



Explore.org's Classroom Toolkit includes eight fun, nature-themed lessons which can be taught and experienced on Explore.org's live-streaming nature cam network. From mindfulness to values, nature is a key component to helping provide calm and modeling values such as perseverance, respect, and cooperation.

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MINDFULNESS

Go with the FLOW-ga



Download this
Toolkit at:



Go with the FLOW-ga

Grade Level: 3rd – 6th Grade

Time Needed: 30 Minutes

Materials Needed:

- Explore.org Livestream Videos:
 1. <https://explore.org/livecams/hawaii/hawaii-waimea-bay-cam>
 2. <https://explore.org/livecams/oceans/channel-islandsnational-park-anacapa-ocean>
 3. <https://explore.org/livecams/zen-den/live-redwood-cam-1>
 4. <https://explore.org/livecams/africam/lisbon-falls>
- Yoga mats or a comfortable place to do yoga on such as a rug or towel
- Computer that has access to the internet
- Projector and screen
- Speaker for sound

Objectives: Students will practice mindfulness and stress management through breathing and basic yoga, while engaging with calming nature scenes.

Essential Question: How can connecting our breath and movement with nature help us feel calm, focused, and strong?

Directions:

Introduction:

Turn & Talk (5 mins)

- What are some things you like to do to relax or unwind when you are overwhelmed?
- (Share out and teacher makes a list on the board.)
- What do you notice about this list? Are there any similarities? Are there themes of water or nature on your list?
- Why do you think being in nature or near water helps people feel calm?

Activity:

“Raise your hand if you have ever done any breathing exercises or yoga to relax. Today we are going to do some breathing exercises and yoga while watching some relaxing nature videos from Explore.org. By practicing mindful breathing and doing yoga, it is just one way that can help reduce stress and anxiety, making you feel happier, think more clearly, and helps you stay calm. Before we begin, check in with yourself right now: how are you feeling? We will revisit this question at the end of today’s yoga and breathing.”

(1 min)

Breathing Exercises (2-3 mins)

<https://explore.org/livecams/hawaii/hawaii-waimea-bay-cam>

Turn off the lights, and while watching the ocean waves in Waimea Bay guide students in slow, deep breaths. Make sure students are in a comfortable seated position.

1. Inhale through the nose (count to 4)
2. Hold the breath in for 2 seconds
3. Exhale through the mouth letting your breath crash like a wave (count to 6)
4. Repeat several times, after guiding the group you can let students do it on their own

Yoga Flow (15-20 mins)

<https://explore.org/livecams/oceans/channel-islands-national-park-anacapa-ocean>

"Let's now move through some yoga poses while watching the peaceful underwater world in (what is the best underwater video for this?). Remember to breathe as we are doing each pose and to try to calm your mind. Focus on your breath listening to the sounds of the video, and watch the beautiful underwater scene."

Reminders:

1. Breathe deeply in each pose.
2. Move slowly and with control.
3. Pause for a few breaths in each pose.
4. Hold each pose for however long you'd like.
5. Repeat any poses if necessary.

Cat/Cow (2-3 mins)

Get down to the ground on all fours. Breathe in, lift your head up to the sky and arch your spine for like a sea turtle coming out of its shell. Hold your breath in and then exhale while rounding your spine and bringing your head down and back into your shell. Repeat as necessary.

Downward Dog (1-2 mins)

Now, move into Downward Dog. From Cat and Cow, bring your knees off the ground, and hips up high like you're a dolphin diving into the ocean. After holding this pose for however long (don't forget to breathe!), walk or jump up to your hands and slowly roll your body up, one vertebra at a time. Reach up high above you, stretch outward, and then bring your hands together at your heart.

Forward Fold (1-2 mins)

Now, fold forward reaching down as far as you can go with your hands to your toes. Let your head and your neck relax like you are weightless in the ocean.

Rag Doll (1-2 mins)

While in forward fold, grab your elbows with each hand, let your upper body go limp, and gently sway side to side like seaweed or kelp underwater. After holding this pose for a few breaths slowly roll your body up, one vertebra at a time. Reach up high above you, stretch outward, and bring your hands together at your heart. Pause, and take a few more breaths here.

"I am now going to play a video of the beautiful Redwood Forest River while we do these last few yoga poses."

<https://explore.org/livecams/zen-den/live-redwood-cam-1>

Tree Pose (3-4 mins)

Stand up tall like a tree and bend one leg up like a branch. Place your foot on your thigh above your knee and balance on one foot. Bring your hands to your heart or bring them up high and outward like tree branches. Take several deep breaths here and then switch to the other leg. Slowly, bring your foot down.

Happy Baby (2-3 mins)

Lie on your back and grab your feet. Rock back and forth like a boat hitting gentle waves. Remember to breathe and relax.

Shavasana (3-4 mins)

<https://explore.org/livecams/africam/lisbon-falls>

"Now, lie down on your back with your arms at your side. Close your eyes and listen to the soothing sounds of the Lisbon waterfall in South Africa. Inhale like mist rising to the sky and exhale like water flowing down the cliffside. Stay here and guide your own breathing. I will let you know when it's time to open your eyes."

Reflection (1 min):**Turn & Talk:**

- "Open your eyes and come to a seated position. How are you feeling now? Any different than at the beginning?"
- Allow time for a brief share-out.



MINDFULNESS

“Leaf” Your Worries Behind



Download this
Toolkit at:



“Leaf” Your Worries Behind

Grade Level: 3rd – 6th Grade

Time Needed: 30 Minutes

Materials Needed:

- AfriCAM watering hole video*

**Teachers: These are livestreamed from around the world. Depending on the time of day, animals may not be visible. Preview links to see which feed will work best for your class time. Livestreams also can rewind up to 12 hours—find a spot in daylight that shows animals at the watering hole. Below are links to try:*

- <https://explore.org/livecams/african-wildlife/tembe-elephant-park>
- <https://explore.org/livecams/african-wildlife/african-watering-hole-animal-camera>
- <https://explore.org/livecams/african-wildlife/naledi-cat-eye>
- <https://explore.org/livecams/african-wildlife/africam-shows>

OR

- “Elephant at Watering Hole—Antidote to Stress”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LjxqGKV5CU&t=2s>
- Computer that has access to the internet
- Projector and screen
- Speaker for sound
- Writing utensils
- Printed out worksheets (**Option A or Option B**)
- Scissors (**Optional**)
- Mason jar with a lid (**Optional**)
- (**Eco-Friendly Option C**) Real leaves collected during a nature walk or pre-collected for classroom use

Objective: Students will utilize self-reflection to identify personal worries and employ a strategy and use a mindfulness-based strategy to symbolically release them.

Essential Questions:

- What is mindfulness, and how can we implement it in our daily lives?
- How can mindfulness help us worry less?

Directions:

Introduction (5 Mins)

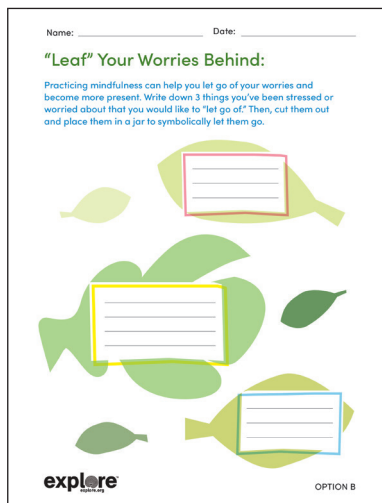
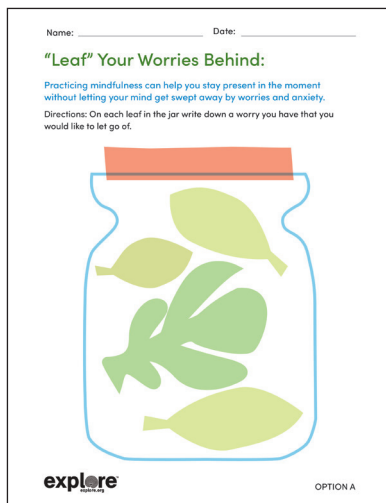
- “Today we will be observing a watering hole in Africa. As we are silently watching for about 5 minutes I want you to think about ‘*What do you notice?*’ and ‘*What do you wonder?*’ Then, we will discuss our observations afterwards.”
- Silently view one of the AfriCAM videos from [Explore.org](https://explore.org).

Class Discussion: Understanding Worries (10 Mins)

- “Early in the morning animals come out of hiding to come to the watering hole to get a drink, take a bath, or to cool off. All animals have to come to the water source at some point because water is vital for life. Water is the foundation for all life here on Earth.”
 - *What kind of animals in Africa did you see coming to the watering hole? What are some animals that you don’t see that might come to these watering holes? Prey? Predators?*
- “Prey are at their most vulnerable state being seen at the watering hole and predators are often lingering nearby as they know at some point all animals need water.”
 - *What do you think these animals are feeling inside when they are at the watering hole?*
- “All of these animals at some point have to let go of their worries and enjoy the moment: a drink, a bath, or to cool off. We can do the same thing through mindfulness. Mindfulness can have huge benefits to our mental health.”
 - *What is a worry and who has them? Can you think of a worry you have right now?*
- “A worry is anxiety about the future or a current problem you are facing. Just like these animals we can have worries, but we don’t have to let those worries consume us. Sometimes it’s more beneficial to let them go for the time being especially when they are worries that we don’t have control over.” *[Give some examples of worries you can control or cannot control. Students can offer examples as well.]*

“Leaf” Your Worries Behind Activity (10-15 mins)

- “Now we will be thinking about our own personal worries that we have and you will be writing them down on a leaf. We will then symbolically let our worries go. While you are working I will be showing a livestream of _____ which can always help to improve our mood!”
 - **Puppies:**
 - <https://explore.org/livecams/warrior-canineconnection/service-puppy-cam>
 - <https://explore.org/livecams/dog-bless-you/nec-puppy-room>
 - **Kittens:**
 - <https://explore.org/livecams/kitten-rescue/kitten-rescue-cam>
 - <https://explore.org/livecams/kitten-rescue/kitten-rescue-babykittens>



- **For the Teacher: there are 3 options. Directions are on the worksheets.**
 - **Option A:** use a printed worksheet (no cutting or jar needed).
 - **Option B:** use a printed worksheet that requires cutting out paper leaves and placing them into a jar.
 - **Option C** (Eco-friendly): Use real leaves gathered on a nature walk or pre-collect them for students to write their worries on. Then, you can symbolically release them into the wind or bury them underground.
 - *Note: Some students may prefer to keep their worries private. Options B and C work best for anonymity.*

Exit Ticket/Reflection (5 mins)

- Fast-Finishers can write in their journal using these prompts:
 - Are the worries you wrote down in your control or out of your control?
 - If they are in your control, what can you do to help yourself worry less? Can you set a goal?
 - What are some other healthy strategies you have tried to help relieve stress?

Name: _____

Date: _____

“Leaf” Your Worries Behind:

Practicing mindfulness can help you stay present in the moment without letting your mind get swept away by worries and anxiety.

Directions: On each leaf in the jar write down a worry you have that you would like to let go of.



Name: _____

Date: _____

“Leaf” Your Worries Behind:

Practicing mindfulness can help you let go of your worries and become more present. Write down 3 things you’ve been stressed or worried about that you would like to “let go of.” Then, cut them out and place them in a jar to symbolically let them go.





MINDFULNESS

Take a Hike...into Mindfulness



Download this
Toolkit at:



Take a Hike...into Mindfulness

Grade Level: 3rd – 6th Grade

Time Needed: 30 Minutes

Materials Needed:

- Any of the livestream videos from [Explore.org](https://www.explore.org)
- Computer that has access to the internet
- Projector and screen
- Speaker for sound
- Printed and cut-out “Mindfulness Rocks” baseball card worksheet (preferably on cardstock)
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons
- (Optional Activity) Smooth Rocks and permanent markers/paint pens

Objective: Students will practice mindfulness by engaging their five senses, helping to calm both body and mind.

Essential Questions:

What is mindfulness, and how can we implement it in our daily lives?

What benefits does mindfulness provide?

