

Nature Name Writing

By Ann Smith, First Grade teacher at Dirksen Elementary

Summary: Students spend time outdoors building their names with materials found in the schoolyard.

Objectives: (1) expose students to the outdoors, to new vocabulary words, and using natural materials, and (2) practice cognitive skills of word reading and phonics: (Consonants: m, s, t, c, p, n, b, g, f, d, l, h, r, w, j, k, v, y, z, qu; Vowels: short a,i,o,e,u).

Grades: K-2

Time needed: 45-60 minutes

Standards met:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.1, RF.K.1: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.1.D: Recognize and name all upper- and lower-case letters of the alphabet.

Preparation: Walk through the schoolyard in advance to identify potential useful materials for name writing. If necessary, bring extras from other areas of the school, or your house, and deposit them in the school yard for your students to discover and use to write their names.

Recruit parents or other teachers to help. This lesson is a great opportunity for parents to assist, especially in the small group work outside in the garden.

Procedure:

- 1.) Explain to students the purpose of the activity: exploring what is around us and writing our names with the materials we find.
- 2.) Go over vocabulary words by brainstorming items found outside (stick, rock, grass, flower, seed, tree, bark, outside, branches, pine cone), and practice sounding out those words and identifying letters.
- 3.) Review alphabet letters and our names.
- 4.) Students brainstorm rules and/or best behavior for the garden (i.e. listening, following directions, boundaries, etc.).
- 5.) When outside, in small groups, search for items that could be used then make names. If necessary, use the white paper as the background to make the names clearer. If the weather doesn't permit, the name-creating can be done indoors.
- 6.) As the whole class, perform a gallery walk around the school yard to look at each name. As students walk past each name, have them read it aloud.

Materials Needed:

- Camera
- White sheets of paper (optional)

Suggested modifications for Special Education:

- ➔ Give verbal directions in clearly stated steps and give concrete examples
- ➔ Allow students to volunteer classroom responses, and ask student to repeat directions back
- ➔ Extend time on task for completion of class assignments by 25 percent
- ➔ Provide visual cue (name tag, alphabet chart)

Assessment:

Think, pair, and share about the experience, and have students write about the experience.





Example of how the name can look outdoors

Example of using a piece of paper to make the name clearer

