

GETTING STARTED

Sharpen Your Powers of Observation

Taking the time to carefully observe an item can provide you with details you wouldn't necessarily notice. Sharpen your powers of observation with this activity.

1. Find an item from the natural world. It could be a leaf, a rock, a feather, a seashell, a seed or nut.
2. Spend five minutes examining it. Pick it up. Turn it over. Feel its weight.
3. Write down three or four sentences that describe the item.
4. What questions do you have about the item? (For example, why is the seashell shaped the way it is? How did the rock form? What is the function of this feather?) Write down three questions.

Now that you've had the opportunity to look at one small item, it's time to set your sights on the bigger picture. Go to a natural setting in your area. What do you see, hear, smell, feel? What did you notice about the natural world that you didn't know before?

What's Happening in the Natural World Around You?

The Young Naturalist Awards video and the previous activity might have given you some ideas about the kind of investigation you might undertake for the Young Naturalist Awards. Think about the natural environment in your area. Look at the topics below. Come up with two questions for each related to your local area. (Need help? Look through local newspapers for articles on the environment, talk to a park ranger, visit a local preserve, park, or lake. Your backyard might be a good place to start.)

- Pollution
- Animals/Plants
- Invasive Species
- Ecosystem/Ecosystem Change

Choose a question. Plan what you would do to seek out the answer to that question. For help, see the contest guidelines at amnh.org/yna.

Supported by

