

Recreation and Humanities Classes

AUTHORS & EXPLORERS

Themes: Community; Connections, Cycles, and Systems; McDowell Stewards

Lesson Overview: Learners will connect with and be inspired by natural features by exploring McDowell's woods and journaling their experiences. Learners will be prompted with sensory awareness and observation activities to record and share their experiences using sketches, poetry, and word art. Learners will gain knowledge about the scientific and artistic value of journaling and articulate written expression by relating their experiences to those of famous authors and naturalists.

Total Time: 3 hours

Hiking Distance: varied, .5 to .75 mile

Activity Level: Can be modified for universal accessibility with notification

Learning Goals: At the end of this session, learners will be able to use natural landscapes as inspiration for the following:

1. View and describe the world from different perspectives, including the perspective of a natural object, and consider how perspective impacts understanding of the world.
2. Details and analogies improve descriptive writing and help the author convey information to the reader.
3. Relating their experience to the ways authors, explorers, and scientists use sketching and writing in journals as tools to improve their trade.

Scientific Practices Highlighted: Developing and Using Models

Crosscutting Concepts Addressed: Patterns, Scale, Proportion, and Quantity

CONNECTIONS

Themes: Community; Connections, Cycles, and Systems; McDowell Stewards

Lesson Overview: Learners reinforce their understanding of connections between Earth's spheres, human stewardship, and principles of conservation. Learners connect their experiences at McDowell with their lives, and consider ways to share their knowledge when they return home.

Total Time: 1.5 or 3 hours

Hiking Distance: Varies

Activity Level: Low; Can be modified for all abilities

Learning Goals: By the end of this session, learners will be able to relate the classes they have taken to one another and to their own lives in the following ways:

1. All Earth's spheres are intricately connected to one another.
2. Humans play an important role in the health of all ecosystems, and we are stewards of our environment.
3. Small changes in our personal behaviors can have a major impact on the environment.

Scientific Practices Highlighted: Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information

Crosscutting Concepts Addressed: System and System Models

MYSTERIOUS MEDLEY

Themes: Can be varied to match any theme.

Lesson Overview: Learners get a unique opportunity to experience Camp McDowell like no other group. Instructors build a class tailored to their interests and expertise and correlated to the chosen theme. Learners will explore a topic with their instructor, and experience the excitement of natural investigation and inquiry. The combination of the skillset of the instructor, the passion they bring to

the subject, and the opportunity for open inquiry and investigation result in a one-of-a-kind experience that creates future naturalists.

Total Time: 1.5 or 3 hours

Hiking Distance: Varied

Activity Level: Can be modified for universal accessibility with notification

Learning Goals: Vary based on chosen theme, but are integrated with those from other classes chosen by instructor. Each experience is unique and tailored to the interest of the field group.

Scientific Practices Highlighted: Varied

Crosscutting Concepts Addressed: Varied

NATIVE AMERICANS & THE EARTH

Themes: Community; Connections, Cycles, and Systems; The Earth Provides; McDowell Stewards

Lesson Overview: Learners will engage with Native American artifacts, visit a reconstruction of a typical Mississippian Era village, and participate in activities and games to learn respect for natural resources and different cultures.

Total Time: 3 hours

Hiking Distance: .75 mile

Activity Level: Low to moderate; can be modified for alternate abilities, however some experiences require hiking a short but strenuous hill.

Learning Goals: By the end of this session, learners will be able to discuss the relationship between humans and the natural environment through the lens of Alabama's indigenous people in the following ways:

1. Describe the cultural differences between people of European descent and American Indians, and explain the reason for those differences in the past and today.
2. Explain how American Indian culture changed over time because of changing reliance on natural resources and environmental changes.
3. List and locate on a map the four major tribes of American Indians that lived in Alabama before European settlers, and describe how they were impacted by one another through trade.

Scientific Practices Highlighted: Constructing Explanations

Crosscutting Concepts Addressed: Stability and Change, Cause and Effect

NATURE HIKE

Themes: Can be varied to match any theme.

Lesson Overview: Learners hike through the forest on a favorite trail of their instructor's choosing. On the trail, open exploration and inquiry are highly encouraged and learners can practice their observation and interpretive skills on plants, animals, insects, and tracks! May include the use of field guides, dichotomous keys, hand lenses, and nature journals.

Total Time: 1.5 or 3 hours

Hiking Distance: varied, usually .75 mile

Activity Level: Can be modified for universal accessibility with notification

Learning Goals: Vary based on chosen theme, but are integrated with those from other classes chosen by instructor. Each experience is unique and tailored to the interest of the field group.

Scientific Practices Highlighted: varied

Crosscutting Concepts Addressed: varied

TRAIL OF DISCOVERY

Themes: Can be varied to match any theme.

Lesson Overview: Learners have an immersive, full day experience in nature. Aspects of MEC courses on forest ecology, geology, and Native American cultures, as well as those selected by the teacher, are highlighted on a full day hike. Learners practice appropriate behavior in the woods, enjoy a picnic lunch, and, because of the full day nature of the course, have opportunities to engage more fully with chosen concepts. ***A packed lunch will be provided. All participants need to bring a backpack, 2 water bottles, and comfortable hiking shoes.***

Total Time: Full day (morning and afternoon class session, lunch enjoyed in the field)

Hiking Distance: ~3 miles

Activity Level: Moderate to strenuous; experience cannot be adapted for all abilities, but modifications can be made to accommodate some different abilities.

Learning Goals: Learning goals are dependent, in part, on the content choices of the teacher and other courses taken during the learners' trip. In addition to science content, learners can expect to become more independent in nature in the following ways:

1. Recognizing the behaviors necessary for thriving long-term in an outdoor situation and the ways humans can protect the environment around them.

Scientific Practices Highlighted: Planning and Carrying Out Investigations

Crosscutting Concepts Addressed: Systems and System Models, Energy and Matter, Patterns