Directions:

Introduction (2 mins)

- **Say to your students:** *“Today’s lesson is about practicing **mindfulness**. What do you already know about mindfulness?”*
 - (Either make a list on the board, or have them turn and talk with a partner and then share out)
- *“Mindfulness is the practice of focusing on the present moment—rather than dwelling on the past or future—and letting go of unhelpful thoughts, worries, and emotions. Practicing mindfulness can reduce stress and improve mental health.”*
- *“Check in with yourself: how are you feeling at this moment?”* (Share with a partner)
- *“Today we are going to practice some mindfulness techniques by going on an imaginary hike—right from our seats! We will be using our five senses while watching a livestream nature or animal videos from Explore.org. Can you name all five senses?”* (call on students to share)

Explore 5 Senses/Watch Video (10 mins)

- Choose one of the example video/livestream links above under “Materials Needed” or choose your own from [Explore.org](https://www.explore.org).
- Instruct students to watch silently and observe while seated comfortably.
- Begin with 1-2 minutes of guided deep breathing to help students relax.

Use these following prompts to help guide your imaginary sensory hike:

- **Sight:** What do you see? Are there animals? If so, what are they doing? What does the environment look like? Look at all corners of the screen—what else do you notice?
- **Sound:** Close your eyes and focus on the sound. Are there animals or insects making noise that you didn’t notice before? What other sounds from nature can you hear? Can you hear wind or water? Does it have rhythm? Is it loud or soft?
- **Touch:** Open your eyes and imagine if you were there. What might it feel like? Would it be cold, hot, humid or dry? What could you pick up and put into your hands and touch? What texture would it have?
- **Smell:** Imagine you were there—what might you smell? Can you smell the ocean breeze? The fresh smell of rain on plants? What would the ground smell like?
- **Taste:** Imagine you were there. What might the air taste like? Cool and crisp? Salty? Fresh?

Quick Group Reflection/Class Discussion (3 mins):

- How did this activity make you feel?
- How did using your senses on this imaginary hike help you to feel more present?”

Mindfulness Rocks – Literally! (10 mins)

- Have a quick class brainstorm to create a word pile of one-word reflections related to mindfulness. (*Examples: Breathe, Calm, Stillness, Peace, Patience, Focus, Presence, etc.*)
- Students will then choose a word that resonates with them and write it on their small Mindfulness Rocks! baseball card. They can decorate as they wish.
- These cards can:
 - Be kept in a pocket or folder as a calming reminder.
 - Be collected to create a class calming card deck for students to use when they are stressed.
- Fast-finishers can work on the exit ticket questions in their journals.

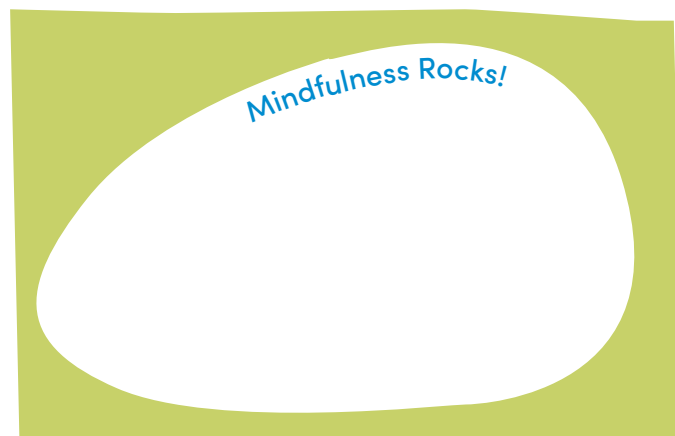
Exit Ticket: (5 mins)

In a journal, respond to the following questions:

1. How did focusing on one sense help your sense of calm?
2. Was there a certain sense that helped you feel more present or calm than the others?
3. When might you use this mindfulness technique in your own life?

Optional Extension Activity: Outdoor Mindfulness Walk

- Take a real hike around your school grounds or nearby nature area.
- Instruct students to use one sense at each stopping point (sight, listening, touch, smell, taste).
- Have students journal their observations. Students can compare their findings when they are back in the classroom.
- Collect any smooth rocks on the hike. Once back in class write one mindfulness word on them with permanent markers or paint pens when back in the classroom. (i.e. Breathe, Calm, Stillness, Peace, Patience, etc.) Decorate the rocks then you can either hang onto them as a visual reminder of mindfulness, create a *Mindfulness Rocks! Garden*, or hide them around school grounds for others to find and be inspired!





MINDFULNESS

TUNE Into the Deep with Saint-Saëns



Download this
Toolkit at:



TUNE Into the Deep with Saint-Saëns

A Lesson Incorporating Music

Grade Level: 3rd – 6th Grade

Time Needed: 30 Minutes

Materials Needed:

- Aquarium Listening Map Video
- Listening Map Pages for Aquarium, A Set Printed for Each Student
- Computer that has access to the internet
- Projector and screen
- Speaker for sound
- Teacher selection of classical music, such as The Aquarium by Saint-Saëns
<https://open.spotify.com/artist/436sYg6CZhNefQJogaXeK0>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyFpZ5MZ7kk>

Videos:

- Select from <https://explore.org/search/aquarium>

Objectives: Students will engage in mindful listening by tracing a listening map with their fingers, deepening their awareness of musical elements such as form, dynamics, rhythm, and phrasing.

Essential Questions:

- How can listening to music help us focus, relax, and be more mindful?
- How does following a listening map change the way we listen to music?
- In what ways does this piece of music reflect the feelings and movements of being underwater?

Directions:

Introduction (5 mins):

Share this “Meet the Composer” slide on the projector and read it as a class:



Make this into a separate slide to share with students:

Meet the Composer!

Camille Saint-Saëns was a famous French composer who lived from 1835 until 1921. He is best known for his pieces “Carnival of the Animals” and “Danse Macabre”.

What is a composer?

A **composer** is to music what an author is to books. Just like authors write the words that readers read, composers write music that musicians play. They write their music down on paper (called sheet music), and that music can be performed again and again—even hundreds of years later! Thanks to written music, we can still hear pieces from long ago come to life today.

Carnival of the Animals

In Saint-Saëns’ piece “Carnival of the Animals” he chose 14 different animals to write short songs about—called movements. He wrote this music for two pianos and a chamber ensemble, which is a very small orchestra. In this particular ensemble he scored his piece for two pianos, two violins, viola, cello, double bass, flute, piccolo, clarinet, glass harmonica, and xylophone.

Each movement of the piece sounds like the animal in its title! For example, one movement is about Kangaroos and the piano sounds like it is hopping around. Another movement is about elephants and he uses a double bass in its low, deep voice to imitate a big elephant dancing.

Listening/Viewing: (20 min)

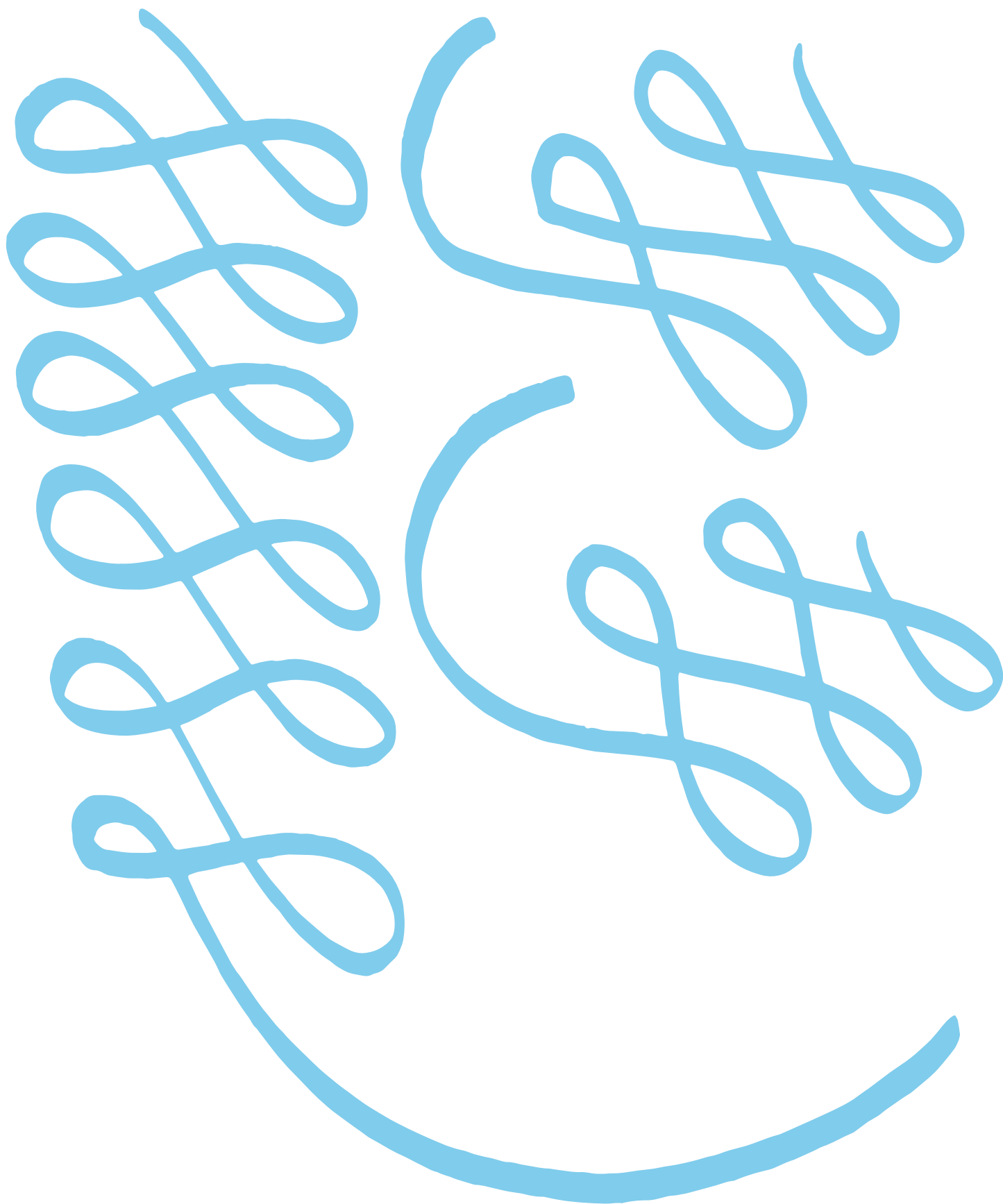
1. *"Today we are going to silently listen to one of the movements from Carnival of the Animals and based upon what you hear we will make guesses as to which animal Saint-Saëns wrote this one about."*
2. Listen to "Aquarium" by Saint-Saëns (but don't tell them the title). **(3 mins)**
3. What animal do you think this piece of music is about and why?
(Students raise hands to share.) **(3 mins)**
4. Then, play Explore.org Underwater Clip with "Aquarium" music **(3 mins)**
5. *"To help further guide our listening of this particular movement we are going to learn how to use a listening map. We are going to watch a video of one being used to this particular piece. I will be asking you some questions at the end so please pay attention."*
6. Play the "Aquarium Listening Map" Video **(3 mins)**
7. **"What did you notice?"** Here are some other suggested questions: **(5 mins)**
 - a. Did any sections repeat?
 - b. Why do you think some sections are in the same color and other sections are in a different color?
 - c. What do you think the shape of the line has to do with the music?
8. *"When sections repeat or are different in a piece of music this is called **form**. Some of the shapes of this listening map also denote **musical phrases**, which are like a musical sentence. We will now be tracing this listening map ourselves, trying to match the music with its style and rhythm."*
9. Pass out the listening maps to students.
10. Play the "Aquarium Listening Map" Video again while tracing along with their own listening maps. **(3 mins)**

Reflection/Exit Ticket: (5 mins)

