



Nature Nearby

Ways to Explore Outdoors with Students

by Marcie Flinchum Atkins

Take Your Notebooks into Nature

Being outside and paying attention can inspire awe and wonder in students (and in us). Students can take their notebooks outside. Have them draw what they see or write down things they notice. They can use what they jotted to craft a haiku.

Set Up a Poetry Garden

If you have garden or green spaces at your school, set up poetry stations on old yard signs for students to explore while being outside. They could write a color poem, a haiku, a sound poem, or a list poem. [Sample stations can be viewed here.](#)

Create a Window Station

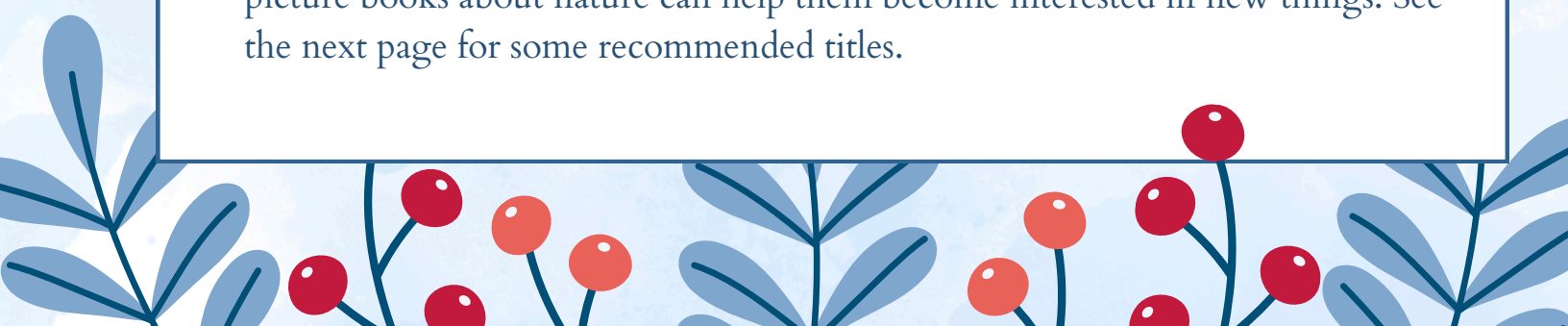
If you have a window, set up a space where students can pay attention to the outside. Provide binoculars and field guides. If they notice something new, they can look for it in a field guide. Local used bookstores often have field guides.

Bring the Outside In

Setting up herbs or other plants that are easy to care for in a windowsill can help students pay attention to smells and textures up close. Collect leaves or acorns or other seasonal things and bring them inside. They can study them up close with magnifying glasses.

Read Nature Books

Have nature books on hand for students to explore. Some browseable books, like field guides, can help students learn the names of things in nature. Other picture books about nature can help them become interested in new things. See the next page for some recommended titles.



Nature Books

Autumn

by Alexander Posey, illus. by Paige Pettibon

Awesome Earth

by Joan Bransfield Graham, illus. by Tania Garcia

Drawing Outdoors

by Jairo Buitrago, illus. by Rafael Yockteng

Firefly Song

by Colleen Paeff, illus. by Ji-Hyuk Kim

Harlem Grown

by Tony Hillery, illus. by Jessie Hartland

Hello, Puddle

by Anita Sanchez, illus. by Luisa Uribe

Jumper

by Jessica Lanan

Mushroom Rain

by Laura K. Zimmerman, illus. by Jamie Green

A Rock is Born

by Richard Ho, illus. by Lily Williams

We are Starlings

by Robert Furrow & Donna Jo Napoli, illus. by Marc Martin

Wind is a Dance

by Debra Kempf Shumaker, illus. by Josee Bisailon

