

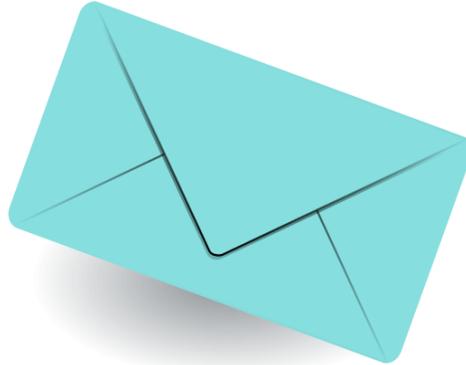


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ENVIROLOPES

Component: Math/Literacy, Leadership Dev.

Time: 30-45 minutes



Goal: To increase observation skills using senses to identify a variety of textures, colors, odors, and evidence of organisms in the activity site.

Materials:

- Letter-sized envelopes (one per pair of youth)
- Different colors of yarn or cloth (optional)
- Glue or tape

Preparation (before the session):

1. Select a site where collecting small samples of leaves, rocks, twigs, or shells is permitted. Picnic tables, sidewalks, or lawns are good places to spread out the envirolope collections for the group discussion and observation game.
2. Copy the Facilitator Resource and cut the challenges apart.
3. Make an envelope for each pair of participants in your group.
 - a. Select challenges that are appropriate for your site and group.
 - b. Adhere an envirolope challenge to the front of each envelope.

Implementation Note:

- “Envirolope” is a made-up term for this activity. It combines the words “envelope” and “environment” as a way to make this activity more interesting. An envirolope is the envelope with the environmental challenge taped/glued on the front.
- This activity can be done with same age or mixed age groups in almost any outdoor setting—along a trail, around a school or science center, at a camp, or on a family outing.

Procedure:

1. Engage and Connect—3 minutes: Tell the group that they are going to do a fun exercise to help practice their observation skills:
 - How many of you have ever noticed different types of leaves?
 - What kinds of differences have you noticed?
 - What senses did you use to note those differences?



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2. Introduction and Set Up—7 minutes: Tell group members that they're going to participate in an envirollope challenge. It's a combination of the words "environment" and "envelope." Ask participants to offer definitions of "environment." Read an example of an envirollope challenge and ask for ideas of how it might be met.
3. Give directions for the activity:
 - Today you're going to work in pairs to identify some different things that exist in nature.
 - Each pair will get an envelope with an envirollope challenge written on the front.
 - You'll have 15-20 minutes to search for samples of things to meet your challenge.
 - All samples must be able to fit into the envelope.
 - You're free to search anywhere within these boundaries _____. (Give clear expectations for boundaries.)
 - After the search, all teams will display their collections and we'll have a discussion.
4. Envirollope Challenges—15-20 minutes: Circulate among the teams, while they search, encouraging them to investigate further. Ask questions and encourage the youth to use all their senses as they search.
5. Re-Gather and Discussion—15 minutes: Ask the youth to return to the lawn, table, or whatever surface you've designated. Give the following directions:
 - Take the contents of your envelopes and place them on the table (or other surface).
 - Walk around and observe the different items using as many different senses as you can (sight, touch, smell, etc.)

Ask the following questions:

- What do you notice about the collections you found? (They might notice that some objects appear in more than one collection.)
- How would you describe your own collection?
- How does your collection compare or contrast with another on the table?
- What questions do you have as a result of gathering these items?
- What's interesting to you about any of these individual items or collections from nature?
- How does the evidence left by animals compare with evidence left by humans?

Reflection: Lead a brief period of reflection with the following questions"

- What was the most important thing you discovered during this activity?
- What are some other times when it would be helpful to use observation skills?
- What do you think it would be like to have a job that required you to pay attention, observe, describe what you see, and identify any issues that might need to be addressed?
- What are some jobs or careers that require good observation skills? (Possible Answers: scientist, civil engineer, environmental engineer, biologist, medical scientist, etc.)

SOURCE: Adapted from www.howtosmile.org, developed by Outdoor Biology Instructional Strategies, Lawrence Hall of Science.

SKILL: Scientific Observation – Nature



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Facilitator Resource: Envirolope Challenges

Directions: Cut these challenges out and tape/glue them to the front of the envelopes. Add more challenges/change these to best meet your group size and needs.

Find at least 5 different textures.

Find at least 5 different colors.

Find 5 very unusually shaped leaves.

Find at least 5 different kinds of seeds.

Find at least 5 different kinds of evidence that animals have been around (a feather, for example).

Find at least 5 different kinds of evidence that people have been around (trash, for example).

Find at least 5 objects with different shades of brown.

Find at least 5 objects with different shades of green.

Find 5 objects with distinct odors.

Find 5 smooth objects.