

Lesson Plan

the Naturalist's Notebook

Leaf Learning in Action—Grades Four & Five ESL

Plant Science Discussion in the Classroom

Introduce the lesson by showing students leaves from common deciduous trees, such as oak, tulip, hickory, and maple. Describe the different parts of a leaf. Ask the following:

- 🍃 How are the leaves on the trees changing?
- 🍃 Do the leaves in your native country change in the same way?
- 🍃 If so, what month does it happen?

If a student cannot answer about the leaf changes in his/her native country, give the assignment of asking a family member for the information.

Field Study

Walk around school grounds and discuss how leaves change in the fall. Pick up leaves and ask students to use English words to describe them. Offer choices for beginners. For example, you might ask, "Is the leaf yellow or orange? Does it have three or five lobes?" The questions can be more complex for more advanced students. You might ask, "Is it smooth, rough, flexible, thick, or brittle?"

Give each child a plastic bag and ask him/her to gather one or two leaves that have changed color from each tree you have selected. After all the leaves are gathered, write the children's names on their plastic bags with a permanent marker.

Vocabulary

branches – ramas
brittle – quebradiza
brown – marrón
color – color
compound – compuesta
crunchy – crujiente
gold – de oro
leaf – hoja
leaves – hojas
lobes – lóbulos
orange – anaranjada

red – rojo
scarlet – escarlata
simple – sencilla
smooth – liso
tree – árbol
trunk – tronco
variations – variaciones
veins – venas
velvety – aterciopeladas
yellow – amarilla



A Young Naturalist's Notebook
sample entry

Naturalist's Notebook

lesson plans accompany the Naturalist's Notebook for K–5 Educators, a quarterly publication of Reynolda Gardens of Wake Forest University. Each plan integrates plant science, art, and writing activities and correlates with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

Young Naturalist's Notebook Art & Writing

Art

To introduce the art activity, hold up a leaf and talk about its characteristics. You might ask, "How many lobes does it have? Are they pointed or rounded? What do the veins look like? Where are the veins?" It would be helpful to draw a picture on the board to illustrate each concept. This will help students see the leaf as it really is, not as a stereotypical leaf, and encourage them to look carefully at the leaf as they draw.

Choose three leaves to draw. Divide students into three groups and ask members of each group to draw one of the three leaves as accurately as possible. (They may trace the leaf if they have difficulty drawing free-hand.) After they have drawn the leaf, ask them to do a rubbing of the same leaf, using crayon on white paper, and then compare the results of the two techniques. If students would like, they may improve on their drawings after comparing.

Writing

Have students write accurate descriptions of the leaves they drew, including color, shape, irregularities, and size. Ask them to read their descriptions aloud to their partners.

On the last day, have students rewrite their descriptions, making error corrections and improving sentences, and then read them aloud to the class. They can also compare their leaves with those examined by other groups, looking for characteristics that are similar and different.

When the project is completed, students can press their leaves in an old book. When the leaves are dry, students can glue them onto pages in their Young Naturalist's notebooks.



Advance Preparation

- Determine the location of three common deciduous trees, such as oak, maple, hickory, or tulip.
- Gather sample leaves for Day 1.

Materials

- Fall leaves
- Plastic bags
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Unlined white paper
- Writing paper



Time: Five 30-Minute Periods

- Day 1: Introduction
- Day 2: Leaf gathering
- Day 3: Art project
- Day 4: Writing
- Day 5: Revision and sharing

Lesson plan created by Susan Moretz, ESL teacher, Hall-Woodward Elementary School, Winston-Salem, NC.

Author's Notes: This is a hands-on activity, which is the most effective way of teaching non-English speaking students. The lesson is a change from the normal academic routine.

NCSCOS: Art 1.02, 4.02; Language Arts 4.02, 5.05; Science 2.1, 2.2, 2.5

Reynolda Gardens of Wake Forest University is located within the boundaries of the 1,067-acre estate that was established by Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Reynolds in the early twentieth century. Today, RGWFU consists of 125 acres of woodlands, open fields, and wetlands; four acres of formal gardens; and a greenhouse range with conservatory. Student visit times are limited. Reservations are taken only in early August for the following school year.

Call the education office (336.758.3485) for information on programs and scheduling.