

UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORM



Hear That? Nature Calls! (Theater, Science, Dance)

In a concrete jungle of nearly 8.5 million people, nature walks are often a rarity. But they're a great way to get kids out of the classroom and into the great outdoors, whether it be on school grounds or at a local park! Nature walks give kids opportunities to learn more about science, geography and art, and are a fantastic way to observe plants and animals. Use this as a reason to take your class on an outdoor expedition through a nearby green space. Put on your park ranger hat and guide your little voyagers in a nature observation by asking questions like: *What do you see down low on the ground? What do you see up high toward the sky? What colors do you see and what sounds do you hear? How do these observations make you feel?* After you've finished your outdoor exploration, head back into the classroom and have a class discussion about what the kids experienced. As they're describing their outdoor adventures, scribe words you hear, especially words or phrases that describe exactly what they saw (e.g. green leaves, tall trees, fluffy clouds). Using your students' experience and the list of scribed words, play alongside your students to create a "Celebration of Nature" dance in which everyone embodies different things found in nature and tells the story of their great, fun, playful outdoor expedition!

To support this unit, use the Activity [Going Wild with Morning Routines in the Discover and Create section.](#)

These Wellies Were Made for Dancin' (Dance, Music)

Dance and movement are all ways to tell a story! Explore these concepts to express emotions with your classroom. To get started, ask questions like: *What are some of the ways you dance with your family? What are dance moves you can teach to the rest of the class? How can we all tell a story we've been reading together through dance?* Now, it's time to create some unique dance moves of your own! Together, choreograph a class dance that you can use in transitions, on your way to lunch, to focus or to start each day off in unison. To begin, play around with rhythm by clapping, stomping or using objects from around the room, remembering to experiment with different levels and tempos. Build on that by playing DJ for a day and adding recorded music, or make music of your own with classroom instruments or found objects. Ask questions like: *How does music make you feel? How do different kinds of music make you move?* Finally, put together a sequence of moves that everyone can do and decide what time(s) of day you'll be using this dance. Now you have a unique dance that only your class knows. Isn't that wild?!

To support this unit, use the Activity [A Case of the Sillies in the Respond and Connect section.](#)

The Playful Battle of Fort Cozy (Visual Art)

Time to bring some of the great outdoors into your classroom! How? Build a fort meant for your students' cozy escape! In the rush of hectic city life, kids will love the rare opportunity to create a space all their own. To start, provide materials like large cardboard boxes to create your fort, giving students the opportunity to use other open-ended materials to create doors, windows and other decorations they'd like to make their cozy structure their own. Alternatively, you could drape sheets or blankets over a series of chairs or pile them on the floor, stack pillows atop one another and include class puppets or stuffed animals for companions inside the fort. The object here is to give students agency to use their imagination to design this space. After all, this fort is a place where, in their home away from home, they can feel most at ease. Next, re-create the feeling of being outdoors by making cutouts of trees, leaves or even hanging class-made clouds from the ceiling above their fort. To add an extra layer to this re-creation, find playful, realistic outdoor sound effects playlists on streaming services like Spotify or YouTube to help feed their imagination while they're building and relaxing in their fort. Oh, and don't forget the most important part of an indoor fort—picture books about exploring the great outdoors!

To support this unit, use the Creativity Page [Gettin' Tucked in to Your Cozy Zone in the Discover and Create section.](#)