FREE TEACHING RESOURCE / K–2 / 15

Garden Neighbors

TEACHER GUIDE • lesson design & facilitation

Grade band: K–2 | 3–4 sessions, 35–45 minutes

Media: washable art media and cut-paper supplies

The artistic problem

Create a close-up composition of two plants and a small visitor from observation.

Essential question: How do careful details make a small subject feel important?

Place-based cultural lens: Look at plants in New Orleans City Park, school gardens, and Louisiana native habitats.

Learning targets

- Investigate the question: How do careful details make a small subject feel important?
- Apply observational marks, texture rubbing, scale in a deliberate original composition.
- Use critique evidence to improve observational marks and name one next step.

Student-visible success criteria

- The final artwork solves this problem: Create a close-up composition of two plants and a small visitor from observation.
- Artwork includes two texture strategies and one purposeful focal point.
- Process evidence shows two different options before selection.
- Visual decisions demonstrate observational marks and support the intended audience.
- Feedback results in at least one visible revision that the student can explain.

Standards & studio habits

Louisiana K–4 cluster: VA-CE-E1, VA-CE-E3, VA-CE-E5, VA-AP-E6

Studio Habits of Mind: Observe, Envision, Express, Reflect. These habits are developed interactively, not in a fixed rank or sequence.

Instructional alignment: Louisiana benchmark codes are official broad grade-cluster benchmarks; specific expectations are developed locally. The ten instructional stages come from the supplied Artistic Investigations framework.

Preparation & materials

- Drawing paper or sketchbook for idea studies
- washable art media and cut-paper supplies
- Samples and images from reliable sources, with attribution
- Tools appropriate to local safety rules and grade level
- Choice of visual, oral, or written reflection tools

10-stage teaching sequence

01 / Engage Present the artistic question: How do careful details make a small subject feel important? Give students two contrasting examples that do not dictate a finished product.

02 / Investigate Look at plants in New Orleans City Park, school gardens, and Louisiana native habitats. Gather visual evidence and note what is observed rather than assumed.

03 / Skill Studio Demonstrate observational marks, texture rubbing, scale. Make thinking visible by testing two alternate solutions and identifying what each communicates.

04 / Generate Develop two possibilities for the challenge: Create a close-up composition of two plants and a small visitor from observation. Change the focal point, material, arrangement or viewer perspective between drafts.

05 / Plan Compare sketches to the success check (two texture strategies and one purposeful focal point); choose a direction and state why it better communicates the intention.

06 / Produce Produce an original visual response using observational marks, texture rubbing, scale; conference on one technical choice and one contextual question.

07 / Critique Partners identify where the artwork communicates the intended idea and locate evidence of observational marks in the work.

08 / Revise Revisit the specific checkpoint: Two texture strategies and one purposeful focal point. Make one visible change after critique and preserve the initial view for comparison.

09 / Present Present with a title, medium, one key artistic decision and any needed credit or contextual limitation.

10 / Reflect Reflect: What evidence proves you improved observational marks? What will you try or investigate next?

Studio sessions & evidence checkpoints

Session	Teaching move	Capture evidence
Day 1	**Notice + explore** Look at plants in New Orleans City Park, school gardens, and Louisiana native habitats.	Record one noticing and a quick mark-making sample.
Day 2	**Skill studio + choices** Demonstrate observational marks, texture rubbing, scale. Make thinking visible by testing two alternate solutions and identifying what each communicates. Children develop two possibilities.	Photo or scan of two studies, with a selected idea.
Day 3	**Make + conference** Create the artwork; show one decision at a time.	Teacher notes use of observational marks.
Day 4	**Critique + revise + share** Peer observation, visible change and oral/visual reflection.	Save before/after samples and next goal.

Key technique to model

observational marks, texture rubbing, scale

Access without lowering the artistic goal

Use photos, leaves from approved sources, tactile samples, and large-format tools. Offer physical samples, captioned images, accessible demonstrations, flexible planning modes, and alternate materials while retaining the common visual learning target.

Teacher coaching questions

- What is the visual problem you are solving?
- Which decision communicates your intended meaning most clearly?
- What does your reference prove, and what are you still imagining?
- What could a viewer misunderstand?
- What visible revision will strengthen your next version?

Cultural care

Do not collect protected plants or imply every habitat is the same across Louisiana.

Stretch & explore

Enlarge the tiniest detail until it fills a whole page.

Design provenance: Original Studio Fieldnotes investigation developed for the 50-lesson library; informed by the teacher-supplied ten-stage Artistic Investigations architecture and reflective Studio Habits framework.