

Details

- 🌐 Either
- 🕒 More than a week/Full Year
- ✅ Download Share and Remix
- ✍ Middle School and Up

Finding your Sixth Sense: Connecting to Place

Overview

“A sense of place is the sixth sense, an internal compass and map made by memory and special perception together.” –Rebecca Solnit

This lesson allows students to record observations from a specific “sit spot” that they will visit on weekly nature hikes. Students will note seasonal changes of the area including its wildlife, flora and fauna, using repeat photography and journaling. At the end of the year, students will compile the photos into a slideshow and compose a short piece of writing that showcases an aspect of their sit spot area.

Objectives

Students should be able to:

- Connect with a specific spot and identify seasonal changes.
- Describe what repeat photography is and how it is used for scientific analysis.
- Record weekly observations such as seasonal changes and various animals, flora and fauna found in their sit spot.
- Compose a short story, poem, narrative, or informational piece about sit spot by incorporating their observations and sketches from their nature journals showing the connections they’ve made to this specific spot and value it holds.

Lesson Preparation

- Introduce repeat photography. See “An Introduction to Repeat Photography” lesson plan.
- Review use of GPS to record a coordinate and find a coordinate.
- Review nature journal assignment.

Materials

- Nature Journal
- Pencils
- Camera
- Thumb drive (to keep photos on)
- GPS unit
- Nature Journal assignment and rubric
- Identification books (plants, birds, animal tracks for example)
- Time to go for weekly hikes to sit spot

- Review plant identification.

Procedure

1. Begin by answering the question: What is repeat photography and how can it be used for scientific analysis? Use the lesson plan “An Introduction to Repeat Photography” to introduce students to the value of repeat photography to analyze for climate change.
2. Take students to the woods to locate their sit spots and use GPS to record the coordinates and revisit the spot weekly throughout the year.
3. Introduce nature journal assignment.
4. Introduce final sit spot story writing assignment and rubric. Introduce final slideshow assignment.

Extension Activities

- Write a letter to the borough mayor, newspaper editorial, or other about the importance of your sit spot area.
- Discuss, debate, and evaluate the changes to your sit spot and decide if they are due to impacts of climate change. If so, predict how your spot will change in the future.
- Publish your sit spot story to a local newspaper, school website, or other.
- Evaluate soils in sit spot areas: this could include installation of a permafrost tube
- Find a sit spot at home and compare observations to repeat photos of your area and discuss changes.

Resources

- [“An Introduction to Repeat Photography” Lesson Plan](#) by Julia West
- [Denali Repeat Photos](#)
- [NPS Land Change Virtual Tour](#)
- Allen, Betencourt, Swetnam, 1997. [Southwestern US LUHNA pilot project](#)
- [USGS Repeat Photography Project](#)
- [AK Dept of Fish and Game](#)
- Local plant, animal, track reference guide books

Assessment

- Nature Journal
- Sit Spot Story
- Slideshow

Author / Credits

Rebecca Hansen and Lisa Beattie created this lesson plan as a capstone project for the 2015

teacher training course entitled: Climate Change: Seeing, Understanding, and Teaching, held in Denali National Park. The course is facilitated by the Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S. (ARCUS) in partnership with Alaska Geographic and the National Park Service. They adapted it from “An Introduction to Repeat Photography” by Julia West’s 2013 Climate Change Capstone Project.

File Attachments

- Nature Journal Assignment/Rubric (includes how to make scientific observations)
- Final Sit Spot Assignment/Rubric
- Final Slideshow assignment/Rubric

Standards

(1) Alaska Writing Standard Grades 6-12: 10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

(2) Alaska Writing Standard Grades 6-12: 2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

(3) Alaska Writing Standard Grades 6-12: 7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

(4) Alaska State Geography Standard F: A Student should be able to use geography to understand the world by interpreting the past, knowing the present, and preparing for the future.

(5) Alaska State Science Standard A1: Science as Inquiry and Process

[7] SA1.1 asking questions, predicting, observing, describing, measuring, classifying, making generalizations, inferring, and communicating.

[7] SA3.1 designing and conducting a simple investigation about the local environment.