



Science Essential Standards:

- Relevant to grades 3-5, depending on questions used by teacher

Time:

15 minutes

Audience:

3rd, 4th, or 5th grade

Learning Objective:

This is an icebreaker activity to get students moving and thinking about experiences they may have had in nature.

Materials:

- questions to be used
- vocabulary words (optional)

Vocabulary:

dependent on questions asked

Preparation:

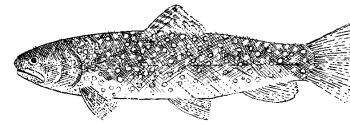
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the area in which you will be teaching.
- ✓ Check for poison ivy, jagged rocks & other safety concerns.
- ✓ Gather the materials needed for the lesson.
- ✓ Decide which variation you want to use and materials needed.
- ✓ Know how many students are in your group.

Instructions:

1. Greet the students and explain the **learning objective** for this activity.
2. Have students form a circle so that they are standing shoulder length apart. Make sure that all the students can see you when you are speaking.
3. Explain that we will be asking yes or no questions about different experiences exploring the outdoors.
4. Ask for one student to stand at the center of the circle or a certain marked spot in the circle. This person will call out the experience.
5. Give an example like **“Have you ever seen the moon?”**.
6. The student calling out the experience can either make one up, or you can provide them with an experience to read out.
7. If the item does apply to you (your answer is “yes”), **you move to a new spot in the circle.**
8. If the item does not apply (your answer is “no”), **you do not move to a new spot in the circle.**
9. Variations:
 - a. Instead of one student calling out all of the experiences, you can alternate students. If a student answered “yes” to the previous experience, they can be picked to read the next experience.
 - b. Instead of standing in a circle, students could move to different areas for “yes” or “no”. If the item does apply to you (your answer is “yes”), then move to the right side of the outdoor area or room you are in. If the item does not apply, then move to the left side of the outdoor area or room.
 - c. The teacher can give students strips of paper with an experience written on it for them to read out loud.
 - d. Students can come up with relevant experiences to the park or a given topic.
 - e. Give students a vocabulary work and ask for them to include it with their experience. For example, if the vocabulary word was **producer**, they could say “Have you ever eaten a **producer**?”

10. Generic example questions: Have you ever ... ?

- Found a bird's nest?
- Watched a meteor shower or seen a "falling star"?
- Been fishing?
- Used binoculars?
- Gotten an itchy rash from poison ivy?
- Watched the sunrise?
- Spent time alone in the woods?
- Been canoeing?
- Experienced an earthquake?
- Used a compass?



Brook Trout

11. 3rd grade example questions: Have you ever ... ?

- Visited a North Carolina river?
- Swam in the ocean?
- Visited the North Carolina mountains?
- Seen fish swimming in saltwater?
- Seen fish swimming in freshwater?
- Smelled a flower?
- Planted a flower?
- Dug in the dirt?
- Watched a butterfly drink nectar from a flower?



Tiger Swallowtail

12. 4th grade example questions: Have you ever ... ?

- Seen an animal camouflaged?
- Watched a bird make a nest?
- Seen a beaver dam?
- Seen ducks or geese migrating?
- Watched a squirrel bury a nut or seed?
- Eaten a mineral?
- Found a rock or mineral in a stream?
- Seen layers of rock?
- Taught an animal to do something that you asked?

13. 5th grade example questions: Have you ever ... ?

- Seen a predator catch its prey?
- Seen mushrooms or fungi?
- Looked under a fallen log?
- Visited a forest ecosystem?
- Heard hail hitting the ground?
- Swam in a lake?
- Watched clouds pass by?
- Played in the snow?

Behavior & Materials Management Tips:

- ◆ Remind students that only **one person** will be sharing an experience at a time.
- ◆ **Model the behavior** to the students exactly how you expect them to behave.
 - Students are more likely to meet expectations if have clearly been shown what they are.
 - Having the students then model the behavior for you reinforces the behavior.

Credits:

Illustrations by Cindie Brunner.

Header photo of the Neuse River by Lauren Greene at Cliffs of the Neuse State Park on March 6, 2020.

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Watched a meteor shower or seen a "falling star"?

Been fishing?

Used binoculars?

Gotten an itchy rash from poison ivy?

Watched the sunrise?

Spent time alone in the woods?

Been canoeing?

Experienced an earthquake?

Used a compass?



3rd Grade Example Questions

Visited a North Carolina river?

Swam in the ocean?

Visited the North Carolina mountains?

Seen fish swimming in saltwater?

Seen fish swimming in freshwater?

Smelled a flower?

Planted a flower?

Dug in the dirt?

Watched a butterfly drink nectar from a flower?



4th Grade Example Questions:

Seen an animal camouflaged?

Watched a bird make a nest?

Seen a beaver dam?

Seen ducks or geese migrating?

Watched a squirrel bury a nut or seed?

Eaten a mineral?

Found a rock or mineral in a stream?

Seen layers of rock?

Taught an animal to do something that you asked?



5th Grade Example Questions:

Seen a predator catch its prey?

Seen mushrooms or fungi?

Looked under a fallen log?

Visited a forest ecosystem?

Heard hail hitting the ground?

Swam in a lake?

Watched clouds pass by?

Played in the snow?