

Guidelines for Outdoor Learning Experiences

Pretrip preparation:

Identify the content knowledge that will be enhanced.

Content:

1. Inform the appropriate authorities (principal, parents, etc.).
2. Scout the site for possible dangers or impediments to the learning experience.
 - a. Look for possible dangers (poisonous plants, insects, steep ditches, etc.).
 - b. Identify where students may sit to record data or rest in the shade if necessary.
 - c. Additional considerations:
3. Develop roles and assignments to ensure every student has a responsibility. Some roles may include:
 - a. Supply and Time Officer: checks out supplies to each group member, checks in all supplies upon return, and monitors the time during the outing so that all of the data are collected in the allocated time period
 - b. Recorder: completes data sheets for the group
 - c. Data Collector: uses the recording devices (rulers, thermometers, wind gauge, etc.) and reports data to the recorder
 - d. Additional roles:
4. Explain the purpose of the experience, hand out data sheets, and assign a role/responsibility to each student. (On multiple trips, rotate the duties so that each student experiences every role.)
5. Immediately before leaving the classroom, check out materials to the supply and time officer and review the purpose and goal of the outdoor learning experience, how much time students will have to accomplish their tasks, and expected behavior.
6. Other considerations:

During the outdoor learning experience:

1. Make sure every student is engaged in an authentic task.
2. Carry extra copies of the data sheets and pencils.
3. Immediately redirect off-task behavior.
4. Be visible to all students and insist they remain visible to you at all times.
5. Carefully monitor the time allotted for the experience.
6. Additional considerations:

After the outdoor learning experience:

1. Collect checked-out materials. Provide students with group time to complete and summarize their data sheets.
2. As a class, discuss questions, what was learned, and other events that may have occurred.
3. Every student should be responsible for writing a summary report using the collected data that tie to the learning objective of the experience.
4. Additional considerations: