

Science Connections: Observation & Senses

Connecting the school commute to observation, the senses, and the natural world

These activities work best on days when students have walked, biked, or ridden the bus. They connect the commute to science observation skills.

Activity 1: My Commute Journal

After the morning tally, ask students who walked or biked to share what they noticed. Guide with the five senses.

"What did you SEE on your way to school today? Any animals? Plants?"

"What did you HEAR? Birds? Wind? Other people?"

"What did you FEEL? Was it warm, cold, windy?"

"What did you SMELL? Flowers? Rain? Food from a bakery?"

Have students draw or write about one observation. Create a class "Commute Nature Board" that grows each week.

MA Framework: K-ESS2-1 (patterns in the natural world), 1-LS1-1 (use observations to describe patterns), 2-LS4-1 (make observations of plants and animals)

Activity 2: Weather Watchers

Track the weather each morning alongside the transportation tally. After 2–3 weeks, look for patterns together.

"Did more people walk on sunny days or rainy days?"

"What happens to the walking count when it's really cold?"

"Can you predict how many walkers we'll have tomorrow based on the forecast?"

MA Framework: K-ESS2-1 (weather patterns), 2-ESS2-1 (solutions to prevent environmental change)

Activity 3: Living Things Along the Route

Challenge students to count different living things they see on their commute over one week — trees, birds, squirrels, insects, flowers, pets.

At the end of the week, make a class list. How many different types did the class find?

MA Framework: 2-LS4-1 (observe plants and animals to compare diversity), 1-LS1-2 (determine patterns in behavior of parents and offspring)

Health connection: "When you walk to school, your body is moving, your brain is waking up, and your senses are working. You arrive ready to learn."