



Nature Connection in the Classroom

Nature Connection in the Classroom brings hands-on experiences with the natural world into the school day, complementing in-school learning while bringing some of the broader benefits of engaging with nature. Through real natural materials and engaging projects - from solving mysteries and testing animal fibers to cracking codes and nature journaling - students are invited to engage, reflect, and connect, both to the natural world and to themselves.

Experiences with nature support attention and well-being as they naturally invite curiosity, exploration, and wonder. Our lessons encourage students to observe, investigate, discover, and work collaboratively, drawing them into the softly fascinating details of the natural world. These moments of engagement with nature can help restore attention, reduce stress, support positive mood, and create opportunities for social-emotional learning that students can carry back into their learning and lives.

That experience continues beyond the program. Each student leaves with a Nature Challenge Card, offering a simple invitation to spend 60 seconds in nature - paying attention, noticing, and inviting wonder. Extension materials and activities are also provided for educators to continue exploring with their students. Like anything, the benefits of engaging with nature grow with practice.

www.nature-connection.org

978-369-2585

info@nature-connection.org

Maple Caper

A maple sugaring mystery

Grades: 4-8

Best Season: January through April

Maple Caper invites students to work collaboratively to solve a nature-based mystery: someone has broken into the maple tap lines — but who? Students investigate evidence from the “crime scene,” including scat, footprints, fur, feathers, and maple syrup, using careful observation and problem-solving to identify the culprit. Along the way, students explore the process of maple sugaring and gain hands-on experience with a variety of natural materials.



Scheduling & Format

Program Length: 40–60 minutes

Program Format: Individual classroom sessions

Program Fee: \$425 for the first classroom, plus \$100 for each additional classroom scheduled on the same day

Best Season: Indicates when a program is most seasonally relevant; all programs are available year-round.

Explore the programs below to find the experience that best fits your students and learning goals.



Penguin Jumpers

An animal fibers lab

Grades: 6-9

Best Season: Fall & Winter

Penguin Jumpers invites students into a real-world challenge inspired by the practice of knitting tiny sweaters - or “jumpers” - for penguins affected by oil spills. If you're going to knit a sweater for a penguin, which animal fiber would make the best insulator? Students investigate fibers from sheep, alpacas, angora rabbits, and other sources, testing their insulating properties and collecting data to compare their results. Using the evidence they gather, the class works together to determine which natural fiber is best suited for the job.

Escape to Nature

A nature-based escape room

Grades: 4-9

Best Season: Year Round

Escape to Nature brings the challenge of an escape room into the classroom through a series of nature-based puzzles and locked boxes. Working in teams, students use careful observation and problem-solving to uncover clues hidden in leaf vein patterns, animal tracks, pinecones, and other natural materials. No single team can complete the challenge alone, but together anything is possible.

Thoreau and the Natural World

Nature journaling through Thoreau's eyes

Grades: 6-10

Best Season: Fall

Thoreau and the Natural World introduces students to Henry David Thoreau, best known for his time at Walden Pond and his book *Walden*. Beyond his writing, Thoreau was a naturalist, transcendentalist, and activist — and a careful observer of the world around him. Students explore some of the same natural materials found in Thoreau's writings and use nature journaling to capture their own observations and reflections. Through the experience, students gain a new entry point into Thoreau's work while practicing a way of slowing down and paying closer attention to the natural world.

Calm to the Touch

A sensory exploration of tree bark

Grades: 3-8

Best Season: Year Round

Calm to the Touch explores how sensory experiences with nature can support regulation and well-being while helping students become more aware of their own responses to the world around them. Students examine and compare bark from different tree species, paying close attention to variations in texture, pattern, and color. Through hands-on exploration and discussion, students practice noticing how different sensory experiences make them feel and identifying qualities in nature that evoke a sense of calm.

