

OBSERVE

NOTICE YOUR ENVIRONMENT



FACILITATOR GUIDE

GRADES: 6-12

TIME: 30 minutes

MATERIALS: Notice Your Environment worksheet, pencil, paper

Designers **observe** by looking and listening carefully. This helps them understand how people, places, and things work.

PROCESS

1. SELECT AN ENVIRONMENT

As a class, choose a place nearby to observe, such as a hallway, playground, cafeteria, park, or neighborhood street.

When we observe our environment closely, we may gain a new perspective or notice things we hadn't seen before. Using the worksheet, ask students to take notes, voice memos, or sketch what they notice. How are people using the space? What behaviors do you notice? How might the weather, day of the week, or other factors impact this place?

2. DEVELOP QUESTIONS

Ask students to come up with 3-5 questions they have based on their observations. What do they want to know more about?

Ex: I noticed that people stand under the trees near the bus stop. Why are people gathering there?

3. SHARE

In groups, ask student to share their observations and questions, or use sticky notes on a board for larger group discussion. What do we want to learn more about?

4. REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Why might observation be important before beginning to work on an idea or design?
What are the limitations of observation? What other types of research would be useful to us?

SCAFFOLDING

- **Gradual Release:** Model and complete an observation cycle as a class before having students observe on their own
- **Think Aloud:** Model your thought process as you're noticing, and asking questions
- **Group Work:** Group students and assign each group each a different location to observe.

EXTENSIONS

- Introduce additional recording methods for observation: field recordings, photos, texture rubbings.
- Create a class collage of observational drawings.
- Read observation poems—like “After Work” by Richard Jones. Have students write their own poems.

LEARNING STANDARDS

ELA (CCSS)

- SL.6.4, SL.7.4, SL.8.4, SL.9-10.4, SL.11-12.4: Present claims and findings clearly.
- WHST.6-8.8, WHST.9-10.8, WHST.11-12.8: Gather and evaluate information from multiple sources.
- WHST.6-8.9, WHST.9-10.9, WHST.11-12.9: Draw evidence from sources for analysis, reflection, and research.

Science & Engineering (NGSS)

- MS-ETS1-1: Define criteria and constraints of a design problem.
- HS-ETS1-1: Analyze a complex challenge to identify criteria and constraints for potential solutions.

Visual Arts (National Core Arts Standards)

- VA:Cr1.2.6.a; VA:Re.7.1.6.a; VA:Cn10.1.6.a
- VA:Cr1.2.7.a; VA:Re.7.1.7.a; VA:Cn10.1.7.a
- VA:Cr1.2.8.a; VA:Re.7.1.8.a; VA:Cn10.1.8.a
- VA:Cr1.2.HSI.a; VA:Re.7.1.HSI.a; VA:Cn10.1.HSI.a
- VA:Re.7.1.HSII.a; VA:Cn10.1.HSII.a
- VA:Cr1.1.HSIII.a; VA:Re.7.1.HSIII.a; VA:Cn10.1.HSIII.a
- Students investigate the world through observation, questioning, inquiry, and connections to personal experience, context, and broader ideas.