



Flipping Through Nature:  
Card Decks to Guide Outdoor Exploration

# Writing Poetry Outdoors

**Write a poem inspired by being outdoors!**



## Leaf

Yellow, orange, honestly I don't  
know what color you are.

At the tip, you are as crisp as a  
potato chip.

In the middle, you are a sky  
with yellowish sun and  
orange bursting out like a  
firework.

*—Kyla Z., 3rd grade*

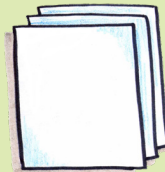


## You will need:

something to  
write with:  
pencil or pen.



something to write on:  
paper, clipboard, or  
journal.





# Find somewhere to write.

- Choose a spot.
- Slow down and take a big breath.
- Notice what is around you.



# **I notice:** Write what you see, hear, smell, touch.

- Focus on anything that catches your interest!
- If you're in a group, share some observations out loud.



**Example:** *Ants crawl in a line.*

# **I wonder:** Write questions about what you notice or anything!

**Example:**

*How many times  
have ants crawled  
along this path?*



# It reminds me of: What memories, ideas, or objects come to mind?



## Examples:

- *They remind me of people walking on a busy sidewalk.*
- *Ants, their shiny bodies move like lines of seeds.*

# Write about how you're feeling right now.

## Examples:

- *Sitting here leaning against the tree trunk, with friends around me, I feel calm, like I have strong roots too.*
- *I feel grateful and sad remembering looking at leaves with my grandma.*



## Make a poem by combining or changing the order of your lines.

- Include what feels meaningful to you.
- Shift between observations, thoughts, and feelings.
- Poems don't need to rhyme.





# Stuck? Look around.

- Notice something and write it down.
- Then, notice what that makes you think of and write that down.



**There are no rules. If the poem goes somewhere unexpected, follow it.**

***“Poems hide . . . What we have to do is live in a way that lets us find them.”***

**—Naomi Shihab Nye**



## First Rain

First rain

strikes the heron-blue lake.

Water meets itself

with a million tiny hands.

Applause.

—Arthur Dawson

(I notice)

(It reminds me of)

**When revising your poem, you may choose to include the words *I notice*, or leave them out.**

**For example:**

- *I notice the first rain strike the heron-blue lake.*

**OR**

- *First rain strikes the heron-blue lake.*



## Read and write more poems.

- Read more poems.
- Try writing more poems in different places.

## Tree Circle

**I notice** roots of a tree growing into the ground.

**They remind me of** elephant legs,  
or columns on a building.

**I wonder** how many people have visited this place?

How many birds have sat on this tree?

**I notice** sitting here leaning against the trunk, with friends around me, I feel calm,  
like I have strong roots too.

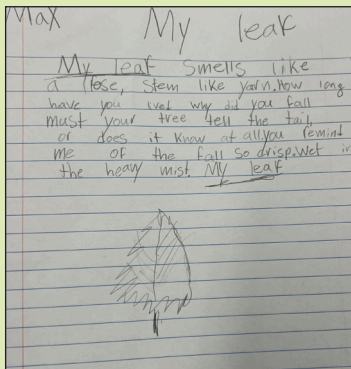
(I wonder)

(I notice)

—Alex P., 9th grade

(It reminds me of)





**My Leaf**

My leaf smells like a rose,  
stem like yarn.  
How long have you lived?  
Why did you fall?  
Must your tree tell the tale,  
or does it know at all?  
You remind me of the fall.  
So crisp. Wet in the heavy mist.  
My leaf.

—Max S., 4th grade

# Writing Poetry Outdoors

## My Backyard in the Spring

I sit in the backyard for  
hours looking up and noticing the  
clouds swiftly drift by.

When I'm there I hear the bees  
buzzing, the birds chirping,  
and wind gently blowing the trees.

I let the low wind hit my face  
with warm spring air.

I let the warm air flood through  
my body.

I sink into the  
hot grass trying  
to figure out  
the shapes of  
the clouds. The  
wind gently pushes the  
trees toward us.

—Brooke Y., 3rd grade

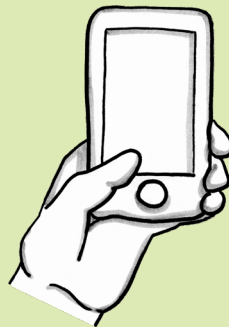


# If you want, you can share your poem.

Read your poem to  
a friend or family  
member.

My poem ...

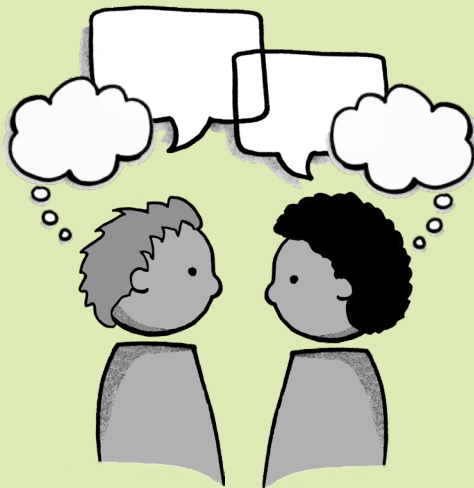
Take a photo and  
share it online.



# Think back on your experience.

Discuss or share with a partner:

- What was it like to write a poem?
- Did anything surprise you about the process?



To see more *Flipping Through Nature: Card Decks to Guide Outdoor Exploration* activities, visit [lwrnce.org/center-for-environmental-learning](http://lwrnce.org/center-for-environmental-learning). There you will also find guides for using the *Flipping Through Nature* card decks, photo and poetry acknowledgments, and more information.



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