



Task: Off to the Woods



Teacher Directions:

Steps you will be following over five days of instruction:

1. Share the scenario with your students.
2. Review the note-taking tool.
3. Read the book *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg* by D.B. Johnson.
4. Watch the video *Sesame Street: Nature Talk*.
5. Have students read *Off to the Woods* booklet.
6. Check student notes.
7. Assign research questions.
8. Field Experience – practicing observation skills.
9. Assign the writing prompt.

Scenario:

Your school is sponsoring a writing festival to celebrate nature. Students in the 1st grade are asked to write stories about what it is like to take a walk in the woods. You will listen to a picture book, watch a video, and read a booklet to give you background knowledge for your story. You may also use information from your own walks in the woods!

Source Information:

Picture Book: *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg* by D.B. Johnson

Video: *Sesame Street: Nature Walk* (3:21)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nXmIDejoHk>

Reading Booklet: *Off to the Woods* by N. Skerritt for the Pacific Education Institute

Other Helpful Resources:

Guide: [*Fostering Outdoor Observation Skills*](#), by Pacific Education Institute and the Association of Fish & Wildlife



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Day 1: Introducing the Scenario

Let's get started!

Introduce the scenario to students. Then review the note-taking tool, showing them where to record information from the picture book, video and the reading booklet.

Listen to the story *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg*. Notice how Henry uses his senses on his nature walk. Use your note-taking tool to record things Henry sees, hears, smells, and tastes on his adventure.

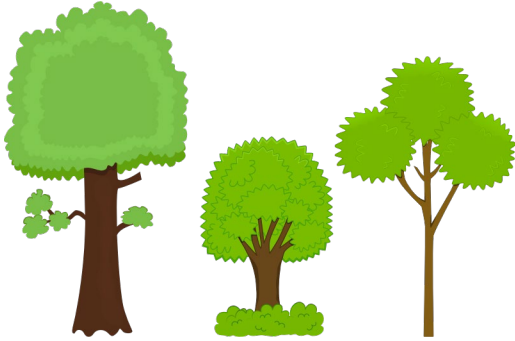
Stop as you read to have students point out what Henry experiences. Be sure to share the pictures of what Henry sees like the bugs and snake on the stone wall. What can the students infer from Henry finding the honey tree? What makes us think that he tastes the honey? Reinforce that the students are noticing what Henry observes on his nature walk to Fitchburg. Record information on the note-taking tool. Provide support for the students as needed.



Discuss with the students what they learned today about what it's like to take a nature walk through the countryside including the woods.



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Optional Activity for Day One:

Ask students to share their opinion: Would they prefer walking to Fitchburg like Henry or taking the train to Fitchburg like his friend? Have students share reasons for their opinions. **(ELA Writing Standard 1: Opinion Writing)**

Day 2: Note-taking

1. Review the note-taking template with the students, showing them where to record information from the video and the booklet. Watch the video, *Sesame Street: Nature Walk*, stopping in a few places to point out what the child is observing. Tell students to take notes on the note-taking tool. The video is short-around three minutes- so consider showing it more than once while students take their notes. **(ELA Listening and Research Standards)**
2. Provide each child with a copy of the booklet, *Off to the Woods*, and complete the note-taking tool with help as needed. Depending on your students' reading level, use the booklet as a shared reading activity or for independent reading. Check students' notes to make sure that they captured information from both the video and the booklet. **(ELA Reading and Research Standards)**

Day 3: Research Questions

Assign one or more of the following research questions. You may want students to work independently or with you as a shared learning activity.



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Questions:

1. Describe two things you might see in the woods. (*Research Target: Locating Information*)
2. Which sense might you use the most in the woods: seeing, hearing, smelling or tasting? Explain your choice. (*Research Target: Selecting the best information*)
3. Which is best for learning about a walk in the woods: The video, the picture book or the reading booklet? Give a reason for your choice. (*Research Target: Selecting the best information*)



Field Experience: Practicing Observation Skills.

Take your students on a walk in the woods (or even just a nature walk in the school yard). Use a student journal to ask students to record what they are observing using their senses. Focus on the senses of sight, hearing, and smelling. You may want to include the sense of touch as well with carefully selected objects like pine cones or leaves. Include in the student journals space for sketching what the children see on their walk. Upon returning to the classroom, discuss with students what they observed on their walk. What did they observe that was mentioned in the three sources? What did they observe that was new?

Day 4 & Day 5: Essay Writing

Assign the writing prompt and allow time over a minimum of two days for children to draft and edit their stories.



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Writing Prompt: You have been asked to write a story about a walk in the woods. Use information from the picture book about Henry, the Nature Walk video, the Off to the Woods booklet and/or your own experience to write your story.

See the attached tools to support story planning. You may want to have the students write a “Small Moment” story about one experience they had while in the woods or create an imaginary story about what it is like to visit. Characters might include the creatures or even plants that live in the woods. You decide what will work best for your students!



You are practicing **ELA Writing Standard #3**, Narrative Writing. Use your district’s primary narrative writing rubric to score the student work.

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