



Reflective Activities

Dear Teachers,

We have really enjoyed working with you and your students on the “Story of Our Oaks” project and hope that you had as much fun as we did!

In this final packet of papers, you will find:

1. Instructions and materials needed to lead two **reflective activities** in your classroom. The reflective activities are very important as they allow the students to reflect upon, synthesize, and retain what they have learned. You may choose one of the activities or you may choose to do both- it's up to you! Both activities are designed to be creative and fun while allowing students to reflect upon what they have gained.
 - The “Story of Our Oaks” activity allows students to reflect on their own experience of the program, from the slide show to the acorn planting. It emphasizes creative writing and also provides a space for drawing.
 - The “Recipe for a Woodland” activity invokes students’ imaginations as well as their knowledge of oak woodlands in the task of creating their very own oak woodland. This activity emphasizes drawing more than creative writing.
2. A list of **vocabulary words** that relate to oaks and oak communities. We provide these so that you may integrate them into other lessons as you see fit.
3. A list of the 4th grade **content standards** that our program has touched upon. One reason we provide this list is so that you can draw upon information and experiences from our program and complement them with other material to thoroughly cover these standards.

Thank you so much!

Erin Marnocha
Project Manager
Once Upon a Watershed

310.968.6138
erin.marnocha@gmail.com

Sara Benjamin
Project Director
Once Upon a Watershed

805.895.1241
SaraBrookeBenjamin@gmail.com



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Reflective Activity #1: The Story of Our Oaks

Students will be able to write and draw about what they have learned and what they have experienced during the program. You will be provided with a transparency to remind the students of all the activities that have led them on their journey of discovery. A blank space on the front of the booklet allows them space to draw anything they wish and the inside provides space for writing. We encourage them to write about anything oak-related that inspires them. For those that would like more direction, we suggest the following writing prompts:

1. Tell about the time you spent on the meadow. What did you do? What did you see?
2. What did you learn about oaks that you didn't know before?
3. Who are some of the animals that live in an oak community?
4. How were oaks important to the Chumash people?
5. What was your favorite activity (or activities) and why?
6. What else would you like to learn or comment about?

Reflective Activity #2: Recipe for an Oak Woodland

Each student will receive an imaginary deed to one square mile of land. On this virgin plot they will be free to create their own dream-forest, complete with as many trees, animals, mountains and rivers as they desire. Let their imaginations run wild. To encourage creativity you can give them some suggestions: "To make your woodland beautiful and radiant, you might want to add things like waterfalls and windstorms, or perpetual rainbows..." Have them list the ingredients of their oak woodland, then have them draw a picture of it. Ask them to write the name of their woodland on their deed and on the signpost. End by discussing with them whether their individual woodlands are able to maintain themselves year after year. For instance, see if they have chosen representatives of the food cycle: producers, consumers, and decomposers.

(Modified from: Cornell, Joseph. Sharing Nature with Children. Dawn Publications: Nevada City, 1998.)

Vocabulary Words

oak tree
acorn
sprout
woodland
community
energy
matter
acorn woodpecker
great horned owl
red-tailed hawk
western scrub jay

American crow
northern flicker
yellow warbler
fox squirrel
mountain lion
pocket mouse
coyote
California newt
gopher snake
salamander
alligator lizard



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4th Grade Life Sciences Content Standards Covered

2. All organisms need energy and matter to live and grow. As a basis for understanding this concept:
 - a. Students know plants are the primary source of matter and energy entering most food chains.
 - b. Students know producers and consumers (herbivores, carnivores, omnivores, and decomposers) are related in food chains and food webs and may compete with each other for resources in an ecosystem.
 - c. Students know decomposers, including many fungi, insects, and microorganisms, recycle matter from dead plants and animals.

3. Living organisms depend on one another and on their environment for survival. As a basis for understanding this concept:
 - a. Students know ecosystems can be characterized by their living and nonliving components.
 - b. Students know that in any particular environment, some kinds of plants and animals survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all.
 - c. Students know many plants depend on animals for pollination and seed dispersal, and animals depend on plants for food and shelter.
 - d. Students know that most microorganisms do not cause disease and that many are beneficial.