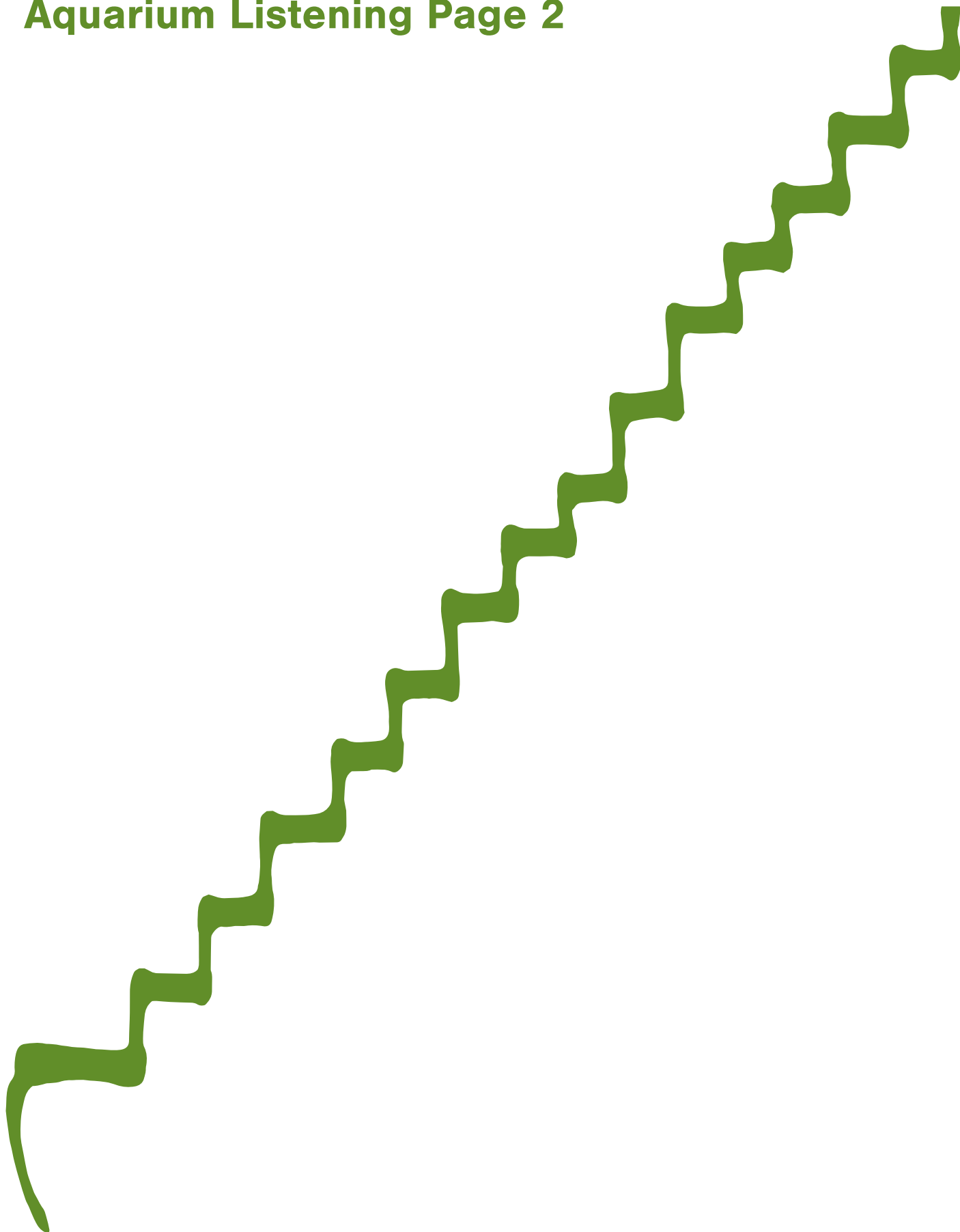
In a journal, answer the following questions:

- How can listening to music help us focus, relax, and be more mindful?
- How does following a listening map change the way we listen to music?
- In what ways does this piece of music reflect the feelings and movements of being underwater?

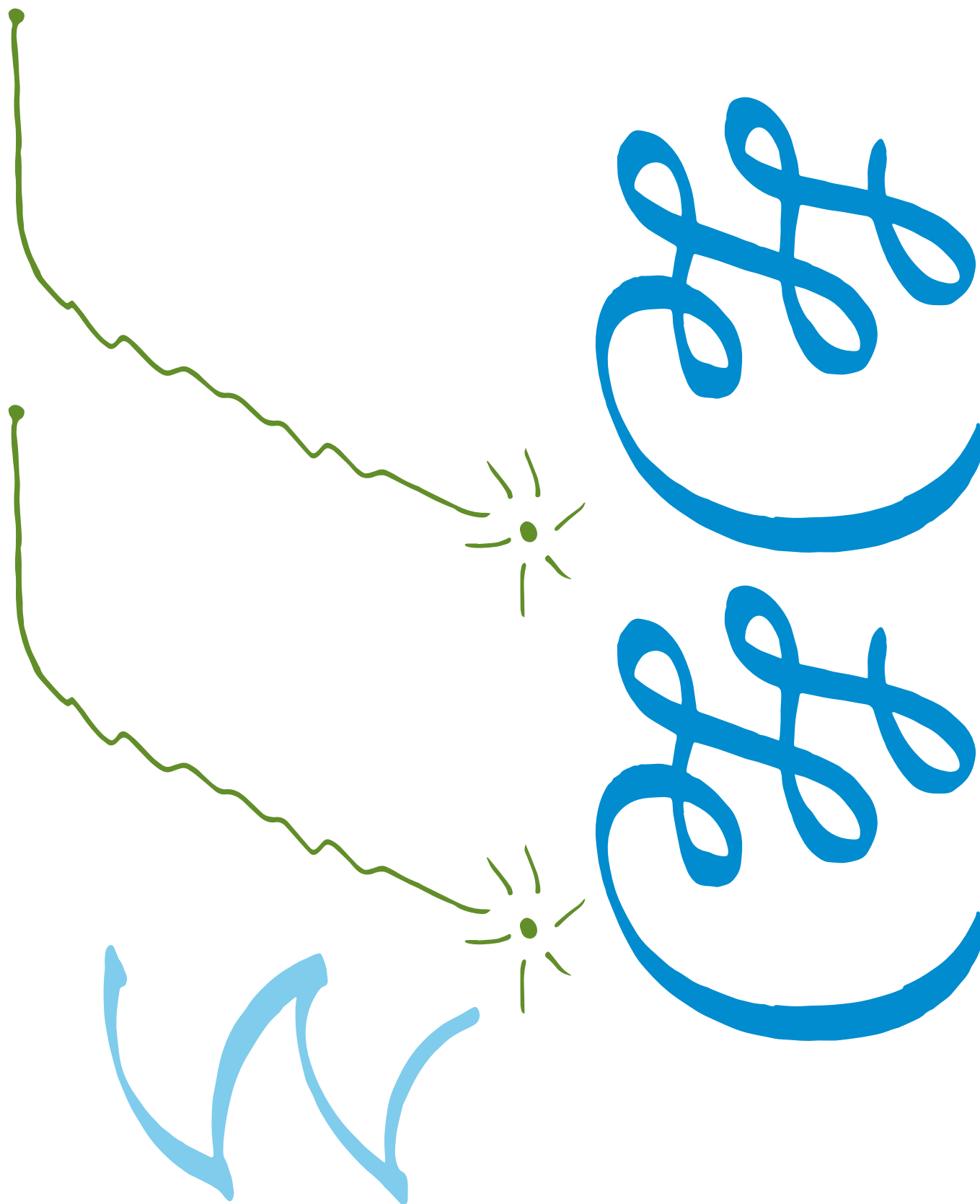
Aquarium Listening Page 1



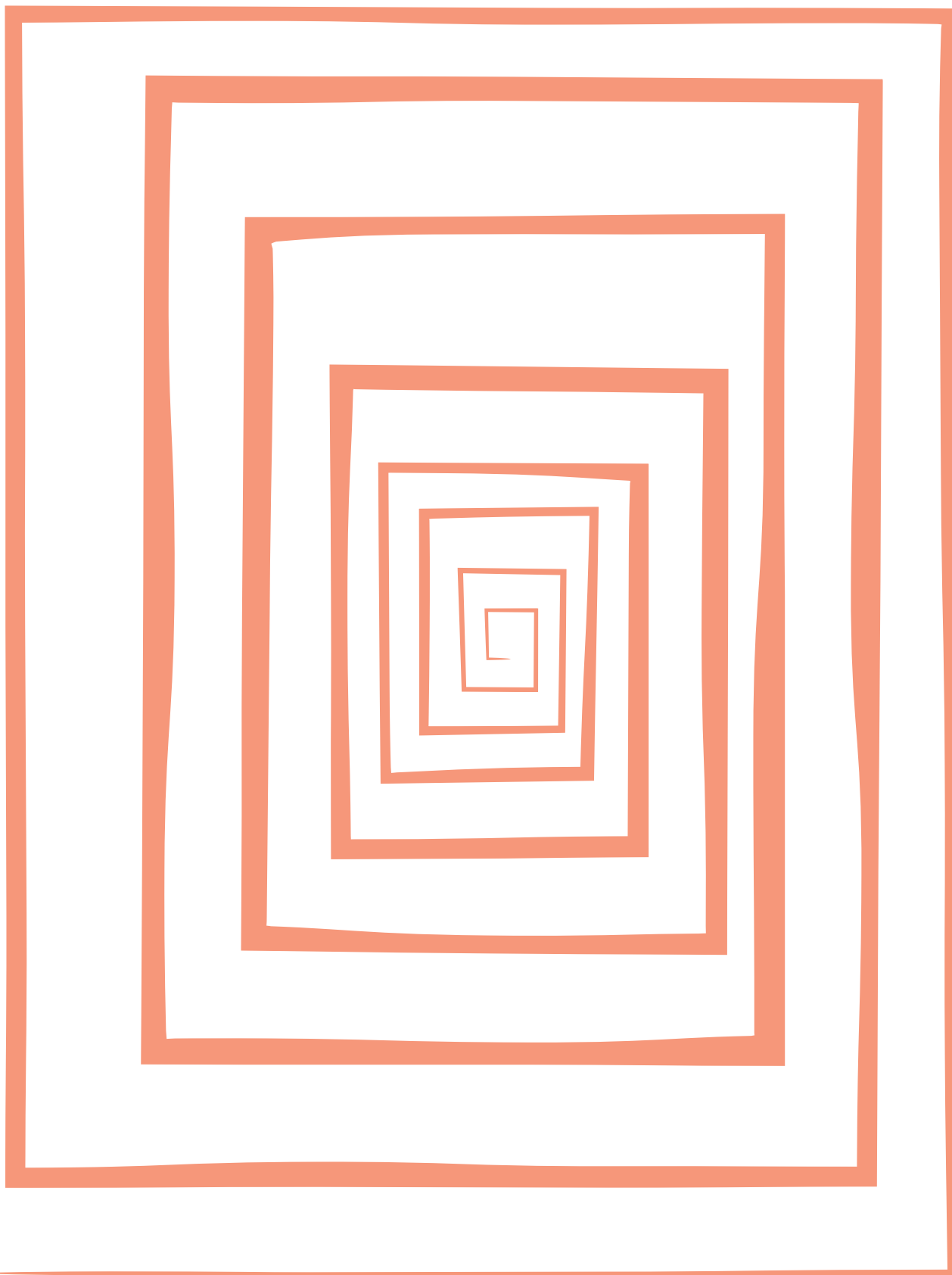
Aquarium Listening Page 2



Aquarium Listening Page 3



Aquarium Listening Page 4





PERSEVERANCE



Download this
Toolkit at:



3rd Grade Lesson: Keep Going

Featured cam: Tembe Elephant Park

Learning Objective

"I can learn to keep going and not give up, even when something is hard"

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students explore the value of perseverance, by observing the behaviors of the elephants and other animals at Tembe Elephant Park. Elephants model endurance, patience and determination offering a powerful parallel to the kinds of perseverance our students show in their own lives.

Materials Needed:

- Bark, small pebbles, twigs, leaves,
(or classroom equivalents; paper plates, cardboard bases, paper, cotton wool balls, pipe cleaners)
- Optional – glue or tape to secure items

Lesson Plan

1. Watch & Wonder (5 mins):

Gather students to quietly observe the Tembe Elephant Park cam for a few minutes.

