class, showing them how to shape their words from I Saw I Heard I Felt into a short diamond-shaped poem. “I Heard I Felt” into a short diamond-shaped poem. This version of a diamante poem begins and ends with the same word, which is the topic (for example “Fall” or “Meadow”). Middle lines have two words, one of which is a describing word, e.g., *Insects flying*. (Diamante Template available in Resources)

Step 6. Children draft a diamante poem. 20 minutes.

Children use their completed handout, “I Saw I Heard I Felt,” and the Community List to help them draft a diamante poem using the template. They make a sketch to go with their writing (before or after writing).

Step 7. Children write and illustrate a final copy. 15-20 minutes.

Teacher conferences with each student to revise poems and assess writing. Teacher may choose to type final copies and then have children draw illustrations.



Conclusion/Follow-Up to Activity

Step 8. Poetry reading. 15-30 minutes.

Children read final copy of their poem and show illustration to the class

Step 9. Bulletin Board Gallery Walk. 15-20 minutes.

Bring students to see display of poems and illustrations on a bulletin board. If possible, include in the display a write-up of the process, photos from the class trip and link to curriculum frameworks.

Materials Checklist:

Pencils and colored pencils

Student Handouts (downloadable from Resources)

Developer's Comments on Lesson:

Note on differentiation:

“Drawing before writing engages students who have difficulty with print and invites multiple modes of expression for all students. Students do not have to complete all the lines on the individual template. One-on-one writing conferences allow the teacher to individualize the revision process for each child. If possible, assign a volunteer or support person to sit with children who need help with the vehicle of writing to get words onto paper.”

Note on addressing multiple learning styles:

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Art: For some children who have learning issues with communication and print, art is their way into the world. Children with kinesthetic and tactile sensibilities need to get their hands moving with paint.

Getting outdoors: Now more than ever because of the digital age it's important to get kids into the backyard looking at critters.

Social learning: Field trips at the beginning of the year help bond a community. Going to a meadow gets kids out and moving, gives them a first hand experience that matches the expansive nature of a 6 year old, and allows them to spend time together.

–*Susan Pelis*

Useful Links

[Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center Fall School Programs](#)

[Diamante Poem online teaching resource](#)

Downloads

Student Handouts (downloadable from Resources)

Handout: "I Saw, I Heard, I Felt" <<http://massbook.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/3-I-saw-I-heard-I-felt.pdf>>

Handout: Diamante Template <<http://massbook.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/5-diamante-template.pdf>>

Handout: Final Copy Template <<http://massbook.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/8-Final-Copy-Template.pdf>>

Connections to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:**Framework: Science and Technology/Engineering**

Strand: Life Science (preK-8)

Topic: Characteristics of Living Things

*1: Recognize that animals (including humans) and plants are living things that grow, reproduce, and need food, air, and water.**3: Recognize that plants and animals have life cycles, and that life cycles vary for different living things.*

Topic: Living Things and Their Environment

*6: Recognize that people and other animals interact with the environment through their senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste.**8: Identify the ways in which an organism's habitat provides for its basic needs (plants require air, water, nutrients, and light; animals require food, water, air, and shelter).*

Strand: Earth and Space Science (preK-8)

Topic: Earth's Materials

*1: Recognize that water, rocks, soil, and living organisms are found on the earth's surface.***Framework: English Language Arts**

Strand: Composition

Topic: Writing

*19: Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.**19.6: For imaginative/literary writing: Write or dictate short poems.***Connection to the Common Core Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org/>):****Writing » Grade 1**

Production and Distribution of Writing

W.1.5. With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

*W.1.8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.***Speaking & Listening » Grade 1**

Comprehension and Collaboration

*SL.1.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.**SL.1.2. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.*

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

*SL.1.4. Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.**SL.1.5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.***Language » Grade 1**

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

L.1.5. With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.