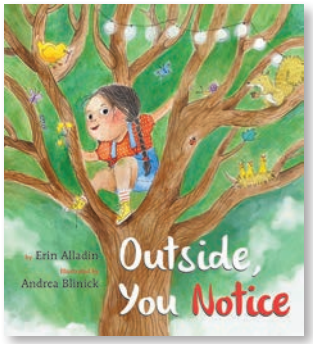
READING GUIDE

Outside, You Notice

Erin Alladin
illus. Andrea Blinick



Story Summary

Time spent in the outdoors stirs a child's imagination. Nature sparks wonder, wonder leads to curiosity, and curiosity brings about a greater knowledge of the world and one's self. In *Outside, You Notice*, a meditative thread of child-like observations (*How after the rain / Everything smells greener*) is paired with facts about the habits and habitats of animals, insects, birds, and plants (*A tree's roots reach as wide as its branches*).

Author Erin Alladin invites young scientists and daydreamers to look closely and think deeply in this lyrical nonfiction text, celebrating all the kinds of "outside" that are available to children, from backyards to city parks to cracks in the sidewalk. Illustrator Andrea Blinick portrays these spaces bursting with small wonders with a child's-eye view, her naïve and nostalgic style capturing the joy of endless discovery.

Links:
Take Me Outside:
https://takemeoutside.ca

Ontario Parks Blog—Healing in the forest:
https://www.ontarioparks.com/parksblog/guide-forest-bathing/

Pair this book with:
Water's Children by Angèle Delaunois and illustrated by Gérard Frischeteau

A World of Mindfulness by the Editors of Pajama Press

Erin Alladin is an editor, a writer, and an ecology enthusiast who is always looking for ways to combine her passions. Born in Northern Ontario to a gardener and a forester, she spent most of her early life looking at and thinking about the natural world. As a young adult she spent nearly a decade immersed in Toronto's children's literature scene before retreating back up north, where she continues to edit wile writing *Earth Undaunted*, a blog about regenerative gardening. Erin lives near Parry Sound with her husband, her garden, and not quite enough bookshelves.

Andrea Blinick is an artist and an art educator with a passion for children's literature. After graduating from the Ontario College of Art and Design with an illustration diploma, she went on to receive a Bachelor of Design through OCAD in conjunction with Thompson Rivers University and then pursued a Bachelor of Education at York University. Today Andrea lives in Toronto with her husband and two daughters, who often inspire the storytelling behind her art. She enjoys music, writing, comedy, trying new restaurants, and making a mess on her art table.

Illustrated Book Ages 4–7 | ISBN: 978-1-77278-193-9 | Pages: 32

Themes
The Natural Environment, Mindfulness, Health and Nutrition

BISAC Codes
JNF051000 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Science & Nature / General
JNF022000 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Gardening
JNF003000 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Animals / General

Reading Level
Lexile Measure: AD830L

Curriculum Connections
Oral communication—read-aloud, listening, responding, making connections
Science—life systems, earth and space systems
Media literacy—photo journals
Health—mental and physical health

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Curriculum Connections:

Activiy	Main Subject Areas	Specific Skills
Read-Aloud	Oral Communication—Listening	Active listening strategies Responding to oral texts Making connections
The Needs and Characteristics of Living Things	Science—Life systems	Describe and compare the needs and characteristics of living things, including humans
Air and Water in the Environment	Science—Earth and space systems	Investigate air and water Living things, including humans, need air and water
Soils in the Environment	Science—Earth and space systems	Components of soil Composting
Photo Journal	Media literacy	Create a media work with varied camera angles
Mindfulness	Health—mental health	Taking care of mind and body Using the five senses

The Read-Aloud

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- use active listening strategies
- express personal thoughts and feelings about what has been read
- extend understanding of oral texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge and experience

You Will Need

- *Outside, You Notice*
- outdoor space

How To:

First Reading

If possible, take students to a comfortable location outside where they can relax on the ground while you read. Read only the larger text, which forms a lyrical poem, saving the green informational text boxes for another time. Instead of discussing, pause at the end of each page, modelling a sensory sort of response, as suggested below:

Second spread: Breathe deeply.

Third spread: Cup your ear.

Fourth spread: Lift your face to the sun. Mmmm.

Fifth spread: Smile.

Sixth spread: Nod.

Seventh spread: While reading, cup your free hand and stress the word "important."

Eighth spread: Close your eyes.

Ninth spread: While reading, stress the words "under" and "around".

Tenth spread: If you are near trees, look at the leaves' shadows. Students may follow your gaze.

Eleventh spread: Point to the carrots.

Twelfth spread: Sit very still.

Thirteenth spread: Breathe deeply and plant your feet.

Fourteenth spread: After reading, ask students what they notice.

Final page: After reading, invite students to describe their thoughts and feelings about the book. Discuss what outdoor locations are in the schoolyard and nearby, that you might visit as a class.

