

A Look at the Garden from an Ant's Perspective

Connect - Research shows students are much more likely to taste vegetables that they have had a part in growing. Today's lesson encourages students to look at the garden from a new perspective, and consider how the garden plays into the food system, habitat, and more, for other living creatures. In this lesson, kids will spend time outside exploring and then record their thoughts by journaling, writing a short story or drawing. This lesson gives students a chance to pay attention to details, take another's perspective, and practice empathy.

Teach - Prompt students to consider ways to be good detectives in the garden by taking many different angles and approaches of looking at the garden. Next, explain to student's that they will be walking through the garden as if they were an ant. Ask: What is an observation?

- What questions can you ask to make good observations?
 - Who, what, when, where, how & why?
 - What patterns did you notice?
 - What is different when you take on the perspective of an ant? What is the same?
- What are the five senses (taste, touch, see, smell, hear).
- What do you already know about ants?
- What do you need to learn about ants in order to pretend being an ant in the garden?
- Quick facts about ants:
 - An ant can lift 20 times its own weight (that's like a second grader lifting up a car!).
 - Ants don't have ears, instead they feel vibrations in the ground through their feet.
 - When searching for food, ants leave a scented trail so they know where they've been & how to get back home.
 - Ants are social insects; they live in groups called colonies.
 - Ants are good for the environment and the garden.
 - Ants are decomposers; they eat and help break down organic matter into soil.
 - When ants tunnel in the soil, they put air into the soil, making it light and fluffy. This is good for plants to grow.
 - When found in a garden, ants are likely snacking on some old, rotting plants.



Active Engagement - Take students out to the garden. Give students *at least* 2 minutes to walk around the garden area while taking on the perspective of an ant. Encourage students to walk, bend, crawl, and lean into the garden as they view the world from the eyes of an ant. Depending on the age of your students, encourage them to record notes during their experience.

Link - After completing their garden exploration from an ant's perspective, have students journal, write a short story, or draw a picture to reflect on what their experience was like in the garden from an ant's view.

- Listen to the story [Hey Little Ant](#) by Phillip and Hannah Hoose. This book invites the main character and readers to practice empathy and to think twice before squishing an ant.
- Make your own [Ant Farm](#) using mason jars, soil, a small piece of fabric, and ants & watch how ants tunnel through the soil.

Bonus - Instead of taking on the perspective of an ant, have student's pretend to be a bird, dog, rabbit or bee, etc. How does the environment look the same or different with this fresh perspective?

