

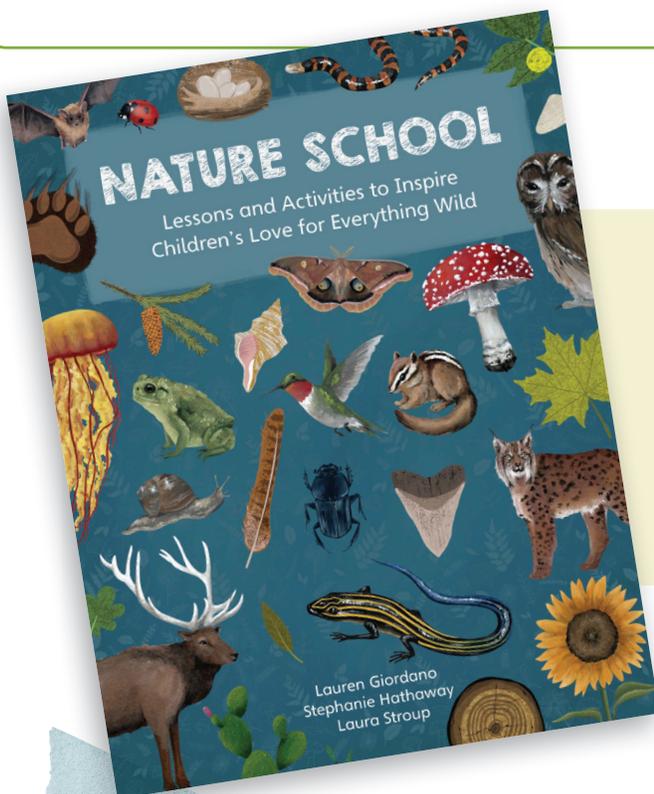
NATURE SCHOOL EXTRA ACTIVITIES

Introduction

Dear Reader,

Thank you for purchasing our book, *Nature School: Lessons and Activities to Inspire Children's Love for Everything Wild*. Our goal is to encourage a connection with nature through hands-on, outdoor learning. This pack of "extras" includes an additional activity to go with each chapter. Let nature (and these activities) be your guide as you enjoy exploring the great outdoors. Make a mushroom spore print with fungi from the temperate forest floor. Identify different types of rocks as you investigate desert ecosystems. Study sand from the seashore with the help of a microscope. Uncover interesting invertebrates that take shelter in savannas and other grasslands. And discover the difference density makes in how well things float in watery wetlands. It is our hope that as you immerse yourself in the natural world, you experience a sense of wonder and curiosity that keeps you coming back for more.

— Lauren Giordano, Stephanie Hathaway, and Laura Stroup, authors of *Nature School: Lessons and Activities to Inspire Children's Love for Everything Wild*



Nature School

By Lauren Giordano, Stephanie Hathaway, and Laura Stroup

Quarry Books

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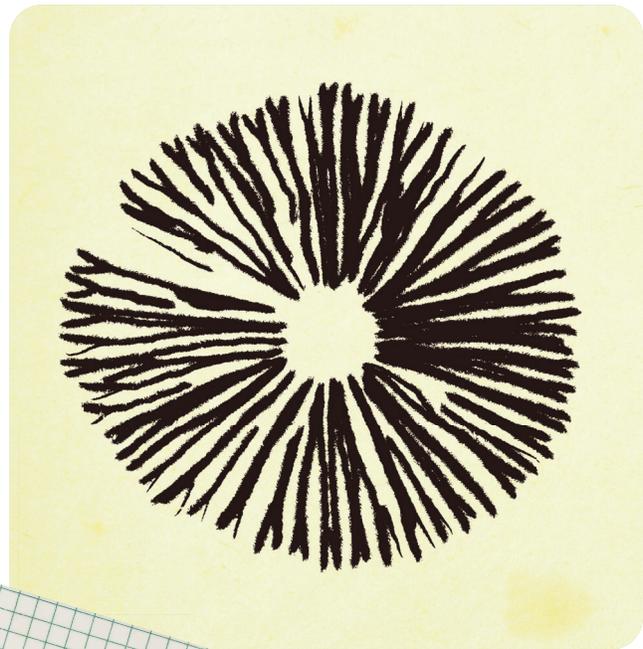
Available June 2023