Second Reading

Focus on the facts in the green text boxes. Record any questions the students have.

After Reading

Use students' questions to stimulate a student-led inquiry.

Erin Alladin, illus. Andrea Blinick
Outside, You Notice

Activity 1: The Needs and Characteristics of Living Things

With a few changes, this activity can become a study of animals or plants, to tailor it to your grade's specific curriculum.

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- identify the physical characteristics of a variety of plants and animals
- investigate the physical characteristics of plants (e.g., basic parts, size, shape, color) and explain how they help the plant meet its basic needs (e.g., roots anchor the plant and help provide the plant with food and water; some plants have brightly colored flowers to attract bees)
- investigate and compare the basic needs of humans and other living things, including the need for air, water, food, warmth, and space

You Will Need

- *Outside, You Notice*
- "Comparing Animals" blackline master, included below, one per student
- Chart paper and markers

How To:

1. Post an enlarged copy of the Comparing Animals chart (change the headings as necessary to suit your curriculum goals). Leaf through *Outside, You Notice*, inviting students to stop you when they see or hear reference to an animal (including all members of the animal kingdom, such as humans, birds, invertebrates, etc.). Fill in as much information about the animal as the group can provide, and plan to do research to fill in the gaps. Use drawings where possible if students are non-readers.
2. Ask, "What do all these creatures need, that we have not listed on the chart?" (air and water)
3. Ask, "What living things are not part of the animal kingdom?" We will focus on plants here, but there are other kingdoms as well. Fungi, also mentioned in *Outside, You Notice*, are their own kingdom, as are protozoa and algae. And from time to time, new organisms are discovered which blur the line between plants and animals. It's not necessary to

teach young children about these, but it's good practice to avoid making outdated assertions, such as "Every living thing is either a plant or an animal."

4. Draw a horizontal line across a piece of chart paper to represent the ground. Draw a vertical line up from the ground to represent the stem of a plant. Read through *Outside, You Notice* again, this time on the lookout for parts of plants and things plants need. As you come to these things, draw and label them on the chart. For example, after reading the first full spread, you might add roots, underground water, and leaves funneling more water to the roots. Later spreads might prompt you to add flowers, fruit, seeds, pollinators, food in the soil, etc. Collaboratively with students, write a sentence or two describing the things that all plants need. Have students make their own labeled diagrams of plant parts, with a sentence describing plants' needs.
5. Consolidate students' understanding of the parts and needs of plants by growing your own plants from seeds on the windowsill, as described in the next activity.

Activity 2: Air and Water in the Environment

Help students gain an appreciation for the two most important necessities of life.

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- investigate water in the natural environment
- describe ways in which living things, including humans, depend on air and water

You Will Need

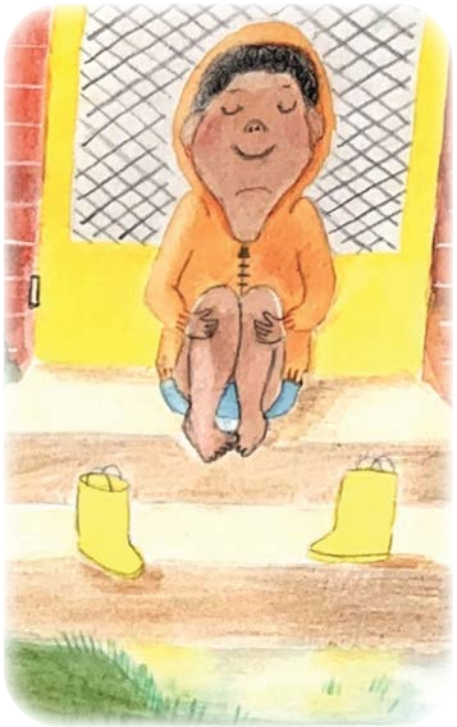
- *Outside, You Notice*
- an outdoor space
- clear cups, soil, paper towels, seeds, water
- other picture books featuring the importance of water, such as *Water's Children* by Angèle Delaunois and illustrated by Gérard Frischeteau

How To:

1. Read the second spread of *Outside, You Notice*. Record any questions that arise from the facts given. For example: Why do plants release the oils mentioned? What plants in our area funnel rainwater? Does the ground really stay drier under large trees? Design investigations to study these questions.
2. Go for a walk just after a rain. Take recording devices such as clipboards, notebooks, or cameras. Tell students to be prepared to notice water in the environment, including things mentioned on the second spread, and new things as well. Invite them to record the things they notice. Back in the classroom, design and execute an investigation into questions that arise from students' own observations.
3. On the seventh spread of *Outside, You Notice*, draw attention to the child watering the garden, and the fact box to the right of that child. Discuss the effects of water on seeds. Invite students to help you design an experiment to study this. For example, sprout seeds in a clear cup lined with paper towel, with damp soil filling the center and seeds wedged be-

tween the towel and the cup, for easy observation. Have students record their observations each day. Beans, corn, and squash have seeds that are large enough for children to handle easily, and sprout quickly enough to maintain interest. These particular seeds could also lead to a study of the Indigenous planting idea of The Three Sisters: https://gardening.cals.cornell.edu/lessons/curricula/the-three-sisters-exploring-an-iroquois-garden/

