

## Photos of Nature

### Parent Guide

Read the “Directions” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

#### SUMMARY

In this activity, children will explore the outdoors with a digital camera.

#### WHY

Building connections between words and sensory experiences helps to build or reinforce vocabulary. Using a camera can help children remember their experiences later on.

#### TIME

- 20 minutes or more, depending on interest

#### RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best with children in grades kindergarten through 4.

#### GET READY

- Read the book *Rachel Carson and Her Book That Changed the World* to learn about one of America’s most famous biologists and her work in the environmental movement. A reading guide is available at [http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/environment/environment\\_read.pdf](http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/environment/environment_read.pdf).
- Some children like to use worksheets to have a sense of accomplishment or to follow specific instructions. Other children would rather just talk about what they see. Think about your child’s preference to decide if you will use the *ThinkAbout* sheet or just talk through the questions.

#### YOU NEED

- *Directions* sheets (*attached*)
- *ThinkAbout* sheet (*attached*)
- *Step Back in Time* sheets (*attached*)
- Digital Camera (could be part of a cell phone)

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/environment/>.

## Photos of Nature

*Directions*, Page 1 of 2

*For adults and kids to follow together.*

1. First, spend some time together talking about your digital camera. How do you turn it off and on? How do you take a picture? How do you look at a picture you've already taken? How many pictures can you take? Are there rules for how to protect the camera?

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**Tip** Even the most experienced photographers check their equipment and make sure they know all the features of their camera before they head out. This is a good habit to encourage your child to develop.

2. Next, decide where you will go on your photography hunt. The activity will be easiest to complete in a diverse natural place. For more challenge, use a place like a playground or backyard.
3. Bring your *ThinkAbout* sheet to your photography hunt location. On your way, decide how you will use the sheet's ideas: You could try to find many pictures of one idea (such as many photograph of natural things that are tiny), one picture for each idea (checking off ideas like a to-do list); or several pictures illustrating many of the ideas (the most free-flowing approach).
4. Explore your location while taking photos. As you explore, consider these ideas for making your photos as interesting as possible:
  - a. Does your camera have a zoom option? Which of the *ThinkAbout* ideas should be zoomed-in? Which should be zoomed-out?
  - b. Does your camera have a video option? Are there any of the *ThinkAbout* ideas that would be recorded best on video?

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## Photos of Nature

*Directions, Page 2 of 2*

5. Share your photographs with someone who was not on your photography hunt. Explain which idea prompted each photo. If possible, think about ways you could arrange the photos to be most interesting, such as putting two contrasting pictures (one very big natural thing and one very small natural thing) next to each other.
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**More information at** <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/environment/>.

## Photos of Nature

### *ThinkAbout*

Something made by people

Two natural things that look especially interesting next to each other

Something natural that . . .

- o is growing in a surprising place
- o makes an interesting noise
- o has an interesting smell
- o is huge/tiny
- o is a great color
- o is camouflaged
- o is rough/smooth
- o is heavy/light
- o moves quickly/slowly
- o looks like a triangle/square/circle
- o eats something else in nature/gets eaten by something else in nature
- o seems rare or unusual

Of course, not all places have all of these things!

If you can't find something to match the ThinkAbout idea this time,  
just keep an eye out next time you're outdoors!

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/environment/>.



## Photos of Nature

### *Step Back in Time*, Page 1 of 2

For more information, visit the National Museum of American History website <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/environment>.

Rachel Carson's love of nature started when she was a young girl. Beyond her mother's love of nature, Rachel's frequent trip outdoors were also motivated by a nature-study movement in the early 1900s, with books and articles advising parents to help children understand nature and want to protect it. Rachel's favorite magazine, *St. Nicholas*, included nature-study articles and illustrations and when she was only ten, Rachel published her first piece of writing in *St. Nicholas*.

In school, Rachel worked very hard and encouraged her classmates to take their studies seriously as well. In addition to top grades, she also worked on and wrote for her school newspaper. Her teachers were important role models who encouraged her to grow up to be a writer or a scientist—and she ended up becoming both!

Although it was very hard for women scientists to publish their writing in the 1930s and 1940s, Rachel's scientific research and storytelling skills helped her become well known for books and articles about the oceans. But in the late 1950s, Rachel felt that she needed to share the newest science about how widespread use of man-made pesticides hurt the environment. She did a lot of research in libraries, wrote to other experts on the topic, and spoke to other authors to get ideas on the best way to share her research. In 1962



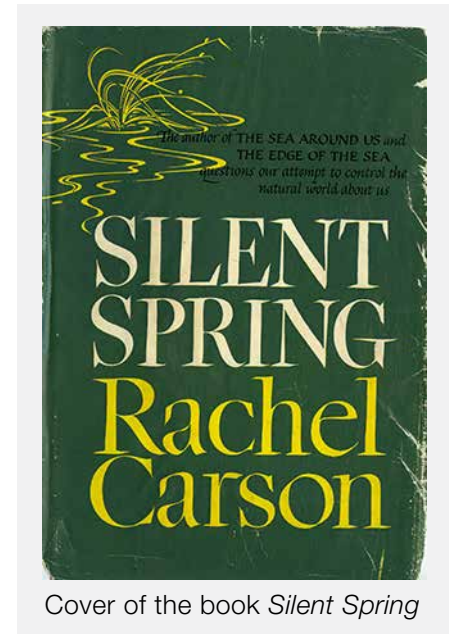
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### Step Back in Time, Page 2 of 2

she published the book *Silent Spring*, which brought a lot of attention to pesticides and other ways that people change the environment.

Some people think that the modern environmental movement might not have started without *Silent Spring*'s wake-up call. Today, the environmental movement has made great changes in the ways everyday people, companies, and governments think about balancing the needs of people with nature's needs. Some topics that environmentalists today think are important include: how people change the places animals live, what chemicals people put in the air or water, and how people make and use energy. What environmental topic is most important to you?



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## Photos of Nature

### Teacher Guide

*Read the “Parent Guide” and “Directions” sheets for step-by-step instructions.*

#### OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Describe and compare things in terms of shape, texture, size, weight, color, and motion.

#### STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Accurately applies descriptive and comparative language.
- Uses the camera’s capabilities.
- Composes an engaging presentation of images.

#### STANDARDS

##### *AAAS Science Benchmarks*

##### *Grade K-2 Benchmarks*

- 12-D-1: Describe and compare things in terms of number, shape, texture, size, weight, color, and motion.

##### *ISTE Standards for Technology for Students (NETS.S)*

##### *1. Creativity and Innovation:*

- b. Create original works as a means of personal or group expression

##### *6. Technology Operations and Concepts:*

- a. Understand and use technology systems

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