

Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center's  
***Wilderness Investigations***  
High School

**Wilderness 101/Lesson 1**  
*An Introduction to the Concept of Wild*

**Goal:** Students will investigate their perceptions of wild places.

**Investigation Objectives**

**Audience:** 9-12 grades.

- Students will explain what the term “wild places” means. (Behavior)
- Students will be given a verbal prompt, a partner exercise, a classroom exercise, and an individual journal entry. (Condition)
- Students will use a journal entry to reflect on the discussion of wild places, how humans can impact wild places, and if there are enough wild places remaining in the United States today. (Degree)

**Common Core Standard Connections**

NOTE: See Common Core Standards sections to see listed objectives for this and other lessons/activities.

**Time Requirement** 50 minutes

**Materials/Resources Needed and Pre-Investigation Tasks**

- Outdoor setting (or room with a view of natural area).
- Students' Wilderness Journals (see teacher background)

**Teacher Background**

Before leading this activity you should:

- Pick an outdoor setting that is comfortable for a class discussion and journal time. If this is not possible or practical, choose a room with a view of a natural area.
- Have students select or create a Wilderness Investigation journal, which will be used throughout the curriculum. This journal is simply a space for students to reflect on the Wilderness Investigation lessons through guided questions and prompts. It is a space for students to both write and draw. Teachers are welcome to use a pre-existing journal that may already be in use in their classroom or use a class period for students to create personalized journals. Spiral notebooks or composition books will work. Students may be able to create a digital journal as well.

- Familiarize yourself with the “Think, Pair, Share” activity approach. *Think/Pair/Share* activity steps:
  - Students will be asked to independently **think** about a topic and write notes.
  - Next, students will be asked to get with a partner and share their independent thoughts on the topic. Together, the **pair** will come up with a statement to share with the class. This collaborative statement does not mean students have to consolidate contrasting thoughts on a topic; rather, students should be encouraged to share a statement of divergent thoughts.
  - Finally, students will **share** their collaborative statement on the topic with the class. This can be done orally, written on the board, or a combination of the two.

### **Step-by-Step Presentation Instructions**

#### **Activity # 1: Think, Pair, Share**

- Students will think independently about wild natural things in the local area or surrounding environment and write down their observations and thoughts on the topic.
  - Example of observations: Parks, urban deer, squirrels, birds, creeks, flowers, trees, plants, gardens, trees, etc.
  - Example of thoughts: “The flowers are pollinated by bees”. “The Raccoons eat both natural food like nuts and seeds and also human food scraps”. “The birds take a bath in the pool of water on the pavement after a rainstorm”.
- Students will pair with a partner and discuss their observations and thoughts on the subject. Students will work together to come up with a single definition of the word “wild”.
  - Students will then share their definition of the word wild with the class.

#### **Activity #2: Class Discussion**

- Ask: How might wild places, animals, and plants be impacted by humans?
- Have students think of examples where wild animals and/or plants have developed a degree of codependency with humans.
  - Example: “Bears that come out of the mountains and eat human trash”. “Personal gardens that are watered and weeded”. “Bird feeders”.
- Ask if these scenarios make any of them want to change/alter the class definition of what is wild.

### Activity #3: Assessment

In Journals:

- Write one paragraph on how the quality and quantity of wild spaces have been affected by human population, development, and industry in the past 100 years.
- Write one paragraph on whether or not they think there are still enough wild spaces in the United States today.
- Write one paragraph on ways to insure that wild spaces will exist for future generations in the next 100 years.

### Evaluation: Example Rubric

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Journal Question 1: How can humans impact wild place?	Student gave many complex examples of how humans impact wild places.	Student gave some accurate examples of how humans impact wild places.	Student gave one decent example of how humans impact wild places.	Student did not give a single example of how human impact wild places.
Journal Question 2: Are there enough wild places remaining in the United States today.	Students clearly expressed their view on the topic and gave supporting examples.	Students expressed their view on the topic, but did not give supporting examples.	Students made an effort, but did not clearly express their view on the topic.	Student made no effort to express their view on the topic.
Journal Question 3: How can we insure there will be enough wild spaces for future generations?	Student exhibited critical thinking skills and gave many examples of ways to insure wild spaces for the future.	Student gave one example of a way to insure wild spaces for the future.	Student did not give a logical example of a way to insure wild spaces for the future.	Student did not make an effort to answer the question.
Other:				

**Grade Scale: 8 total points**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Journal Question #1	4	3	2	1
Journal Question #2	4	3	2	1
Journal Question #3				
Other:				

**Extension Ideas**

- Take students to a place where wild elements are present. This can be a large wild landscape or a place with bits and pieces of wildness (i.e. a fence line, ditch bank, abandoned orchard, open field). Compare and contrast wild and not wild through explorations using as many senses as possible.