4. Read and discuss the eighth spread of *Outside, You Notice*.
5. Read and discuss the ninth spread of *Outside, You Notice*. Draw students' attention to the way in which a plant gets its food, by using its roots to drink water in which nutrients are found. Ask: Are there nutrients in the tap water we are using to water our sprouted seeds? (most likely not) What could we do about that? Perhaps water them with compost tea or transplant them to an outdoor location after they have sprouted: https://www.diynetwork.com/how-to/outdoors/gardening/how-to-make-compost-tea
6. On the tenth spread, model awe at the fact that plants are the only living things that can make their own food, and they do it with just air, water, and sunlight! Make a chart diagram that shows the sun as the source of Earth's energy, and how it flows to plants, which turn it into food, which is then consumed by animals including humans, who then convert it to kinetic energy (movement) in order to live our lives. Discuss how plants and humans use different parts of the air. Plants mainly need carbon dioxide and humans mainly need oxygen. Plants and humans are excellent partners because we each exhale or release the part of the air that the other needs. Walk outside again, this time looking at leaf veins, to cement the awareness that these veins transport water.
7. On the twelfth spread, draw attention to the fact that (moving) air plays another important role in the lives of some plants: pollination. Return to the seventh spread for one more way: the spread of seeds. Go outside and look for evidence of pollen and wind-borne seeds. Students may have fun blowing on any dandelion seed heads they find!
8. Read the thirteenth and fourteenth spreads. Go outside. Discuss how, just like plants, our two primary needs are air and water, followed by food. Encourage students to lie on their backs in a grassy spot (if available) and breathe deeply, thinking about the air that they are breathing, and how the birds and other animals nearby, seen or not, are breathing the same air. Invite students to think about the plants that are using the carbon dioxide people exhale and releasing the oxygen that people need. Invite them to think about what it means to "bloom" as mentioned on the fourteenth spread, and how we are connected to the natural world. After this experience, provide students with their next most pressing needs: a drink of water and a snack break.
9. Read other picture books featuring the importance of water, such as *Water's Children* by Angèle Delaunois and illustrated by Gérard Frischeteau.



Activity 3: Soils in the Environment

"How digging the earth / Until it's up to your elbows / And even behind your ears / Makes you feel more proud / Than dirty"

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- identify and describe the different types of soils
- investigate the components of soil, using a variety of soil samples from local environments
- investigate the process of composting

You Will Need

- *Outside, You Notice*
- outdoor space
- 1 large pail and smaller containers (1 for each student, pair, or small group)
- soil sieves
- 1 large shovel and several trowels or spoons (1 for each student, pair, or small group)
- masking tape and permanent marker
- blank newsprint

How To:

1. Re-read the fifth and ninth spreads of *Outside, You Notice* with students.
2. From those pages, make a list of facts that interest students, questions they have, and investigations they would like to pursue. The following steps describe an investigation into the questions "Is our soil a mixture of tiny pieces of rock and tiny pieces of decomposed plants?" and "Is our soil more rocky the deeper we dig?"
3. Decide if students will work alone, in pairs, or in small groups, according to the amount of equipment available. Take students outside to a place where you can dig a hole in the soil. Using the large shovel, dig a scoop through the topmost layer and place the soil into a bucket. Invite about a third of your students to scoop some of this soil into their containers and label their containers "top". Empty the bucket and refill it with a scoop of soil from deeper in the ground. Invite another third of your students to take samples of this soil and label their containers "middle". Repeat with a bucket of deeper soil and have the final group of students label their containers "deep".
4. Back in the classroom (or better yet, in an outdoor classroom!), have students empty their containers onto blank newsprint placed on their desks. Invite them to spread the soil out and look at individual components. If they have any live animals such as centipedes, they can place them in their container for now. Guide students in identifying the difference between organic ("tiny pieces of decomposed plants" and animals) and inorganic components ("tiny pieces of rock"). Invite students to record what they find, using words and pictures, and perhaps photographs. Release any live creatures back outside. Have students present their findings to the group and see if there are any differences between the soil found at different levels.
5. Demonstrate how to sift a soil sample, beginning with the largest available sieve and ending with the smallest. Have students place the sieved soil in piles arranged by size on their newsprint. Again, have them make observations and compare results from the different depths of soil. Encourage students to discuss and draw conclusions. Ask if they felt happier after getting soil on their skin.
   Detailed instructions on how to use a soil sieve:
   https://www.cbsd.org/cms/lib010/PA01916442/Centricity/Domain/1908/soil_sieve.pdf
6. Other investigations can be done around the presence of plant roots, fungus, and other living things in the soil. You might even want to start a composting program for your school to investigate how worms, with the help of microbes, can turn organic matter into compost. Use the fruit and veggie scraps from students' lunches. A vermicomposter kept right in the classroom will allow students to see the process up close:
   https://www.epa.gov/recycle/how-create-and-maintain-indoor-worm-composting-bin

Activity 4: Photo Journal

Making a photo journal of outdoor locations will reinforce the love of nature your students have developed in previous activities, and allow them to share it with others!

