



Museum Partners Consulting, LLC

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I Wonder

Suggested grade levels/subject: Grades K-4; Visual Arts, Science, English/Language Arts

Time required: Three 45-minute class periods, including one exploration (outdoors/out-of-class) period*

Essential Question: How can our environment inspire us?

*depending on the length of your class periods and/or how often you work with the students, this could take more or less time

This lesson is based on the work of Matthew Jensen, a multidisciplinary artist who begins his work by wondering about a place, then exploring it, on foot, being open to “wonder” and things that are mysterious and unknown. He then incorporates what he finds into a work of art, bringing the outdoors inside. ([Read more about Jensen’s work](#) and [see images of his installation “Park Wonder”](#))

We encourage students to explore their neighborhoods around their school, but also know that sometimes these areas can be unsafe. This lesson could also be completed by taking the students to a park or similar safe public space. A goal of the lesson is to learn to look carefully at what is around you, inspire curiosity and wonder, and use this curiosity and wonder in a creative, expressive manner. We encourage you to adapt the lessons to best meet the needs of your students and situation.

Objectives:

- Students will be encouraged to explore and immerse themselves in an outdoor (preferably natural) environment by careful looking and listening.
- Students will be encouraged to ask questions and be curious about what they see and hear.
- Students will create artwork and practice writing skills that incorporates the sense of wonder they cultivated through immersion in their environment.

Materials:

- Collecting containers (could be plastic tubs, reusable bags, boxes, etc.)
- Trip sheets and clipboard(s)/pencil (see below re: age group)
- Cardboard or stiff paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Markers/crayons/paint
- Various textural collage materials i.e. pipe cleaners, pom poms, tissue paper, etc. (optional)
- Pencils
- Images of Matt Jensen’s work (see links above/following)

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Vocabulary:
Collage
Found objects
Tangible
Invisible
Landscape
Wonder
Curiosity
Inspiration

Instructions:

- 1) Show students some of Matt Jensen's work via [his website](#) or photos of the installation "[Park Wonder](#)." Discuss with students what they see in the artwork. *What do you notice? What do you see? How do you think the artist created each piece?*
- 2) Explain Matt Jensen's process to students, and introduce the word "inspiration." *Where do you think Matt got his inspiration?*
- 3) Ask students *what do you wonder about the artwork or the artist? How do you think he chose what to include in each artwork?*
- 4) Explain to students that they will be going on a walk and you want them to fill in a K-W-L chart (Know – wonder- learn) during and after their walk. They will collect something from their walk to include in an art or written piece afterwards. Remind them to use their senses as they go on the walk. For younger students, have them walk in smaller groups with an adult who can record what they see, smell, hear, and can touch on the (attached) trip sheet; older students can fill the sheets out on their own.
- 5) Back in the classroom, review what happened on the walk and have students share what they wondered. Each student can pick one thing they wondered and use that plus some of the objects they collected and the other art materials to create a collage. Older students can include a written piece (story, poem, description) based on what they wondered.

Wrap-up:

Together with students, fill in the "Learn" part of the K-W-L chart. *How did listening carefully help you learn? How did looking carefully make you curious and give you inspiration as it did to Matt Jensen?*

Extension activities:

If you are near one of the areas Matt Jensen walked have students explore this area instead of/in addition to another area locally near their school. Compare what they experienced with a corresponding artwork from the show.

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New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards Alignment:

English Language Arts:

Literacy SL1/2/3/4.1-3 Speaking and Listening: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade-appropriate topics with peers and adults in small and larger groups, following agreed-upon rules for discussion, responding to others' comments; asking and answering questions.

Literacy SL1/2/3/4.5 Speaking and Listening: Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate, to clarify.

Science:

ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems: The sustainability of human societies and the biodiversity that supports them requires responsible management of natural resources. (HS-ESS3-3)

Visual and Performing Arts:

1.1 The Creative Process: All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1.1.2.D.1 Identify the basic elements of art and principles of design in diverse types of artwork.

1.4 Aesthetic Responses & Critique Methodologies: All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment, and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1.4.2.A.3 Use imagination to create a story based on an arts experience that communicated an emotion or feeling, and tell the story through each of the four arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual art).



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