

nature-of-stem

Hello! Let's wonder together

Lesson at a glance

Hold up one ordinary object (leaf, spoon, pine cone or pebble) and model noticing out loud without naming it. Practise the stem I notice... together, then lead a short wonder walk — outdoor yard loop if staffing allows, or an equal indoor route past window sill, nature table, coat pegs and door mat. Back on the carpet, each child draws one noticed thing on plain paper; pin four to six shares on the class wonder wall and close with the line that scientists stop and wonder too.

Learning objectives

- Stop, look closely and say something they notice about the classroom or yard
- Draw one thing they noticed on a wonder-wall picture

Before the bell – prep

Before the bell: pick one ordinary object for the hook, clear a small noticeboard space as the wonder wall, and set crayons plus one sheet of drawing paper per child aside (not handed out yet). Choose and walk the indoor-only route as your default; only plan the yard loop if weather and a second adult are confirmed.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
drawing paper (A4 or similar)	1	pupil	classroom	any scrap paper large enough for a simple drawing
chunky crayons	1	pupil	classroom	washable markers or colouring pencils
blu-tack for the noticeboard	1	class	classroom	masking tape or pins (teacher handles pins)
one ordinary wonder object to show at the start (pine cone, pebble, leaf or spoon)	1	class	outdoors	any safe classroom object the children walk past every day

Safety watch-point

Stay with the class at all times outdoors; clear boundaries; no picking plants or tasting; watch slippery ground after Irish rain. Wash hands on return if soil, walls or plants were touched.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Hold up the object without naming it. Pause and look at it yourself first, then model once in a warm voice: I notice it is smooth. I notice a little brown spot. I wonder how it got there. Keep the hook light — no paper, no route talk, no wonder wall yet.
- **What does wondering mean?:** Read the two board ideas once, then have the class chant the stem I notice... together. Run the worked model aloud once (I wonder → I think → I look → I notice). Add one helper line only (doctor or gardener) — no long brainstorm. Praise any honest notice; do not treat wondering as knowing the answer.
- **Our wonder walk:** Line up calmly: stay together, walk slowly, pointing fingers only, no picking or tasting. Run two or three short stops (~12 min total). At each stop invite two or three children to point and say I notice...; revoice so the whole class hears a clear notice. If a child only points, supply the stem for them. Prefer two rich stops over a rushed loop.
- **Draw what you noticed:** Hand out paper and crayons only now. Circulate asking What did you notice? Scribe a short label only if the child wants one. If someone claims they noticed nothing, offer two real choices from the walk (e.g. puddle or tree bark; window sill or coat pegs). Keep to about five minutes; fast drawers add detail to the same picture.
- **Our wonder wall:** Name the clear wall space out loud. Invite four to six children only to hold up their picture and say I notice... / I noticed...; blu-tack as you go. Fold watchers in with Did anyone else notice something like that? Close with one make-sense line: Today we stopped and wondered. Scientists are people who stop and wonder, just like us.

What it should show

Most Junior/Senior Infants will stop briefly, point to or name one everyday detail (wet leaf, shiny handle, coat colours, a robin, door mat), and make a bold simple drawing of that one thing. Some only point — affirm and supply I notice... for them. A child who says they noticed nothing usually needs two concrete choices from the shared walk, not a blank prompt.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **Children think wondering means you already know the right answer.** — Praise any honest notice on the spot: Guesses and notices are never wrong — they are how we start finding things out. Revoice their words with the stem I notice... so the class hears noticing, not answering.
- **A child says they noticed nothing or only names the object without looking closely.** — Offer two real choices from the walk you just shared (Was it the puddle or the tree bark?). When they only name the object, gently revoice: You noticed the yellow flower by the wall.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Accept pointing only and supply the stem yourself: You are pointing at the wet leaf. You notice the shiny leaf. • If they freeze at drawing time, offer two real choices from the walk so they can pick one thing to draw.	• Prompt one extra detail with a key question: What colour? What shape? Rough or smooth? Moving or still? • Scribe a short label under the drawing if the child wants one (wet leaf, shiny handle).	• Invite a confident talker to add one more detail to the same notice or picture rather than starting a second sheet. • At the wonder wall, ask what a friend noticed that they did not see.

Cross-curricular hook

Pairs with oral language: practising the sentence stem I notice... and listening to a friend’s notice on the wonder wall.