

Observing Stone Walls (#2)

Grade Level: 3

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National Content Standard Alignment

- Science (NSTA):
- Content Standards C, D & E
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- English Language Arts (NCTE):
- 7, 11 & 12

Learner Background

- A prior knowledge of who colonists were and why they are important to the history of New England is necessary for maximum effectiveness of this lesson.

Student Learning Objective(s)

- SWBAT understand why stone walls were built.
- SWBAT comprehend how stone walls were built.

Assessment

- Informal: Teacher observation & questions asked at end of lesson in form of a science talk
- Formal: Students may be asked to respond in writing to one or more of the questions listed in the “closure” section of this lesson.

Materials/Resources

Hardcover blank white notebooks

Pencils, crayons, markers

Stone Wall Secrets by Kristine and Robert Thorson

Potato chips

Chive dip (may substitute with other locally grown herb)

Learning Activities

Initiation

- Teacher begins lesson saying, “If you remember last time, we read a couple pages in the book, *Stone Wall Secret*; can anyone tell me who the characters are and explain the setting or environment in which the story takes place?” Other pre-reading strategy questions, such as “Why do you think the author chose to title the book, *Stone Wall Secret*” may be asked to engage children.
- Teacher then initiates a mini-discussion about the previous lessons’ activity and how difficult it must have been for colonists to remove stones from the land for farming, thereby creating stone walls.

Lesson Development

- Books are dispersed to students, who are asked to observe the farmhouse illustration and then follow along as teacher reads aloud the first two pages, starting “The old man” and ending “we’ve got some walls to inspect.”
- Teacher stops reading at key points to clarify vocabulary and allow students the opportunity to interact with text. Suggested discussion topic:

Grandpa really cares about stone walls; does Adam?

What can Grandpa possibly do to make Adam care about these stone walls?

- Teacher makes transition from book to activity by explaining that we have reasons to care about stone walls as well. But, before students discuss why, students will examine the stone walls on the nature walk. At this point, teacher gives each student their own blank white notebook while explaining directions for next activity (nature walk):

Find your own place once we get to the stone wall

Examine the stones in the wall carefully and note their colors, shapes, textures and sizes because real scientists pay very close attention to every little detail.

What types of plants grow near stone walls?

Now, what else do you see around the stone wall (dead leaves, sticks, pebbles, etc.)?

Please use your pencil to sketch a drawing of the stone wall and its' surroundings on your journal cover.

Closure

- Once inside, students are allotted time to color-in their sketches while teacher asks students what they noticed about the stone walls. Questions might include:

What colors did you notice?

Was it sunny or shady around the stones?

What types of plants (or what did they look like) were growing near the stone walls and why?

- Teacher shows students a handful of chives while explaining that many herbs, which colonists used for cooking, were planted near stone walls because the walls shaded the plants from too much sunlight and sheltered them from the wind. Chives were grown, as well as many other herbs near stone walls because of these suitable conditions.
- Each student is given a small plate to sample chive (herb) dip with some chips while they continue to finish their journal covers.