



# Family Winter Walk

**Setting:** Any trail in the winter

**Description:** By making observations, you can get to know the winter environment.

**Recommended Time:** 1 to 2 hours

## MATERIALS LIST (optional):

- Clipboard/Cardboard
- Paper and Pencil
- Small container

## ENGAGE

Play the "Eagle Eyes" game to sharpen your observation skills.

- Face a partner. Look carefully at their appearance and try to remember as many details as possible. Both people turn around. Each person alters something in their appearance (untie a shoelace, fasten a button, take off a shoe, fold a plant leg up, etc.). When ready, face each other again, and each person tries to spot the change in appearance of the other person.

## EXPLORE

Start by recording the date, time, and weather (cloud cover, wind, temperature) in the top corner of your paper. Record any of the following observations on your paper as you go (optional).

1. Colors: Make a T chart. One header is Color and the other is Plant or Animal. Record at least five colors and what it is. *What do you notice about the colors in winter?*
2. If there is snow, fill a small container with snow and put it in a pocket until it melts. Observe the amount of actual water that exists in snow. *What does this mean for the plants and animals?*
3. Stop and observe the buds on shrubs and trees. Notice if any sticks are broken off. *Why do these shrubs look like this?*
4. Plants often go dormant in the winter but have already created the buds that will grow in the following spring into leaves. Search and record the different types of buds on plants. *How do the buds on various plants differ?*
5. During the walk, be ready to record the details of any insects you find. Turn over rocks or logs to look for bugs- be sure to turn the rocks and logs back over to leave it the way you found it. *What about insects? Where are they right now?*
6. If any birds are spotted, take time to observe. Ask the following questions:
  - a. *Bigger, smaller or about the same size of a robin?*
  - b. *Is it alone or are there a lot of them?*
  - c. *What type of habitat are they in? Grass, trees, near water, flying?*
7. Stop at any animal signs you find- footprints, scat (poop), bird nests, or eaten cones and record them.
8. *What is the ground like? Exposed dirt? Rocks? How would you describe the trail?*

## ELABORATE

Connect two observations from the walk and make a guess how they interact.

- For example, we saw twigs that had been browsed by an animal and we saw some deer tracks. Deer ate the twigs.
- The birds we saw were in the grasses. The grasses have a lot of seeds. The birds maybe eating the seeds.