FOREST ACTIVITY

Mushroom Spore Print

Spore prints are fun to make because they are beautiful, interesting, and they can even help you identify different mushroom species based on their color. Spores are similar to seeds; mushrooms use them to reproduce. Use black and/or white paper for your prints. You can even connect two pieces of paper - one black and one white - in order to see the spores on both colors. *Light colored spores on white paper and dark colored spores on black paper may be difficult to see.

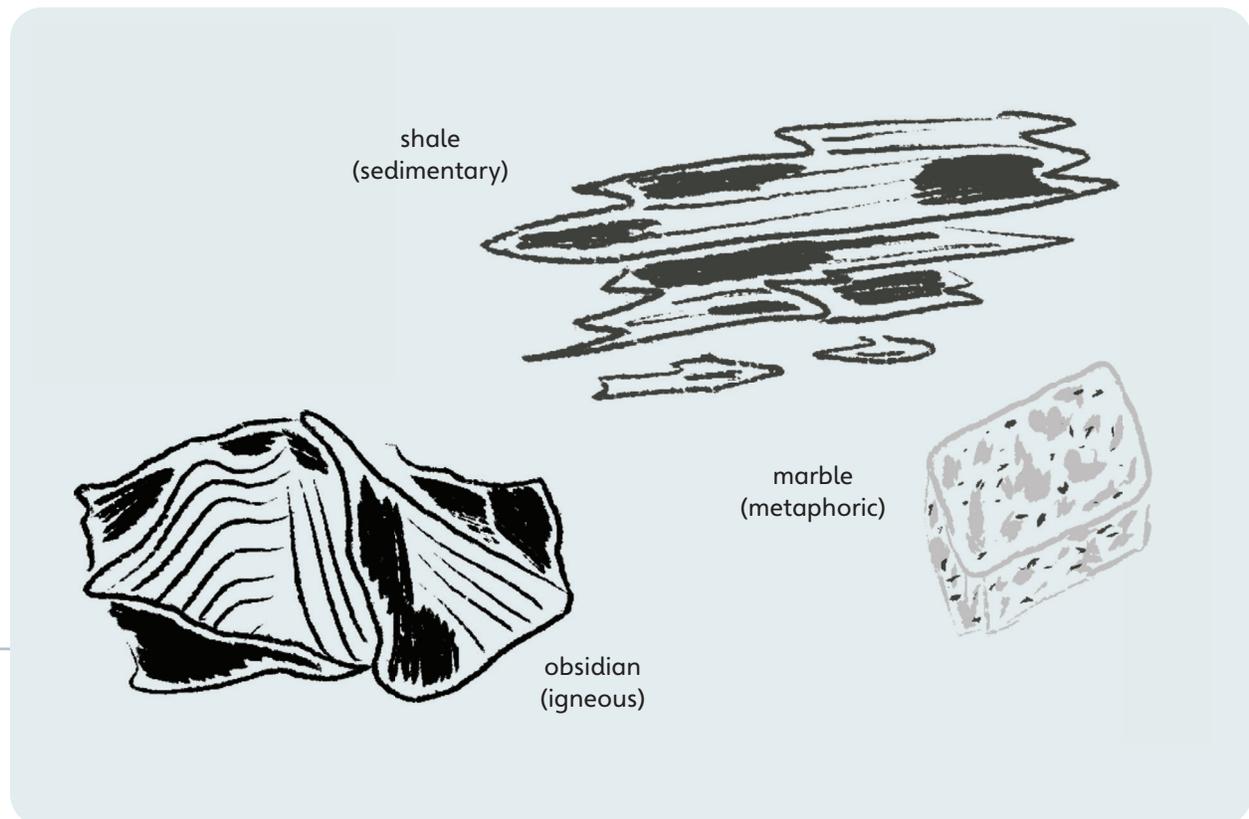
1. Carefully remove the mushroom cap from the stipe (stem), and place it spore side down on the paper. Straddle the cap over both colors if using the black and white combination.
2. Cover your mushroom cap by placing a bowl or cup upside down over it, allowing it to sit undisturbed for the day.
3. Gently lift the bowl and then the cap. The spores that fell from the cap should have left a print on the paper.