Ask:

- What animals do you see?
- Are they doing anything that takes time or patience?
- What might make it hard to get water at a busy place like this?

2. Setting the Scene (5 mins)

Guided Visualization: *"Close your eyes. Take a deep breath in...and out.*

Now imagine you're a young elephant. You've just woken up under the shade of a tall tree. The air is warm, and the ground beneath your feet is dry and dusty. You hear the soft rumble of your family's footsteps—it's time to move.

You start walking. The sun gets hotter. Your legs feel heavy. It's a long way, and you're tired. But you keep going, step by step.

You stop sometimes to rest under a tree. You keep walking. You feel the strength of your herd beside you. They've done this before—and now it's your turn to try.

Finally, you reach the place you've been walking toward. You feel proud. You didn't rush. You didn't give up. You made it.

Ask:

- What did you see and feel during the journey?
- Was there a moment you wanted to stop? What helped you keep going?

3. Perseverance Path (15 mins)

Invite students to build a miniature journey path across their desk/bark/ plate using the natural or craft materials. As they build, encourage students to think about what it feels like to keep going when things are hard.

“What is your animal trying to reach at the end of the journey? What kinds of obstacles do they face—and how do they get through them? Where do they pause to gather strength? What helps them keep going, even when no one sees their effort?”

Instructions:

1. Give each student a piece of bark/paper plate/cardboard base as their landscape.
2. Invite them to build a miniature journey path across their plate using the natural or craft materials.
3. The path should include three key elements:
 - **“Struggle” Zones:** Represented by rough materials like small rocks, pointy twigs, or crumpled paper. These symbolize difficult moments or obstacles.
 - **“Resting” Spot:** A soft or open area made with leaves, cotton balls, or smooth surfaces to show moments of pause, reflection, or support.
 - **“Reward” or Goal:** The endpoint of the journey—this could be a tiny pond made of blue paper, a shiny stone, a nest, or any symbol of success or hope.

4. Reflection**Ask:**

- Can you think of a time that you had to keep trying, like the animals?
- What helped you keep going?
- What would your “perseverance path” look like in real life?

Learning Outcome

Students explore how perseverance is a journey by creating a path with challenges, resting spots and goals. Students understand that they can learn to follow the path and not give up even when things are hard, just like animals in the wild.

Optional Craft: “Growth Rings”

This activity helps students reflect on how perseverance builds over time—like the growth rings of a tree. Each ring represents a challenge faced, a lesson learned, or a quiet step forward. Students create symbolic tree “slices” that map out their personal perseverance journey.

Materials Needed:

- Circular pieces of cardboard or thick paper (cut into tree-slice shapes)
- Brown crayons, pencils, or paint
- Markers or fine-tip pens
- Optional: pressed leaves or bark pieces for decoration

Instructions:

1. Hand out a cardboard or thick paper circle to each student.
2. Students lightly draw concentric rings (like tree growth rings) across the circle.
3. In each ring, they write or illustrate a moment of perseverance—starting at the center with something small and recent, then gradually working outwards with bigger or longer-term examples, e.g. *“I kept practicing my times tables, even when I kept getting them wrong at first”, “I finished reading a chapter book, even though it was hard at the beginning”*
4. Encourage them to decorate the outer edge with natural patterns (bark textures, leaves, footprints) that connect to the idea of strength over time.
5. When finished, students can display their “Growth Rings” as visual maps of how they’ve quietly grown stronger.

4th Grade Lesson: The Waiting Game

Featured cams: Africams – South Africa, (Tau/Tembe)

Learning Objective

I can see how sometimes perseverance means waiting your turn, staying calm, and trying again—even when you really want something now.

Learning Overview

This lesson helps students explore perseverance by focusing on the patience and self-control animals demonstrate at a shared watering hole. After observing the web cams students participate in a movement-based simulation that mirrors the turn-taking behavior of various animals. Through this experience, they reflect on what it means to wait, try again, and stay calm when things don't happen right away.

Materials Needed:

- Paper or stickers for animal roles, cones or mats to mark 'watering hole' area.

Lesson Plan

1. Watch & Wonder (5 mins)

Gather students to quietly observe animals around the watering hole.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- Who arrived first?
- Do animals wait their turn or rush in?
- How do they show patience?
- What do you notice about how different animals behave?

2. Set the Scene (2 mins)

"Close your eyes and imagine you are deep in the heart of Africa. It's a hot, dusty day. You've walked a long way through the dry bush, and finally—you reach it—a life-giving watering hole. You're thirsty. But you're not alone. Other animals are gathering too: tall elephants, cheeky baboons, nervous antelope, bold birds, and even powerful lions.

But here's the thing—at the watering hole, there are unspoken rules. Every animal has to be patient. They all need water, but they take turns. They read each other's signals, wait for their moment, and learn that rushing in too fast can be dangerous or disruptive"

3. Animal Turn-Taking Simulation (15 mins)

"Now we're going to bring this scene to life. You'll each take on the role of an animal—and you'll need to show perseverance through patience, awareness, and turn-taking. Let's see how animals must be aware of others and practice patience. How does it feel to wait your turn? What helps you stay calm when you want to go now?"

Instructions:

1. Assign students different animal roles:
 - Elephants: Move first, take slow heavy steps, and stay calm.
 - Baboons: Must wait until all larger animals are done, can chatter but not push.
 - Antelope: Must stay on the outside, approach only when it's quiet, leave and return if startled.
 - Birds: Can swoop in quickly but only stay for 5 seconds.
 - Lions: Observe but must wait until all herbivores are gone.
2. Students act out their roles based on these rules.
3. Introduce 'challenges' (e.g., loud noise = antelope leave; crowding = everyone pauses) to simulate obstacles.

Let's see how animals must be aware of others and practice patience. How does it feel to wait your turn? What helps you stay calm when you want to go now?

4. Reflection (5 mins)**Ask:**

- Was it hard to wait? Why?
- How did you feel when it was finally your turn?
- What are some real-life moments when you've had to wait or try again?

Learning Outcome

Students will be able to identify how animals at Tau/Tembe watering hole demonstrate patience and turn-taking, and will reflect on how these behaviours relate to their own experiences and perseverance in real life.

Optional Craft: Perseverance Portraits

This craft helps us reflect on what perseverance looks like in the wild—and in ourselves. By creating an animal portrait that captures a moment of perseverance, we can connect our learning to creativity and express the strength it takes to keep going even when it's hard.

Materials Needed:

- Paper or cardstock, markers, crayons, colored pencils, optional mirrors or printed animal photos.

Instructions:

1. Students choose an animal they observed on the Tau/Tembe cam (or one they connected with in the simulation).
2. They create a stylized portrait of that animal showing a moment of perseverance—e.g. an elephant walking through dust, a zebra waiting patiently, a monkey watching quietly.
3. Around the border of their portrait, they write action words or short phrases that describe perseverance (e.g., “keep trying,” “stay calm,” “wait and watch,” “don’t give up”).

5th Grade Lesson: Built to Persevere

Featured cams: Africams – South Africa, (Tau/Tembe)

Learning Objective

“I can understand how perseverance helps us face challenges, solve problems, and keep trying—even when things don’t go as planned.

Learning Overview

In this lesson, students will explore how perseverance shows up in both nature and their own actions. Inspired by elephants who sometimes have to navigate getting through mud and rough terrain to reach water, students will work in teams to design and build a bridge that helps their elephant reach the other side. They will plan, test, fail, and try again—experiencing perseverance in action.

Materials Needed:

- Natural loose parts (twigs, stones, leaves, bark)
- Craft sticks, string, rubber bands, tape, cardboard strips (recycled materials welcome)
- Containers to represent a river or ‘mud patch’ (shoebox, tray, or floor space with tape)
- Small animal figurine or paper elephant cutout (1 per group)

Lesson Plan

1. Watch & Wonder (5 mins)

Begin by gathering students and quietly watching either the Tembe or Tau cam.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- What do you notice about how the elephants move through the environment?
- What obstacles do you think they may face in this terrain?
- Do you notice them trying more than once or choosing a new path?
- How do they show perseverance?

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Introduce students to the idea that elephants often have to cross tough terrain—mud, rivers, and more—to reach water. They use different strategies and may not succeed on the first try. Today, students will become elephant engineers, building their own crossing.

Guided visualization: “Close your eyes for a moment and imagine this...You are in Africa. The air is hot, and the ground beneath your feet is soft and muddy. You are a young elephant. You’ve been walking for hours, your big feet squishing into the earth, your ears flapping to cool you down. You can smell the water nearby, and you know your family is counting on you to keep going. But suddenly, you reach a wide patch of sticky mud or a flowing river—too deep and dangerous to cross easily. You pause. You can’t go around it. You can’t turn back. You need to figure out a way to get across. You try one step, and your foot sinks. You back up and try another route. Still no good. Maybe you stop and look at the trees around you—branches that could help you cross, rocks that could hold

your weight. You think, you try again, you ask for help. Bit by bit, step by step, you build your own path forward. And finally—you make it. Now, open your eyes.

Today, just like that elephant, you'll face a challenge that may not work out the first time. You'll need to think, test, work together—and most importantly—keep going. You are elephant engineers."

3. Build a Bridge (15 mins)

1. Divide students into small groups and give them a set of materials.
2. Explain the challenge: build a freestanding bridge that can hold an elephant figurine or token (to represent an elephant) across a river/mud patch.
3. Give 5 minutes to plan and sketch or discuss their design.
4. Build and test! If it fails, they revise and try again.
5. Optional: Each group presents their final design and demonstrates the crossing.

4. Reflection (5 mins)

- What part of your build didn't work at first?
- How did your team keep going?
- What helped you stay focused and try again?
- How does this remind you of what animals go through in the wild?

Learning Outcome

Students will be able to explain how perseverance involves trying again, learning from mistakes, and working through challenges—just like elephants do in the wild.

Optional Craft: Perseverance Path Beads

Students will create a symbolic bracelet or necklace that reflects each student's unique perseverance journey—challenges faced, lessons learned, goals set, and support received. This activity reinforces the idea that perseverance is built one step at a time, just like the long and steady journeys of elephants.

Materials Needed:

- String, twine, or yarn (bracelet or necklace length)
- Pony beads, wooden beads, nature beads, or painted pasta
- Optional: paper and markers for planning or labeling meanings

Instructions:

1. Give each student a piece of string and a selection of 5-7 beads.
2. Students choose beads to represent parts of their perseverance story. For example:
 - 1st bead = a challenge they've faced
 - 2nd = what helped them through it
 - 3rd = a lesson they learned
 - 4th = a goal they're still working toward
 - 5th = someone who supports them
 - Optional beads can represent symbols of strength, courage, or progress
3. Once all beads are added, students tie off their bracelet or necklace.
4. Students can take them home, wear them, or contribute to a class display titled 'Our Perseverance Paths'.

6th Grade Lesson: Quiet Strength – The Power of Sticking With It

Featured Cam: Tembe Elephant Park

Learning Objective

“I can recognize and describe the quiet ways people and animals show perseverance, and reflect on how I do this in my own life”

Lesson Overview

This lesson explores the quiet power of perseverance by observing animals in the wild, reflecting on personal experiences, and creating symbolic representations of persistence. Students will engage in partner storytelling and reflective writing, to honor the often unseen moments of determination in themselves and others.

Materials Needed:

- Paper and pens or tablets (for silent interviews)

Lesson Plan

1. Watch & Wonder (5 mins)

Gather students to quietly watch the Tembe Elephant Park cam together. As you watch, see if you can spot animals showing quiet strength — like sticking with something calmly or patiently even when no one’s watching.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- Which animals are calm but consistent in their actions?
- What small efforts do you notice that show perseverance?
- How do animals keep going even when things don’t go their way?

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Guided Visualization:

“Close your eyes and take a deep breath in...and out. Now picture a quiet savanna. The sun is rising slowly. You see a large animal—calm, steady—taking one step at a time across the land. No one is cheering them on. No one is watching. But still, they walk. They walk because something inside tells them to keep going—not loudly, not dramatically—just with strength and trust in the journey. As you breathe, think about a time when you’ve had to keep going, even if no one saw or said “well done.”

