

## Soloists in Nature

*Recording a soundscape and crafting observations*

**Lesson Designer:** Calliope Pettis

**Grade Level:** Grades K-12

**Enduring Understanding:**

The world is a noisy place, but when we hone our ability to focus, we are able to connect on a deeper level.

**Essential Question:**

How do we become better listeners and observers?

How does your community benefit when we make the time to notice and appreciate the little things?

**Arts Discipline Standards: Music, Media Arts**

**Alabama Anchor Standard Creating 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

**Alabama Anchor Standard Creating 2:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

**Alabama Anchor Standard Creating 3:** Refine and complete artistic work.

**Alabama Anchor Standard Performing 6:** Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

**Grades K-12 Connecting 2:** Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts and daily life.

**Media Arts Grade 1: Producing 5:** Combine varied academic and arts content to form media arts products.

**Non-Arts Discipline Standards: English Language Arts, Science**

**English Language Arts:**

**ELA Grade 1: 24a:** Write simple poems addressing a topic.

**ELA Grade 2: 22a:** Write free verse poetry to express ideas.

**ELA Grade 5: 24:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences.

**Science:**

**SCI Grade 3:11b:** Create models that illustrate how organisms and their habitats make up a system in which the parts depend on each other.

**Digital Literacy and Computer Science Grade 8: 6:** Produce, review, and revise authentic artifacts that include multimedia using appropriate digital tools.

**Requirements: Materials and Supplies:**

- Pen and Paper
- Imagination and Listening ears
- Sound clips of the natural world (provided)
- Audio Recording Device
- Audio Editing software (GarageBand)

**Requirements: Prerequisite Knowledge - Arts:**

Singing Improvisation, Audio Brainstorming, Rhythm

**Requirements: Prerequisite Knowledge - Non-Arts:**

The Scientific Method - especially observing and hypothesizing  
Elements of Poetry - Rhyme Scheme, Forms, Meter, etc.

**Procedures: Introductory Activity:**

Invoke the students' sense of curiosity by playing pre-recorded sounds from the natural world. Start a conversation based on the subtleties of those sounds.

**Procedures: Sequence of Activities:**

Explore the subtleties: Have students play with their voices and try to imitate the recorded sounds; placing emphasis on tone, timbre, emotional context, alteration of articulators, breath, etc.

**Becoming a Better Listener:** Group exercise.

1. Call and Response: Creating, imitating and interpreting sounds.
2. Responding Instead of Reacting: Create a conversation using only sounds.  
Each person has the opportunity to craft their own unique response.

**Explore poetry:** Review selected works by Emily P. Johnson, George Meredith, Marianne Moore, Walt Whitman and William Wordsworth; choose one or more of the poems provided and:

1. Discuss how they incorporate nature.
2. Discuss their treatment of poetic form.
3. Borrow elements to create their own free form.

**Nature walk:** Have students choose where they would like to walk and explore the area thoroughly. Remind them to be present and move slowly so they can get a 360 degree view of the landscape. They can make their way to the quietest area they can find.



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**Macro to Micro:** Have them find one plant or creature that calls this landscape home, and begin to hone their focus. Approach it as if they were invited to be its honored guest.

1. Use their Audio Recording Device (or cell phone app) to record their conversation with the flora, fauna or element of their choice.
2. They can spend 5-15 minutes with the flora, fauna or element of their choice: talking, listening, questioning, observing, exploring.
3. Have them take a photo of their new friend: it should help them identify it more specifically later on in the process.

(REMEMBER: There is NO SUCH THING AS A BAD IDEA! Have fun and be present with Nature.)

**Research:** They can use a book or the internet to gain more knowledge about the flora, fauna, or element of nature they chose to get to know. Have students choose a couple of facts to incorporate into their poems.

**Edit:** Synthesize all of the information collected and write the poem.

1. Listen back through the recording and write down thoughts/phrases/words of note.
2. Were enough ideas collected to write a traditional Poem (with rhyme scheme and meter)? A Monologue? OR Maybe they were only able to capture a few meaningful ideas. Would the information collected be better suited for A List Poem? A Concrete Poem? Or A Free Verse Poem?
3. Have them map out their Soundscape and create a visual representation of what the poem might sound like when it's recited acappella (use your own symbols, or create a color code). Indicate: breath, rests, prolonged pauses, syllabic stress, volume, meter, etc.

**Create an Accompaniment Track: Crafting a Soundscape in GarageBand**

1. Record free verse
2. Add sounds soundscapes (provided mP3s and/or the student's own cell phone recordings)
3. Layer sounds, play around, record extra vocals, play with the mix, play with the levels, etc.

**Culminating Activity: Performance Task:**

Students will walk away with an original poem set to music.

In performance, students who would like, may also use movement to enhance the performance of their poem.