DESERT ACTIVITY

Rock Sorting

Rocks can be sorted in many ways depending on age level. Color, size, and texture are great starting categories. A more advanced system might include types of rocks - igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary. Igneous rocks are formed when molten rocks cool, and they can be porous or dark in color. They may also be shiny or glassy looking. Metamorphic rocks are formed by extreme pressure or heat deep in the earth. Sometimes light and dark streaks or bands run through these rocks. Sedimentary rocks form when layers of sand, silt, and remains are compressed together. They may appear light in color, layered, or have visible grains or fossils in them. Make a table in your nature journal with three columns, each labeled with a different type of rock. Place your rock specimens in the column you think best matches their characteristics.



shale
(sedimentary)

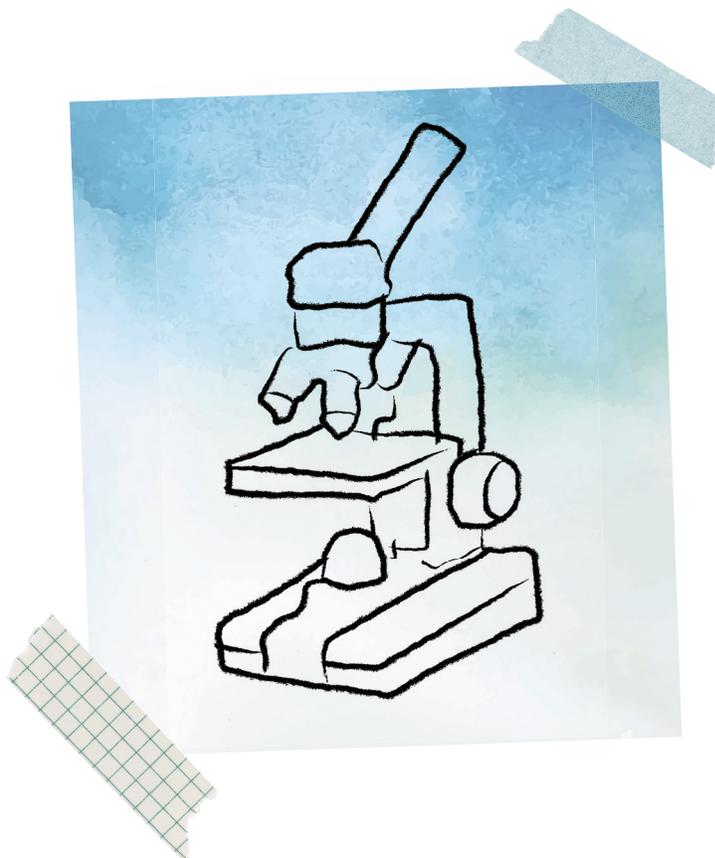
marble
(metamorphic)

obsidian
(igneous)