Open your eyes when you’re ready”

3. “What You Don’t See” – Silent Pair Interviews (15 mins)

Explain: Perseverance doesn’t always mean pushing loudly. Sometimes, the strongest thing you can do is keep going—quietly, calmly, and bravely—even when no one notices. What does your quiet strength look like?

Instructions:

- Students pair up and take turns sharing a quiet perseverance story—a time they had to keep trying or show strength without any recognition.
- Each partner listens carefully, without interrupting.
- After sharing, they write or draw a short summary of their partner’s story. This could be a comic strip, a journal entry, or a symbolic image that shows perseverance beneath the surface.
- Volunteers can share their partner’s story with the class – giving voice to the quiet efforts we often overlook.

4. Reflection (Discussion or Journaling – 5 mins)

Ask:

- What’s something you’ve done that took quiet persistence?
- Why do you think quiet effort is sometimes overlooked?
- How can we notice and celebrate the quiet perseverance we see in ourselves and others?

Learning Outcome

Students will be able to identify and describe examples of quiet perseverance in both the animal world and their own personal experiences. They will demonstrate their understanding through story telling and reflective discussions.

Optional Craft Activity: “Strength Stack” Accordion Book

This craft helps students visualize perseverance as a journey with stages — each one essential to the overall strength they build. The folds represent both setbacks and steps forward. This accordion book shows students how they move through different parts of the journey, even when no one else sees the effort.

Materials Needed:

- One sheet of paper
- Markers/colored pencils, pens

Instructions:

1. Give each student one sheet of paper and demonstrate how to fold it accordion-style (zig-zag).
2. On the front of each fold, they label a different stage of perseverance: Try Again, Rest and Regroup, Ask for Help, Keep Going.
3. Inside each fold, they illustrate or describe a moment (real or imagined) where they experienced that stage—either from personal experience or from the animal cam.
4. Decorate the cover and folds with symbols of strength: animal tracks, roots, stones, leaves, or quiet footsteps.



RESPECT



Download this
Toolkit at:



3rd Grade Lesson: Respecting Space

Featured Cam: Brooks Falls Brown Bears – Katmai National Park, Alaska

Learning Objective

“I can give others space and move through shared areas with care—even when I feel big emotions.”

Lesson Overview

At Brooks Falls, many brown bears gather in one place to fish for salmon. Bears are not naturally calm or social animals—sometimes they growl or swat if another bear gets too close. But to avoid constant conflict, they tolerate each other and show respect by giving space, waiting their turn, and choosing quiet areas to rest.

This lesson helps students explore the idea of respecting physical space in their own lives through role play and movement, learning that even when we feel strong emotions, we can choose to move respectfully and avoid causing harm.

Materials Needed:

- Painters tape/string/scarves to mark out ‘bear paths’
- Bean bags/cones – to mark starting points to path (6 feet apart)

Lesson Plan

1. Watch and Wonder (5-7 mins)

Begin by watching the bears interacting at the Brooks Falls Bear Cam. Ask students to watch closely and silently for a few minutes.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- How do the bears move around each other? Do they touch?
- What do you think the bears are feeling?
- Did you see any ‘bear signals’ that showed one bear was uncomfortable?
- What do you notice about how they share space near the water?

Explain that even though bears aren’t naturally friendly or social, they use body language to avoid conflict and stay safe. This is a powerful form of respect in the wild.

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Guided Visualization:

Let’s take a deep breath in...and let it out, and close your eyes. Now, imagine you’re standing quietly near Brooks Falls in Alaska.

The river is rushing, and big brown bears are everywhere. They’re here for one reason: to catch fish. These bears are wild and powerful. They growl if another bear gets too close. Sometimes they swat the air or chase each other off. But most of the time, they find their own space and keep a careful distance. They don’t all

like each other—but they tolerate one another because the falls are for everyone. You watch one bear wait on a rock. Another moves around him to avoid a fight. They don't hug or smile—but they respect each other's space. That's their way of getting along.

Now imagine you're one of the bears. You move slowly, watching others. You're aware of the space around you. You don't bump or push.

Take a deep breath in...and out. When you're ready, open your eyes.

Ask:

"How do we show respect with our bodies when we're walking through busy places/ playing in a busy play park/ crowded school yard, especially when we might feel annoyed or impatient?" Discuss and share ideas

3. Set Up the Bear Paths (5 mins) (see picture for guidance)

Use tape, yarn, or long scarves to create 3-4 winding "bear paths" across the room. Make sure paths occasionally cross each other or come close. Add 1-2 'quiet zones' with a stone or pinecone where bears can pause and rest.

This game helps students embody the concept of 'respecting space', by simulating how bears move around Brook Falls, students practice nonverbal communication, patience and spatial awareness - all key elements of respectful interactions.

4. Play Bear Path Movement Game (10-12 mins)

Students take turns walking the bear paths. Start with 112 students and gradually add more "bears."

Rules:

- Walk slowly and quietly—like a bear.
- If two paths cross, one bear should pause and use a quiet "paw signal" (raise hand) to show they are giving space.
- Students can also "rest" in the quiet zone if the paths feel too busy.
- Even if you're feeling squished or bothered, take a breath like a bear might do in the wild—pause, use your paw signal, and move with care.

Teacher Tips:

- Keep a calm tone to encourage mindfulness
- If energy rises, pause the game and reflect *"let's reset and try moving even more gently this time"*
- Narrate what you see *"I noticed Miles paused to let Callie pass - that's a great way to show respect"*

5. Reflection (5 mins)

After a few rounds, gather in a circle.

Ask:

- How did it feel when someone gave you space?
- Was it hard to wait or pause?
- How do you think the bears feel when it gets too crowded?
- What helped you remember to move respectfully?

Explain that like bears, people can use their bodies to show respect—through pausing, eye contact, and careful movement, even when we feel frustrated.

Learning Outcome

Students will practice respecting space in a physical, hands-on way and learn how to notice and respond to others non-verbally—even when feeling strong emotions.

Optional Craft: Bear Paw Prints of Respect

This reflective craft helps students physically represent what respect means to them in a symbolic and tactile way.

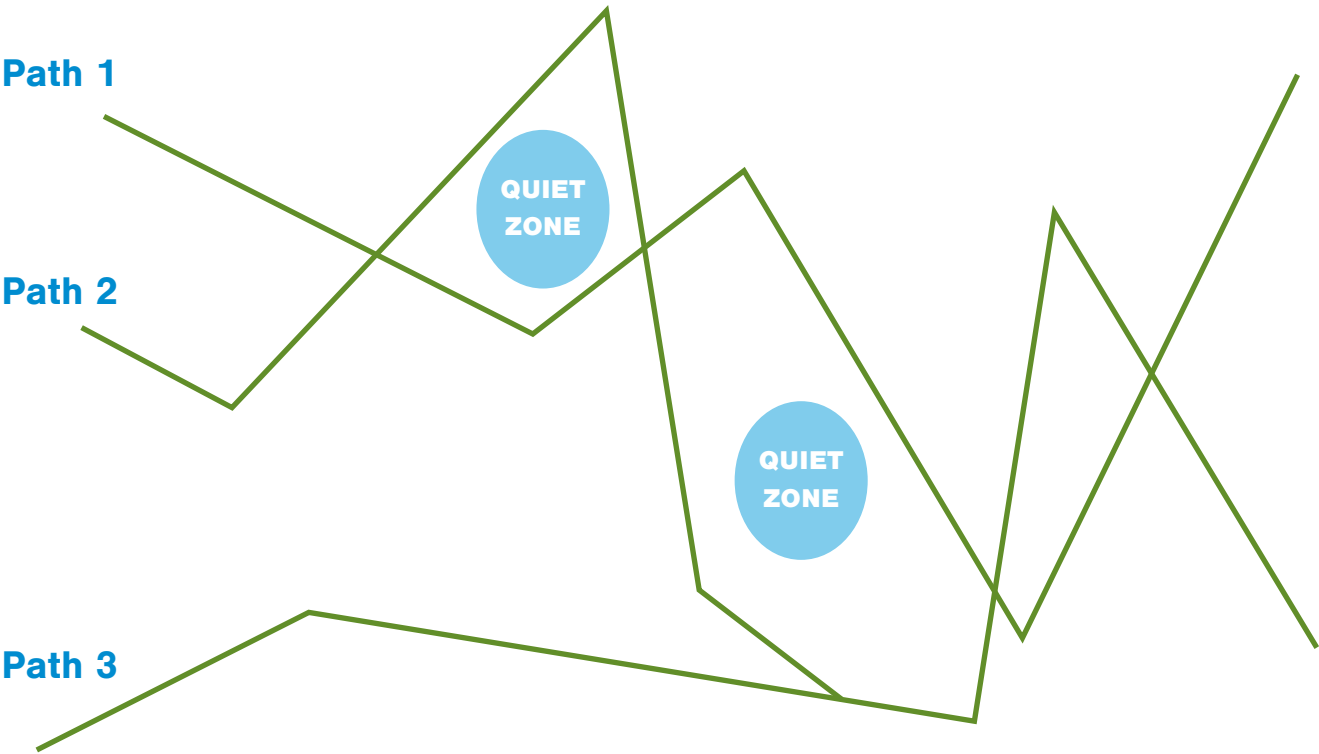
Materials Needed:

- Pre-cut felt or fabric in the shape of bear paws
- Natural markers (such as charcoal), or finger tracing for a no-mark version

Instructions:

1. Each student receives or helps cut out a bear paw shape from felt or soft fabric.
2. They think of one word that represents respect to them (like '*kind*,' '*gentle*,' '*wait*,' or '*space*').
3. They either say the word aloud, trace it with their finger, or mark it gently into the paw shape using a safe natural tool.
4. The paws are then placed along the 'bear trail' or taken home as reminders.

Bear Path Game



4th Grade Lesson: Respecting Needs Through Tolerance

Featured Cam: Brooks Falls Brown Bears – Katmai National Park, Alaska

Learning Objective

“I can show respect—even when I want the same thing someone else does—by giving space, being patient, and avoiding conflict.”

Lesson Overview

At Brooks Falls, bears often compete for the best fishing spots. They don’t always share—but they do practice tolerance. Larger bears take the best positions, and smaller or younger bears wait, move downstream, or give space. This lesson uses observation and roleplay to help students explore respect—not as politeness, but as the choice to avoid unnecessary conflict, give space, or wait their turn when needs clash.

Materials Needed:

- No special materials required

Lesson Plan

1. Watch & Wonder (5 mins)

Begin by watching a short clip from the Brooks Falls Bear Cam (live or recorded). Ask students to quietly observe the bears’ behavior.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- Do some bears wait while others fish?
- Do they share or stay apart?
- What happens when two bears want the same spot?

Discuss how the bears don’t always cooperate—but they usually avoid fighting. That’s a kind of respect too.

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Explain: “At Brooks Falls, bears want the same thing—fish. But not all bears get the same spot. Big bears usually win. The smaller bears don’t argue—they find another place or wait. Bears don’t share like people do, but they do show respect by avoiding conflict. They keep space, move away, or wait.”

Optional Guided Visualization:

“Close your eyes and take a deep breath in... and out.

Now imagine you’re in the middle of the wild Alaskan wilderness. You can hear the sound of rushing water. That’s Brooks Falls. And you’re not alone. All around you are big, powerful brown bears. Some bears have walked a

long way to get here. They're tired and wet, their paws heavy. Others haven't eaten in days and their bellies are rumbling. A few are mothers, keeping close to their small, clumsy cubs. You notice that even though all the bears want the same thing—a salmon from the river—they aren't fighting. Some wait. Others move aside to let the bigger bears go first. You see one bear give a quiet growl, and another backs away. Everyone is watching each other carefully. Respect at the falls means knowing when to step forward... and when to step back. Now open your eyes.

Ask:

- Have you ever wanted something someone else had?
- Did you argue, wait, or walk away?
- Can that be a way to show respect?