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- identify the conventions and techniques used in some familiar media forms and explain how they help convey meaning (e.g., camera closeups to show details, medium and long shots to put people and objects in perspective, high and low camera angles to create illusions of size or artistic effects, environmental sounds for realistic effects, background music to suggest a mood)
- produce a media text for a specific purpose and audience, using a specific media form and appropriate conventions and techniques

You Will Need

- *Outside, You Notice*
- digital cameras or tablets, ideally one per student
- technology suitable for the chosen media form, such as printer or slide show software

How To:

1. Leaf through *Outside, You Notice* again with students, directing their attention to the illustrations. Draw their attention to the varied "camera angles" used and introduce them to media terminology such as close-up, long shot, high angle, low angle, and overhead shot (bird's-eye view). Discuss why the illustrator might have chosen each angle and how it helps the reader understand the text.
2. Look through the list of outside places on the final page of the book. Make a list of similar places on a chart, replacing any that might be very difficult or impossible to go to, with other outdoor locations that will be more viable for you. Tell students that this will be a bucket list of sorts. Together and individually, you will try to spend time in each of the outside locations on the list. Students will photograph each location, choosing the camera angle they feel conveys the idea they are trying to share with the audience. Collaboratively with students, choose a purpose for this photo journal. It might be to advertise "Take Me Outside Day" (see https://takemeoutside.ca) to the rest of the school, promote mental health or a love of nature to a younger class, or create a flyer encouraging visitors to your area to take advantage of special outdoor locations.
3. Provide students with devices for taking photographs (e.g. digital cameras, tablets). Visit a few of the locations on your bucket list, having students bask in the natural environment and think about what they notice, both around them and inside their own bodies. Have them take photos that capture that feeling. Encourage students to think carefully about camera angle. They might work in pairs or small groups and take photos of one another in order to achieve the camera angle they desire. Back in the classroom, give students time to write down what they noticed in each location.
4. Assign some of the locations (e.g. backyard) to be photographed as homework, allowing students to substitute locations that are more accessible to them when necessary, and working with students who do not own the necessary technology to find a way for them to succeed in the assignment. Encourage students to write down what they noticed at each location.
5. Once all the locations on your list have been photographed, have students create a media work in the most suitable form. The written record of what they noticed will inspire captions for each photo. If it will be a print work like a flyer, facilitate the printing of the photos and guide students in arranging them and adding captions. If it will be a slide show, provide the appropriate technology to superimpose captions and add background music or natural sound effects. If each student has created their own slide show, you might want to collect a selection of the most effective slides to show your intended audience (e.g. to advertise "Take Me Outside Day" to the whole school).
6. Assist students in bringing their media works to their intended audience.

Activity 5: Mindfulness

Helping students incorporate simple mindfulness practices into their daily lives can make a positive contribution to their mental health.

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- demonstrate an understanding that mental health is a part of overall health and reflect on the things they can do to appreciate and take care of their body and mind
- identify the five senses and describe how each functions

You Will Need

- *Outside, You Notice*
- other books that encourage mental health through mindfulness, such as *A World of Mindfulness*, by the Editors of Pajama Press

How To:

1. Discuss mental health and the part it plays in overall health. Invite students to share some actions that contribute to positive mental health.
2. Prepare to re-read just the large font text of *Outside, You Notice*. Invite students to signal when they hear a reference to one of the five senses. After reading, make a chart of the five senses and how each one functions. Discuss how attention to the senses can contribute to a sense of calm and well-being.
3. Take students outside to "bathe in nature." Walk through a forested area if possible, or through the most natural environment you can find. Encourage students to focus on what they see, hear, feel (using the sense of touch) and smell, and on how they feel emotionally. Take breaks to sit or lie on the ground and just "be."
4. At another time, read other books that encourage mental health through mindfulness, such as *A World of Mindfulness*, by the Editors of Pajama Press.
   Parks Blog—"A guide to forest bathing":
   https://www.ontarioparks.com/parksblog/guide-forest-bathing/

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http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/healthcurr18.pdf

Comparing Animals

Name: _____

Animal	Legs	Eyes	Body Covering	Food	Home