SEASHORE ACTIVITY

Sand Under the Microscope

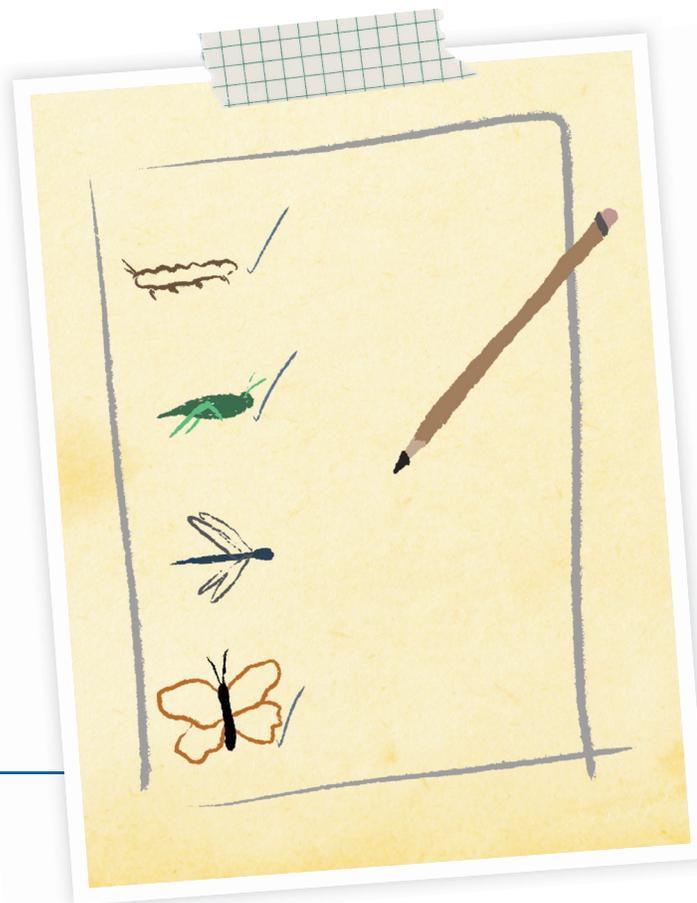
Sand grains form in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors. One handful of sand may be difficult to distinguish from another, but under a microscope, sand grains show their beautiful, unique features. For this activity, you'll need a white paper plate, pocket microscope, and sand. If you're able to find different types of sand to use, that's even better! Begin by making observations using only your naked eye. Draw your observations in your nature journal, and add descriptions of how the sand feels and smells as well. Then, place a tiny pinch of sand on your paper plate, and use your pocket microscope to look at the grains. Draw your observations on another page in your nature journal. What do you notice about the individual grains that you weren't able to see without your microscope?



GRASSLAND ACTIVITY

Invertebrate Scavenger Hunt

Invertebrates are creatures that do not have a backbone or internal skeleton. They may have an exoskeleton to protect them, but not all invertebrates have one. These creatures include insects, spiders, clams, crabs, worms, corals, squid, and more. Venture out to a prairie, savanna, or other grassy natural area to look for different invertebrate species. Bring a magnifying lens if you have one to see them up close, or bring a net to catch one for an up-close peek. Be sure to gently release any creatures from your net when you are finished. You can make a game out of your adventure by creating creature categories. For example, look for invertebrates on the ground, in the dirt, or on plants, and see how many you can find of each. Or take photos of all the invertebrates you see while exploring and count them up when you are finished. Another idea is to find invertebrates of different colors or flying versus non-flying invertebrates.



WETLAND ACTIVITY

Sink or Swim

Some wetlands such as salt marshes or coastal wetlands contain salty or brackish water. Brackish water is a mix of freshwater coming in from rivers and saltwater brought in with the rising tide of the ocean. The more salt in the water, the more dense the water is. How well an object floats depends on its density compared to the water in which the object is placed. Gravity pulls an object toward earth while buoyancy is a force that the water uses to push back on the object. And because saltwater is denser than freshwater, it will exert more of a force to push back on the object than freshwater does. This is why many objects placed in freshwater may sink, but in saltwater, they float. Begin by filling a clear, glass jar with 300 milliliters of water. Place a golf ball in the water. What happened to the golf ball? Did it sink or float? Now, take the golf ball out, and add 70 grams of salt to the water. Stir the water until the salt dissolves. Put the golf ball back in the water. What happened to the golf ball this time?