3. Skit Setup (5 mins)

At Brooks Falls, bears don't exactly share—but they often tolerate each other. That means they don't become friends or help each other—but they avoid fighting by keeping their distance, waiting, or giving space. They're showing respect in their own bear way.

Set Up:

1. Pair students and assign roles: one is a larger bear (who might claim a better spot), and one is a smaller or younger bear (who may need to adjust their plan).
2. Explain the two short skits they'll create together:

Scene 1: Tension Without Tolerance

- Both bears arrive at the same fishing spot.
- Neither gives space—they crowd each other.
- They show signs of irritation (circling, growling, or standing tall).
- The scene ends in a tense standoff with both bears still close together.

Scene 2: Tolerance Through Space

- Both bears want the same spot.
 - The smaller or newer bear pauses, watches, then chooses to move a few steps away or wait nearby.
 - The larger bear keeps the spot, but both avoid a confrontation.
 - The bears stay aware of each other but give space and avoid escalation.
3. Encourage silent body language:
 - How can you show awareness of the other without speaking?
 - What might a bear do instead of growling or pushing?
 4. Let students rehearse both scenes, with the option of performing to the group.

4. Perform & Reflect (10 mins)

Pairs perform both versions for the group. After each skit, reflect:

- Which bear showed respect?
- How did it feel to give up the spot?
- Can we do this in school—on the playground, at snack time, or with friends?

5. Reflection (5 mins)

Gather in a circle and ask:

- Can respect mean walking away or giving space?
- Is it always easy to act respectfully?
- What helps us notice when someone else needs something more than we do?

Learning Outcome

Students will explore the idea that respect isn't always about agreeing or sharing—it's about recognizing other people's needs, avoiding unnecessary conflict, and giving space when it matters.

Optional Craft: Respect Stone

After the skits, each student chooses a stone to symbolize a moment of respectful decision-making.

Materials Needed:

- One smooth stone or pebble per child
- Twine, yarn, or fabric scraps
- Optional: a communal bowl or basket

Instructions:

1. Think of a time during the activity—or real life—when you avoided conflict or gave someone space.
2. Wrap your stone with a strip of yarn or fabric as a symbol of your choice to be respectful.
3. Whisper the word “respect” or a reminder to yourself as you tie it.
4. Place the stone in a bowl or take it home as a quiet reminder.

5th Grade Lesson: Respect, Instincts, and Differences – Learning to Share Space Together

Featured Cam: Brooks Falls Brown Bears – Katmai National Park, Alaska

Learning Objective

“I can show respect by understanding how others act based on their instincts and needs—even if they are different from mine.”

Lesson Overview

At Brooks Falls, different animals—bears, gulls, and eagles—gather to fish. Each species follows its instincts to survive, but must also share the space. In this lesson, students simulate the dynamic of the falls, exploring how instinctual behavior can still happen within respectful boundaries. It’s a lesson in honoring differences and navigating shared environments.

Materials Needed:

- Painters tape/rope/cones/ natural objects to mark space
- Bean bags (or similar) to represent fish.
- Colored bands or verbal cues for animal roles

Lesson Plan

1. Watch & Wonder (5 mins)

Begin with a short observation of the Brooks Falls Bear Cam showing a variety of species sharing the space (live or recorded). Ask students to notice the behaviors of animals e.g. bears, eagles, and gulls.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- How do these animals behave when fishing or sharing space?
- How does each one use its instincts to survive?
- How do they avoid or deal with conflict

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Explain that each animal acts out of instinct—but must also share the space respectfully.

Optional guided visualization:

“Close your eyes and take a deep breath... imagine you are standing on the edge of a wide, river in the middle of the Alaskan wilderness. The air is cool and smells of fresh water and pine. You hear the roar of Brooks Falls as water crashes over the rocks.

Now, picture the animals who gather here each summer—massive brown bears lumber toward the water, patient and strong. Overhead, a bald eagle soars, eyes sharp, waiting for the right moment. Nearby, a group of gulls hop and flutter, looking for scraps left behind. Each of these animals is following their instincts—fishing, flying, foraging. But they also have to share this space. Sometimes they growl or flap or chase each other away, but often, they find a way to tolerate one another. They learn how to move, pause, and wait. As we step into this next activity, think about what it means to act on instinct—but still show respect. You’ll each become one of these animals, working to survive, but also choosing how to move through the shared space of the falls with care.”

They will play a game called ‘Respect the Falls!’ to simulate this.

3. Game Setup: Respect the Falls! (5 mins)

Explain that students will act out how animals at Brooks Falls use their instincts to survive, while also practicing respect by sharing the space without conflict.

Create a central play area labeled ‘Brooks Falls’ using rope/painters tape or natural markers. Scatter several ‘fish’ (beanbags or alternatives) in the middle. Each student is assigned a role with a specific movement rule:

- *Bears: Walk calmly and may pick up a fish only when standing still with both feet inside the falls area.*
- *Eagles: Move lightly with arms spread wide like wings. They may only take fish that have been dropped or discarded.*
- *Gulls: Tiptoe or crouch and may only grab a fish when no other animal is looking directly at them.*

Play several rounds. If two animals go for the same fish or there is a conflict, students pause and do a ‘respect reset’ (rock-paper-scissors + a kind word to each other). Encourage students to strategize, observe, and find respectful ways to share the space and resources.

4. Play & Reflect (10 mins)

Groups play for several rounds, resetting if conflict arises with a quick ‘respect reset’ (rock-paper-scissors + kind word).

5. Reflection (5 mins)

Discuss:

- What was hard about sharing the space?
- How did others show respect?
- Can instincts and respect coexist?
- What did you learn about living with differences?

Learning Outcome

Students will experience and reflect on how instinctive behaviors can exist alongside respectful interactions, building empathy and awareness of diverse perspectives.

Optional Craft - 'Nature Mandalas of Respect'

Students create a mandala using found nature items (can be gathered beforehand if teaching in a classroom), to represent how each of us have our own space, boundaries and needs—but if we respect them, together we can form something beautiful and unified.

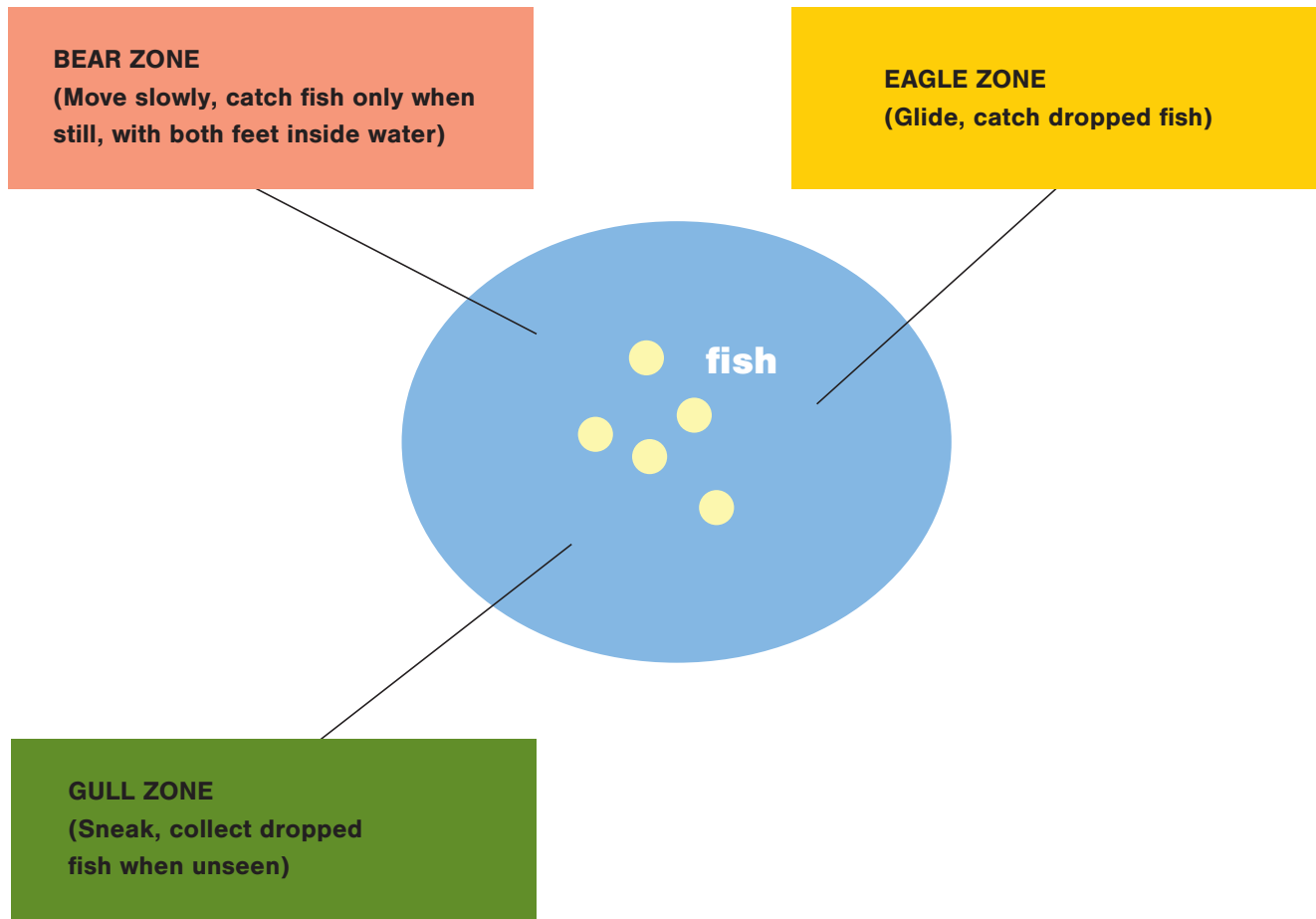
Materials Needed:

- A collection of nature treasures—leaves, twigs, stones, flower petals, bark etc
- A circular space on the ground or shallow tray if working at desk
- String/yarn to make rings (optional)

Instructions:

- Give students a defined circular space to work in (individual/pairs/groups)
- Ask them to think about what respecting space and others means to them as they create.
- Students place items thoughtfully in patterns, building outward from the center in layers. Each layer will represent a different form of respect. *Respect for myself, respect for others, respect for the environment.*
- Once complete students quietly walk around to observe others mandalas—modelling respect by observing without touching or entering someone else's space.

Respect The Falls Game Diagram



6th Grade Lesson: Respecting Roles In A Community

Featured Cam: Brooks Falls Brown Bears – Katmai National Park, Alaska

Learning Objective

“I can understand how we’re all connected, and show respect for everyone’s role in a group.”

Lesson Overview

At Brooks Falls, every living thing plays a role—from salmon and bears to birds and the river itself. If one part of the ecosystem is not in balance, it can affect everything else. This lesson helps students explore how respect includes honoring different roles and responsibilities in any community.

Materials Needed:

- No special materials required for the activity

Lesson Plan

1. Watch & Wonder (5 mins)

Begin with a short observation of the Brooks Falls Bear Cam. Ask students to quietly observe the animals—or natural features—on screen.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- What do you notice about how the bears interact with their environment?
- What role does the water play? The salmon? The trees?
- If you see birds or other animals, how do they fit in?

If only bears or natural elements (trees/water) are visible, focus on the diversity of behavior and roles even within one species or setting. Introduce the idea that each living thing—and part of nature—has a role to play, and respect means acknowledging those roles.

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Begin with a short discussion:

“At Brooks Falls, salmon swim upstream, bears wait to catch them, birds wait for scraps, and trees shade the river. Each living thing has its own job to do. But if someone takes too much or doesn’t play fair, it affects everyone. That’s why respect matters—not just for people, but for nature too.”

Optional Guided Visualization: *“Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now imagine you’re standing beside a river in the middle of the Alaskan wilderness. You can hear the sound of water tumbling over rocks... the buzz of insects... and the distant cry of a bird circling overhead. You look around and see tall trees lining the bank, their*

branches swaying gently in the breeze. The air smells fresh and earthy. Now you spot a huge bear standing in the middle of the river. It's waiting patiently, eyes fixed on the water, until a salmon leaps. With a powerful swipe, it catches the fish and wanders off to eat. Farther downstream, another bear waits its turn. An eagle watches from a branch. A gull picks at the scraps left behind. Each creature is doing its part—each one belongs here. Just like every part of nature, every one of us has a role to play. When you're ready, take one last breath...and gently open your eyes."

