



Teacher Notes- Ants Observations

1. Before taking your class outside, give them instructions on what they will do:
 - a. Take with them pencil and paper, and maybe a book to write on.
 - b. Find an ant. They're everywhere, but easiest to find on pavement/concrete and on walls because they're not blended in there.
 - c. Just watch/observe it for a little while.
 - d. Write down some observations. With some classes you'll want to be specific on exactly how much you expect to be written.
 - e. We'll come back inside after about 10 minutes.
2. Go outside, find an ant, and make observations.
3. Back in the classroom, call on a few students to share an observation they made.
4. Hand each student a copy of "The Battle Of The Ants" by Henry David Thoreau. It's chapter 12 in his book "Walden", which you or your library may be fortunate enough to own, or you can also find [snippets of it](#) online. It begins with the phrase "You need only sit long enough". Here's one excerpt:

" The legions of these Myrmidons covered all the hills and vales in my wood-yard, and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was the only battle which I have ever witnessed, the only battle-field I ever trod while the battle was raging; internecine war; the red republicans on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other."

5. Read Thoreau's essay aloud. It should amuse everyone, and also show them how detailed you can get with observations, and some imagination. (It's not essential that everyone have their own copy; you could just read it to them. But seeing the words for themselves makes them pay more attention.)
6. Homework tonight is for students to observe an animal at/around home and record observations, now that their skills have been sharpened.
7. The next day you could easily spend half of class having students share their at-home observations.