

Outdoor Learning Tips

Taking students outside may seem daunting. The tips below have been designed to make heading outside easier.

- **Set expectations before going outside** – Understanding what is happening and why will help students relax. Ensuring that all students are aware of what is expected of them and of the guidelines to outdoor learning will make the transition to outdoor learning much easier for all.
- **Be prepared** – What essentials will you need outside? Consider hats, sunscreen, warm clothes, a First Aid kit, full water bottles, camera etc.
- **Watch the weather** – The weather affects our ability to learn in multiple ways. Wet, windy or wild weather will affect attention spans so adjust your plans accordingly. Likewise, avoid standing with your back to the sun when talking to students: they will be squinting to see you and probably missing important information in the process.
- **Keep it simple** – Some students can find it hard to listen to someone talking for a long period of time, especially outside. If long stretches of talking are necessary, consider breaking it up between indoor and outdoor time and have a clear plan about what you will do outdoors when you get there.
- **Bring it together at the beginning and the end** – Being outside has the risk of feeling dispersed. Consider bringing all the students together in a circle (or another shape/format) at the beginning of the lesson and at the end of the lesson. This is a good way of holding everyone's attention at once (and will hopefully prevent you from having to say what you need to say more than once).
- **Time** – If you're short of time, try to plan your time outside to occur just before or just after breaks when students are already outside or will be after. This will give you more actual lesson time.
- **Set up a base** – Designate an area as your base. Tell students by the time you count back from 10 they should all be back on base ready to listen to the next set of instructions.
- **Bugs alert!** – Give the students a warning that there are insects outdoors. Some fly. Some crawl. Some bite. Students should try to respect them and not fear them (although make sure you know if any of your students are allergic to bees, ants, or wasps.)
- **Be flexible, and focus on teachable moments** – Be aware that students are making discoveries of their own and may get distracted from what you intend to teach. Use a range of thinking tools and discussion techniques to engage students in different ways.