Ask:

- What roles do you play in your family, at school, or in your community?
- What happens when someone doesn't respect their role—or someone else's?

3. Ecosystem Council Role Play (10 mins)

Assign each student a role: Bear, Salmon, Tree, Water, Eagle, or Gull. (Combine or repeat roles for larger groups.)

Each student silently acts out how their role behaves in nature.

Here are a few example roles and how they can be acted out:

- *Bear: Walk slowly and sniff the air. Pretend to fish or paw the river.*
- *Salmon: Move hands in a swimming motion or "jump" upstream with small hops.*
- *Tree: Stand tall with arms wide like branches. Stay still and grounded.*
- *Water: Move fluidly or wave arms side to side. Whisper to represent flowing sounds.*
- *Eagle: Flap arms wide and scan the room. Swoop gently or perch.*
- *Gull: Move in short bursts, peek at others' movements, and scavenge carefully.*

Then, allow each to speak one sentence in role:

"I am the [Tree/Salmon/etc.], and I help the ecosystem by..."

Example Sentences for Ecosystem Council Role Play:

- Bear:** *"I am the bear. I fish for salmon to survive"*
- Salmon:** *"I am salmon. I swim upstream to lay eggs so the next generation can be born."*
- Tree:** *"I am the tree. I shade the river and keep the water cool for the salmon."
"I give shelter to birds and insects, and I hold the soil in place."
"If I am cut down, the whole river system starts to suffer."*
- Water:** *"I am the water. I connect everything—from the salmon to the sea."
"I carry life, but I can also flood or disappear if not respected."
"Everyone depends on me, but I can't protect myself."*
- Eagle:** *"I am the eagle. I watch from above and wait for my turn."
"If the bears don't leave scraps, I could go hungry."*
- Gull:** *"I am the gull. I clean up leftovers and make sure nothing goes to waste."
"I keep the things clean and eat what others leave behind."*

Then explore what happens if one role overpowers the others (e.g., the bear takes too much salmon).

Discuss:

- How do you show respect for others in your community?
- What happens when someone doesn't respect others' roles?

3. Reflection (5 mins)

Gather the group in a circle and ask:

- What role did you play in the ecosystem?
- What do you think would happen if your role wasn't respected?
- How can we bring more respect into our real-life communities?

Learning Outcome

Students will understand respect as honoring both their own and others' roles within a shared system—whether in nature or in our own communities.

Optional Craft: Ecosystem Respect Bracelets

Remind students that bears, salmon, river, trees that make up the ecosystem at Bear Falls, all depend upon each other. Emphasize the idea that every part of nature plays a role and that respecting the system means honoring each part's place. This sensory and symbolic activity reinforces the concept that respect includes recognizing and valuing interdependence.

Materials Needed:

- colored yarn, twine, or string (3-5 colors)
- Suggested: **blue:** water, **green:** tree, **brown:** bear, **red:** salmon, **yellow:** bird
- Scissors for trimming
- Tape to anchor one end while braiding (optional)

Instructions:

- Tie the strands together with a knot at one end
- Anchor one end with tape to a flat surface
- Begin to twist or braid the threads together—there is no right or wrong way, creativity is encouraged.

As they work, students reflect silently or discuss with a partner: *“What role do I want to play in my community—and how can I show respect for others around me?”*



COOPERATION



Download this
Toolkit at:



3rd Grade Lesson: Working As One – Building Cooperation

Featured Cam: Puffin Burrow – Seal Island, Maine, USA

Learning Objective

“I can work with others, like puffins do to take care of shared spaces, and help a team.”

Lesson Overview

In their burrows on Seal Island, puffins work together as a team to raise their chicks. Both parents share the job of feeding, keeping the burrow clean, and protecting their baby puffling. This lesson uses puffin behavior to explore what cooperation looks like in our own lives. Students will play and use nature-based materials to build a shared nest and care for a ‘puffling’ together.

Materials Needed:

- Sticks, leaves, feathers, soft natural finds
- A shallow tray or basket (optional)
- A small puffin figure, stone, or paper chick to represent the puffling

Lesson Plan

1. Watch and Wonder (5 mins)

Watch a few minutes of the live Puffin Burrow cam as a class. Ask students to observe how the puffin parents move and take turns.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- What do you notice about how they share the job?
- Do they take turns? How do they know what to do next?
- What would happen if they didn’t cooperate?”

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Explain:

“Puffins don’t just live in nests—they dig burrows into the ground. Inside, the puffin parents take turns bringing food, guarding the puffling, and keeping things tidy. They have to cooperate to help their puffling grow.”

Optional Guided Visualization:

“Close your eyes and take a deep breath in... and let it out. Now imagine you’re a puffin—a little black and white seabird with a colorful beak. You live on a rocky island where the wind blows and the ocean waves crash nearby. You and your puffin partner have dug a burrow—a little tunnel under the ground. It’s dark and cool inside. This is where your baby puffin, called a puffling, is resting.

You take turns with your partner—one of you flies out to catch fish, while the other stays behind to care for the puffling. When it's your turn to go out, you flap your wings and soar over the sea, diving under the water to catch a fish. Then you fly back and feed your baby gently. When it's your turn to stay in the burrow, you keep it clean, cozy, and safe. You listen for sounds outside. You help your puffling feel calm and cared for. You and your puffin partner are a team. You work together. You take turns. You cooperate. Take one more deep breath in...and slowly open your eyes when you're ready."

Ask:

What does it mean to cooperate? Can you think of a time you cooperated with someone to get something done?

3. Cooperative Nest Building (10-15 mins)

Students will practice cooperation by working in pairs, just like puffin parents, to build a 'puffin burrow nest' using natural materials.

Explain: "To succeed you'll need to talk to each other, listen to each other's ideas and take turns placing materials, you are a team"

Each group must:

- Build a safe, cozy nest with space for the puffling
- Take turns deciding where to place each material
- Check in with their partner: "Are we ready to place the puffling?"

Teacher prompts: "how are you making sure that each of you has a turn?", "what made you decide to put that there?"

4. Reflection (5-7 mins)

Gather in a circle. Ask:

- What helped your group work well together?
- Did you ever disagree? How did you solve it?
- How did it feel to work as a team to care for your puffling?"

Learning Outcome

Students will explore and practice cooperation through role play, group decision-making, and hands-on building, using the puffin burrow as a nature-based model of shared responsibility.

Optional Craft: Puffin Partnership Tokens

Students will reflect on the importance of cooperation in team work, by creating a “cooperation token” to represent their cooperation during the nest building activity.

Materials Needed:

- Small stones, bark, or paper discs
- Markers or charcoal for drawing symbols (like two puffins, hearts, hands, etc.)
- Optional: string to make a wearable token

Instructions:

1. Decorate your disc with a symbol that represents teamwork, two puffins/joined hands/hearts etc
2. Optional – use yarn to make it wearable
3. Optional – write a word on the back that sums up what you brought to your team. (e.g. ‘patience’, ‘ideas’)

These tokens can be shared or kept as a reminder of how they helped each other in the nest-building challenge.

4th Grade Lesson: Shared Goals, Shared Success

Featured Cam: Puffin Burrow – Seal Island, Maine, USA

Learning Objective

“I can share responsibilities with others and work toward a common goal—like puffins raising their chick.”

Lesson Overview

Puffins form strong partnerships, sharing the work of raising their chick equally. Taking turns fishing and guarding the burrow, these seabirds model true cooperation. In this lesson, students will explore what it means to work together toward a common goal by engaging in a collaborative task and observing how cooperation helps puffins survive and thrive.

Materials Needed:

- A spoon (for the puffin beak!)
- 4–6 small “fish” (pebbles, tokens, pom poms, or crumpled paper)
- Painters tape for a starting line (the ocean)
- Painters tape for a finish line (the burrow or nest)

Lesson Plan

1. Watch and Wonder (5 mins)

Gather together to watch the Puffin Burrow cam (or a recorded clip showing parents trading off roles)

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- What do you notice about how the puffins share the work?
- Does one puffin always do the same job?
- How do you think they know when it’s time to trade roles?

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Explain: “Puffins mate for life and raise one chick a year. They take turns going out to sea to catch fish and bringing it back for their puffling. They protect their nest and each other. If one puffin tried to do it all, it wouldn’t work. They need each other to succeed.”

Optional Guided Visualization:

“Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Imagine you are standing at the edge of a rocky cliff, high above the sea. The salty wind brushes your face and the sound of waves crashing fills the air. Beneath you, in a small burrow hidden in the grass, a tiny puffling waits—hungry and warm.

You are a puffin parent, and your job is important. Your partner is out at sea, diving deep into the cold ocean to find fish. You’ve taken turns all day, flying back and forth, working together to care for your chick. Now it’s your

turn to go. You flap your wings and soar over the waves, searching for the silvery shimmer of fish. You spot a flash, dive down, and catch one in your beak—then another, and another. As you fly back to the cliff, you think about your partner waiting at the nest, keeping your puffling safe. You land, give a little nod, and pass the fish. You are a team. You trust each other. You need each other. When you are ready gently open your eyes”

Ask:

- How did that feel?
- What did you imagine it would be like to rely on someone like that?
- Can you think of a time when working with someone made something easier—or more fun?

3. Puffin Partnership Challenge (15 mins)

Put students into pairs. Explain they will take turns doing a fun relay challenge. The goal is to move “fish” from the sea to the nest—just like puffin parents do for their chick.

How to Play:

1. One partner scoops a fish with the spoon and carefully walks across the room to the nest zone.
2. Once you drop off the fish, hand the spoon to your partner.
3. Before your partner goes, tell them one helpful thing (called a “puffin tip”), like:
 - “Watch out for the chair.”
 - “Go slow—it’s easy to drop the fish.”
 - “Try holding the spoon with two hands.”
4. Take turns until all your fish are delivered safely!
5. Then, play again—but try to do even better by talking and listening to each other more carefully.

Team Goal:

- Get all the fish to the nest with as few drops as possible.
- See if your communication gets better each time you play!

Repeat the game and challenge students to improve their communication and teamwork.

Bonus Round: Silent Puffins!

Try the challenge again without talking. Use hand signals, eye contact, and body language instead. Can you still work together as a team?

4. Reflection (5 mins)

Gather students and ask:

- What did you learn about cooperation during the fish relay?
- Was it harder or easier when you communicated?
- How did it feel to rely on someone else and be relied on?”

Learning Outcome

Students will practice turn-taking, communication, and shared responsibility—reflecting the cooperative parenting of puffins. They will recognize how each team member plays a vital role in achieving shared goals.

Optional Craft: Burrow Flags of Teamwork

Students will reflect on what made their team successful in the 'fish relay challenge' by creating a shared flag that symbolizes their partnership. These flags can be displayed as a collective 'cliffside gallery' showing the many ways that cooperation helps a community thrive.

Materials Needed:

- Small piece of fabric/felt/paper (approx 4x6 inches)
- String for hanging
- Markers/colored pencils
- Nature treasures
- Glue/tape

Instructions:

1. Reflect as a pair. What did each of you bring to the team? What made your team stronger?
2. Each pair designs one flag together to represent their team work.
3. Add symbols or images that show your shared strength e.g. trust/timing/helping/laughter
4. Use nature treasures to add texture and meaning

5th Grade Lesson: Practicing Partnership

Featured Cam: Puffin Burrow – Seal Island, Maine, USA

Learning Objective

“I can work with others, share ideas, and figure things out as a team—like puffin parents working together in their burrow.”

Lesson Overview

Puffins raise their chick by taking turns and paying close attention to each other. This lesson helps students practice those same skills by using nonverbal cues to work with a partner and build a shared project.

Materials Needed:

- Two identical sets of natural items per ‘puffin partner’ (twigs, stones, leaves, shells)
- A folder or book to act as a divider

Lesson Plan

1. Watch and Wonder (5 mins)

Watch a moment from the Puffin Burrow cam showing puffin parents switching turns at the nest.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- What do the puffins do when they take turns?
- How do they know when it’s their turn?
- What might happen if they didn’t work together?

