Exploring Crows in Our Community

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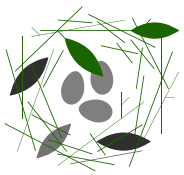
ENGLISH

Created by and for **English** educators, with connections to Science competencies

Overview

Summary

Students observe and learn about crows in their local environment through outdoor exploration, reflection routines, and creative expression.



Who?

K-2 Adaptable to older ages.

How long?

3 – 5 days Extendable to 1–2 weeks depending on depth/repetition of walks.

Curricular Competencies

English Language Arts: Create stories and other texts to deepen awareness of self, family, and community.

Science: Experience and interpret the local environment; Communicate observations and ideas using oral or written language, drawing, or role-play.

Driving Questions

For students: Who are the crows living in our school's neighborhood, and what is their story?

For educators: How can I support students' curiosity about neighborhood wildlife through an inquiry-based learning experience?

Materials

- Compass Points reflection template.
- Mentor text: *Clever Crow* by Christine Butterworth.
- Crow-related stories, songs, video clips:
  - *A Spring Adventure* by Crows Brenda Boreham & Terri Mack.
  - Crow Creation Story.
  - BBC Gift Giving Crows.
- I Noticed / I Wonder/ I Experienced (or I Felt) graphic organizer.
- Chart paper/white board, clipboards, pencils, crayons.
- *Additional/Optional*: loose parts, binoculars, recording devices, cameras, binoculars, crow feathers.

These materials were collaboratively co-created by UBC Pre-Service Teachers, VSB In-Service Teachers, and Inclusion Support Teachers to support inclusive learning environments.

Access Needs

How can this lesson meet diverse access needs?

Physical Access



- Flexible observation methods (photos, videos, outdoors).
- Adaptive equipment (clipboards, binoculars).
- Provide flexible seating and movement options.

Visual Access



- Visual symbols on graphic organizers.
- Provide digital access to materials to customize display.
- Additional materials: (crow feathers for tactile access, binoculars, camera to take photos of crows).

Language Access



- Sentence stems.
- Ongoing visual word bank for key terms.
- Opportunities to share crow stories from student cultural backgrounds.

Neurodiversity & Sensory Access



- Multisensory.
- Flexible grouping.
- Adaptive equipment (Noise-canceling headphones, fidgets).
- Predictable, clear routines.
- Chunk tasks into smaller, manageable steps.
- Additional materials: Visual timers.

SEL Access



- Students identify worries and excitements before walks.
- Opportunities for reflection.
- Build in low-stakes sharing options (partner, small group, opt-out, think-pair-share).
- Emphasize strength-based feedback.

Tiered Supports & Extensions



- Provide scaffolded exemplars as needed.
- Use check-ins and conferencing for targeted support.
- Offer extensions (genre shifts, new audiences, multimodal work).

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Shape Of The Unit

Day 1: Introduction



1. Hook / Engagement

- Provide a diverse collection of media-- stories, songs, video clips, and photos so students can access information in formats that honor their ways of knowing.
- Given students opportunities to connect personal experiences by discussing where they have seen crows near the school or in their own neighborhoods. Facilitate brief discussion.



2. Introduce the "Crow Walk“

- Explain that students will explore the neighborhood to observe real crows, ensuring that learning is contextualized in their local community.
- Set up expectations / community agreements for behavior, where you're going, how long you will be outside, etc.

Day 2: First Crow Walk



1. Review community agreements

2. Compass Points Reflection (Pre-Walk)

- The unit begins with a clear, ongoing reflection routine called Compass Points. Students use the compass organizer with visual symbols to identify...
  - N (Need to know)
  - S (Suggestions / next steps)
  - W (Worries)
  - E (Excitement)



3. Student Task

- On the walk, Draw/write/represent ideas on I Noticed / I Wonder/ I Experienced (or I Felt) graphic organizer.
- Share with a partner.

Teacher Role

- Circulate, listen, and document patterns (especially worries).
- Facilitate short whole-group share-out and create anchor chart.

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Shape Of The Unit

Days 3-4: Deepening Inquiry (Science Integration)



1. Mini-Lessons / Research

- Provide information about crows through diverse formats-- books, videos, or discussion.
- Teacher captures student thinking on a co-constructed anchor chart, recording observations, questions, and new learning as it emerges to support ongoing inquiry and collective knowledge building.



2. Repeat walks with changing focus:

- Walk 2 focus: crow behavior (eating, flying, interacting).
- Walk 3 focus: crow habitat (trees, nests, environment).



3. Science Inquiry Development:

- Review student "wonders" and co-create inquiry questions:
  - What do crows eat?
  - Where do they sleep?
  - How do they communicate?

Day 5: Story Creation (ELA Integration)



1. Science Inquiry Development:

- Observations from the walk.
- What they learned from inquiry.



2. Format options

- Drawing with labels.
- Oral storytelling.
- Simple written sentences.
- Role-play, dramatization, puppet show.
- Building scenes with loose parts.
- Audio/video recording.
- Poem, book, song.

Teacher Role

- Provide sentence stems (e.g., “One day, the crow...”).
- Encourage inclusion of real-life observations.
- Support sequencing (beginning, middle, end).

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