

LESSON PLAN: NATURE JOURNALING

Date:	Class:	Unit:
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LESSON TOPIC:	Starting a Nature Journal with <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>
AIM:	<p>In the novel <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>, Cricket follows the clues to a treasure box that contains Bob’s paintings and drawings of the woods and its wildlife. Students can use Bob’s paintings as inspiration to start a nature journal for recording their own thoughts and discoveries.</p> <p>Nature journaling helps students get to know their natural surroundings. Sometimes it’s hard to care about something when you don’t know much about it. When students learn about nature, they may be more motivated to help take care of it.</p>
OBJECTIVES:	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Describe what it means to “nature journal”.2. Identify the supplies needed to start a nature journal.3. Identify the information that may be included in a nature journal.4. Recognize the value of recording natural experiences to the characters in <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>.5. Recognize the potential value of nature journaling in their own lives.
GET STARTED/ DO-NOW:	Take the students to a natural area outside, such as a field or a place with trees. Instruct the students to just sit, look, and listen without talking for five minutes. When the time is up, ask the students what they saw or heard. Then have the students try it again. Ask the students if they noticed more the second time. Why or why not?
MINI-LESSON:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Check out a copy of <i>The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady</i> by Edith Holden from your local library. Read some selections out loud to the class, showing them the illustrations as well.2. Have the class answer the following questions: What kind of book is this? In what ways is it like a diary? In what ways is it different from a diary you might keep? What sort of person wrote in this book? Who would find this book useful?

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MAIN ACTIVITY:

1. In *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*, Cricket and Miss V. discover a hidden treasure box containing Bob's paintings and drawings of the woods and its wildlife. Tell the students they are going to be drawing and writing in nature journals. Just as Bob's artwork reflected his time in nature, their nature journals will be a place where they can record their own experiences outdoors.
2. Have the students read about Cricket's and Miss V.'s discovery again in Chapter 43 of *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe* (pp. 182-184). On page 184, Cricket says: *I'd never thought that doing a painting of something you saw every day of your life could change the way you looked at it.* As a class, discuss what Cricket means by this statement.
3. Provide each student with a nature journal. These may be drawing pads, composition notebooks, or even a regular spiral notebook. Spiral-bound books are easier to lay flat; books with unlined pages may be easier to draw in. If using regular notebooks, students can draw on unlined paper and later glue the pictures into their notebooks.
4. Explain the purpose of a nature journal: to record the thoughts, feelings, ideas, and observations about the natural world. Nature journals help people connect with the outdoors by getting to know their natural surroundings.
5. Explain the different ways people use nature journals:
 - For collecting scientific data. For example, it can include an on-going record of a specific location and how that location changes through the seasons. A journal might contain information such as where and when to look for particular wildflowers or birds.
 - To preserve memories by recording outdoor experiences.
6. Provide students with pens, pencils, markers, colored pencils, and/or watercolors. Take the students outside again. Instruct them to turn to the first page in their journal. Have them record the date, time, place, and weather at the top of the page.
7. Instruct the students to observe and listen as they did at the beginning of class. Have them draw something they see and write down what they hear. They can also include descriptions, thoughts, and feelings about what they experience. Does the object remind them of a song or a funny poem? Students may include these as well.

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	<p>8. Return to the classroom. Ask the students to share what they found.</p> <p>9. Instruct the students to choose one type of wildlife they found to research. Students may use individual computers to do research online, or they may look for the information in field guides. Students should include some of these facts in their journals. For example, if the students saw a robin, they can do research to find out more about robins. Then they write some of this information on the pages about the robin.</p>
CLOSING ACTIVITY:	Each student shares one thing they learned with the class.
EXTENSIONS:	<p>Continue nature journaling as a class on a regular basis, such as weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly.</p> <p>Collect and press leaves or flowers to add to the journals. Be sure to identify them with the field guides.</p> <p>Create leaf rubbings to add to the journal by placing the leaf under a sheet of paper and rubbing over it with the side of a crayon or pencil.</p> <p>In <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>, some of Bob's paintings were in watercolor. Try adding watercolors to your nature journal entries.</p>
CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:	Students' journal entries include accurate scientific data.
MATERIALS:	<p><i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i> by Jo Hackl</p> <p><i>The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady</i> by Edith Holden</p> <p>Nature Journals</p> <p>Computer or field guides for research</p> <p>Pens, pencils, markers, colored pencils, and/or watercolors</p>
TECHNOLOGY:	Research wildlife found outside online.
STANDARDS:	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.2.D</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.3.D</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.7</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.9</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.10</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.9</p>