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Explain: “Puffins don’t talk, but they work together really well. Today we are going to try to be puffin partners and practice silent teamwork.”

Ask: “Have you ever worked on something with a friend without talking?” “What were the challenges?”

Optional Guided Visualization:

“Close your eyes and take a deep breath in...and out. Imagine you are on a small, rocky cliff surrounded by ocean. The wind is cool and salty, and the sound of waves crashing and seabirds calling fills the air.

Now picture a burrow nestled in the cliffside. You are a puffin, returning to your burrow after a long flight across the sea. Inside, your partner is caring for your puffling. You nod to each other, silently understanding—it’s time to switch. You step carefully inside, brushing wings gently. No words are needed. You both know what to do. You’ve done it before. You work as a team, taking turns, sharing the job of keeping your puffling warm, fed, and safe. Now gently open your eyes”

Explain: Today, you’ll get to be like those puffin partners—working together silently, using only your eyes, hands, and focus to complete a challenge. Let’s see how well you can cooperate without speaking.”

3. Puffin Partner Silent Nest Challenge (15-20 mins)

Students work in pairs to build matching 'nests' without talking.

How it works:

- One student (Silent Puffin) builds a small nest behind the divider.
- The other student (Observer Puffin) watches only the builder's face and hands to guess how to copy it.
- No talking! Builders can give small clues using eye contact, facial expressions, and hand movements. (the Silent Puffin is allowed to look over to see how the Observer Puffin is building)
- After 3-5 minutes, remove the divider and compare nests.
- Switch roles and repeat.

4. Reflection (5 mins)

- What helped you understand your partner without words?
- How did you feel when you were the builder? The observer?
- What made your team successful?

Learning Outcome

Students will learn how to use body language and observation to cooperate with a partner, just like puffin parents who rely on silent teamwork to raise their chick.

Optional Craft: Cooperation Pebbles

Students will create a symbolic pebble that represents what they personally contributed during their puffin partnership silent nest challenge. When placed together in a cairn (a stack of pebbles used as a trail marker), the class has something that visually represents how each individual's effort supports the whole.

Materials Needed:

- One smooth pebble per student
- Paint pens/charcoal

Instructions:

1. Reflect together—what helped your pair work well together? If your pair had a symbol, what would it be?
2. Create the pebbles—choose a small pebble, decorate it with a symbol/word/shape that represents how you helped your team, (e.g. hearts for kindness, spirals for flexible thinking, stars for ideas, hands for helping)
3. Build the class cairn. One at a time students place their decorated pebble on the class cairn base (consider using glue if it's tricky). Encourage them to do it with a shared phrase like 'together we are stronger'.

6th Grade Lesson: Cooperation In Action

Featured Cam: Puffin Burrow – Seal Island, Maine, USA

Learning Objective

“I can communicate clearly, contribute to a shared task, and solve problems together—like puffins raising a chick.”

Lesson Overview

Puffin pairs succeed by coordinating their actions and adapting to each other’s needs. They don’t always do the same job at the same time, but they rely on shared purpose and timing. This lesson helps students experience the nuance of true cooperation through collaborative problem solving.

Materials Needed:

For ‘nature nests’

- Small twigs, dried leaves, pebbles or stones, string or raffia

Alternative – nests with classroom based materials

- pipe cleaners, paper, tape, scissors, cardboard base, index cards

Lesson Plan

1. Watch and Wonder (5 mins)

Gather students to watch the Puffin Burrow cam or a clip of parent puffins working in together.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- How do puffins coordinate care for the chick?
- What do you notice about communication and timing?
- What does this tell us about cooperating when the stakes are high?”

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Explain: “Puffins can’t speak, but they stay coordinated by reading each other’s behavior and responding. Good cooperation is flexible and focused—not just following directions, but adapting together.”

Ask: “Have you ever been part of a group project where things fell apart? What would have helped?”

Optional guided visualization:

“Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Picture the edge of a wild island, seabirds call above the waves. Now, imagine you are a puffin—with feathers sleek and waterproof, a bright beak, and powerful wings. You’re perched beside your partner, standing over the small burrow you built together. Inside, your puffling peeps quietly, waiting for food and warmth. You can’t talk out loud—not in words. But you watch. You listen. You move together. One of you heads out to sea to find fish, while the other stays close to protect the burrow. When you switch roles, it’s seamless. You both know what’s needed—because you’ve practiced, learned from each other, and stayed in sync. As you flap off into the sky, feel the trust in your wings. Know that your partner is doing their part, and you’ll do

yours. Cooperation doesn't mean doing the same thing—it means working together with shared purpose. When you're ready, gently open your eyes."

3. Puffin Partners Mini Burrow Build (15 mins)

Students will work together in a team of three to design and build a model "burrow" for a puffling using natural and/or classroom materials. Your focus is not only on the structure—but on how well you cooperate.

Instructions

1. Each team of three will assign roles:

- **Designer** – Comes up with the overall plan for the burrow and guides the team's vision. Responsible for sketching ideas (mentally or on paper) and making sure the team sticks to the design goals.
- **Builder** – Takes the lead in assembling the structure. Makes decisions about how to place and combine materials based on team input. Works closely with the designer to bring the vision to life.
- **Communicator** – Keeps the group on track. Encourages teamwork, makes sure everyone is heard, and helps resolve disagreements. Reminds the group to be flexible and cooperative.

2. Gather Materials:

Each team receives a tray with the following:

- Nature nest: Small twigs, dried leaves, pebbles or stones, string or raffia
- Classroom alternative: pipe cleaners, paper, tape, scissors, cardboard base, index cards

3. Plan Together: Discuss what kind of burrow you want to build. 'Designer' to share their plan, with help of 'communicator'. Where will the entrance be? How will it protect a chick? Agree on your design before beginning.

4. Build the Burrow: Work as a team to create your burrow on the cardboard base. You can take turns or help one another, but stick to your team roles as your main jobs.

5. Remind the team of their focus on cooperation, with the following questions...

- Are you listening to each other?
- Is everyone involved and respected?
- Are you adapting as needed if the plan changes?

4. Reflection (5 mins)

Ask:

- What was your role and how did it support the team?
- Did your plan change? How did you decide together?
- How did communication shape your cooperation?"

Learning Outcome

Students will experience deeper-level cooperation through flexible problem solving, role adaptation, and team communication, like the coordination of puffin pairs in the wild.

Optional Craft: “Cooperation Compass”

Each student makes a simple compass from cardboard, wood slices, or thick recycled paper. Students can keep their compass as a reminder of how to guide their behavior when working cooperatively with others.

Materials Needed:

- Small circle cutouts from cardboard, thick paper, or wood (approx. 3-4 inches in diameter)
- Markers/ pencils
- Optional: paper fasteners and paper arrows to make a spinning needle
- Hole punch and string if students want to wear or hang their compass

Instructions:

1. On the front of the circle, students draw a compass with four directions.
2. In each quadrant, they write one word they think is essential for cooperation (examples: listen, include, adapt, trust).
3. If using a paper fastener, attach a small paper arrow in the center so the compass can spin.
4. Decorate with natural patterns, symbols, or textures.

Bee Lesson: One Goal, Many Minds

Featured Cam: Honeybee Hive

Learning Objective

"I can work with others, play my part, and trust my team-like honeybees working together in the hive."

Lesson Overview

In a beehive, no single bee works alone. Each bee has a job-gathering nectar, building the hive, making honey-and their success depends on everyone doing their part. In this lesson, students take on 'bee roles' in a hive-inspired relay, learning how cooperation, communication, and trust make teamwork possible.

Materials Needed:

- A bean bag (or something similar) to represent nectar. (Optional – could be imaginary nectar)

Lesson Plan

1. Watch and Wonder (5 mins)

Watch a few minutes of the Honeybee Hive Cam. Encourage silent observation first, then invite discussion.

Suggested Prompt Questions:

- What do you think the bees are doing?
- How can you tell they are cooperating?
- What might happen if bees didn't work together?
- What jobs do you think exist inside the hive?

2. Set the Scene (5 mins)

Explain:

"Bees live in one of the most cooperative communities in the natural world. Each bee has a role, and they all depend on one another to keep the hive strong and healthy. Today, we're going to become bees-and work together just like they do."

Ask:

"Have you ever been part of a team where each person had a different job?"

"What happens when someone doesn't do their part-or when someone tries to do everything?"

Optional Guided Visualization:

"Close your eyes and take a deep breath in... and out. Imagine the warm morning sun rising over a wide, green meadow. The flowers are beginning to open. You are one small honeybee in a bustling hive. Feel the soft buzzing of your wings as you begin your day. You fly out of the hive and into the cool breeze. Beneath you, the flowers stretch across the field. You land gently on a blossom and gather golden nectar, careful and focused. Around you, other bees are flying too. Some are returning to the hive, some are leaving, and everyone is doing their part. You know the way home without thinking-it's part of you. When your tiny basket legs are full, you rise into the sky

and head back. You enter the hive. Inside, it's warm and humming. Bees are building perfect hexagons from wax, feeding the baby bees, and turning nectar into honey. You pass your nectar to the next bee, and they take it from there. You trust them. You've done this before. Now you rest for a moment, nestled among your hive mates. You've done your job. You've helped your team. Your wings slow down, and your breath is calm. Take one more deep breath in... and out. And when you're ready, gently open your eyes."

Explain:

"Today, you'll get to be like those bees-working together, playing your part, and trusting your teammates. Let's see how strong our hive can be."

3. Bee Relay Challenge (15 mins)

How it works:

Students are divided into teams of 4-6 "hive mates," and each student is assigned a different role in a pretend bee relay. The goal is for each team to move a pretend piece of nectar from the "flower field" to the "hive," step by step, with each bee performing only their own job.

Instructions:

1. Prepare your space:
 - Designate one area of the room as the "flower field" (where nectar is collected).
 - Designate another area as the "hive" (where nectar will be stored).
 - Set a middle area for bees to transfer the nectar from one to another.
2. Use a bean bag, (or any small object), to represent nectar, (or could be imaginary!)
3. Assign students one role each:
 - **Forager Bee** – Flies to the flower field and collects the nectar. Brings it back and passes it to the Receiver Bee.
 - **Receiver Bee** – Takes the nectar and passes it to the Honey Maker Bee.
 - **Honey Maker Bee** – Pretends to process the nectar (e.g., spin in a circle or buzz quietly while holding it), then hands it to the Builder Bee.
 - **Builder Bee** – Carefully walks the nectar to the hive area and places it down gently.
 - (Optional roles if you have more students: Guard Bee to watch for intruders, Queen's Helper to cheer and support their team.)
4. All bees must wait their turn and only perform their own role. No skipping ahead or taking over someone else's job!
5. Once one round of nectar is delivered to the hive, the team can switch roles and repeat.
6. Repeat the activity for several rounds to give each student a chance to try multiple roles.

Teacher Tips:

- Encourage students to act out their roles with movement and buzzing sounds for fun.
- Emphasize that no one bee is more important than another-the hive only works when everyone does their part!

4. Reflection (5 mins)

Ask:

- How did it feel to only do one part of the job?
- Was it easy or hard to trust your teammates?
- What happened if forgot their role?
- How is this like real life—at school, in sports, or at home?

Learning Outcome

Students will learn how individual contributions support a shared goal, and how cooperation builds trust and success—just like bees working together in a hive.

Optional Craft: Build-a-Bee

Students will create bees using natural found materials.

Materials Needed:

- Small nature finds (twigs, seed pods, leaves, feathers, etc.)

Instructions:

1. Students pair up or work in small groups.
2. They create one bee per group from gathered natural items (no glue)
3. Emphasize cooperation: each group must share ideas, make decisions together, and divide the building work.

Teacher Prompts:

- What kind of bee are you building—what's its job?
- What does your bee need to be strong and helpful to its hive?
- How did you share the work between you?

Optional Closing Ritual:

Place all the bees together in a shared 'hive' centerpiece—celebrating how each unique creation becomes part of a greater whole.