

## Lesson Summary

**Program name: Inside, Outside, In Between**

**Duration: approx. 1 hour and ten minutes**

**Grade level: K**

**Students will be able to (SWBAT):**

1. Recognize that objects and behaviors can occur both inside and outside (i.e. “in between.”)
2. Distinguish between what objects and behaviors can be found outdoors and indoors by sorting objects, behaviors, and concepts into “outdoor,” “indoor,” or “in between” categories.
3. Reflect on their ideas of what happens outside and inside by using a Venn diagram.
4. Identify expectations of working with Oxbow farmers both in-class and on the farm.

**Materials/Preparation: *(Include technology needs, printed handouts, classroom arrangement, & books)***

- Sorting mats for students divided into columns (if not available, you can use egg cartons with three rows, labeled “Inside,” “Outside,” “In Between”)
- Manipulatives for each student to demonstrate indoor and outdoor items—as many 3-D/real life as possible, though photographs are okay. Stored in ziplock baggies.
  - 3-D objects: leaves, pencils, rocks, pinecones, popcorn seeds, small spoons, twigs
  - Images of objects: backpack, toothbrush, scissors, squirrel, bug, book, plant, bed, food, apple, friends
  - Images of actions/behaviors/concepts: learning, reading, asking a question, baking, running
- 1 leaf-shaped cutout per student labeled with their name
- Tape
- Markers
- Tape in a straight line across the floor long enough for students to be able to stand in front of it
- Document camera and screen (or Active Board or another classroom display tool)
- Snack (carrots and/or apples, washed and cut)

**Program name: Inside, Outside, In Between**

**Duration: approx. 1 hour and ten minutes**

**Grade level: K**

**Theme(s): Nature can be my classroom and farmers can be my teachers!**

**Goal(s):** To establish Oxbow as an outdoor learning environment and the Oxbow Education team as teachers, this lesson will reframe being outside at Oxbow as an outdoor classroom and not as recess time. This lesson seeks to introduce the concept that learning can happen outdoors as well as indoors and sets expectations for learning and being outdoors.

**Objective(s):**

<b>Students Will Be Able To:</b>	<b><u>Educator verification method</u></b>
1. Recognize that objects and behaviors can occur both inside and outside (i.e. "in between.")	1. Students will place themselves along an axis taped on the ground to display where certain objects and behaviors occur. They can put themselves anywhere on the spectrum of Inside and Outside, demonstrating understanding that certain things can happen in between, or in both locations like learning, eating, etc.
2. Distinguish between what objects and behaviors can be found outdoors and indoors by sorting objects, behaviors, and concepts into "outdoor," "indoor," or "in between" categories.	2. Using a sorting mat and manipulatives, students will sort indoor items (pencils, desks, books, etc.) with outdoor items (pinecones, rocks, etc.); they will sort photos of concepts like learning, teachers, etc.
3. Reflect on their ideas of what happens outside and inside by using a Venn diagram activity.	3. Students can understand the concept of the Venn diagram and can identify behaviors and objects that take place both indoors and outdoors, beginning to understand that the outdoors can be a classroom.
4. Identify expectations of working with Oxbow farmers both in-class and on the farm.	4. Students will participate in creating a "CommuniTree" as a group contract for behavioral expectations and add their initials to the document. Students will be introduced to what they might find on a farm by snacking on some veggies from Oxbow. Students will also learn to see Oxbow Farm Educators as teachers.
5. <u>Take home challenge:</u> through a teacher-led in-class lesson, students will begin to define a farm, preparing them for their visit to Oxbow.	5. Students will be asked "Where does this food come from?" and "What is a farm?" during the snacking in the classroom. When they arrive at Oxbow, they will be asked the same questions.

### **Teacher Background:**

Formal and informal educators can use the outdoors as a learning space. Both types of educators can also incorporate items from the outdoors in indoor lesson plans. Similarly, items typically thought to be indoor items such as books, notebooks, etc. can be used outdoors.

When students start Kindergarten in the fall, it is often their first time in a formal schooling system. They are learning basics like how to walk in a quiet line, how to share with their classmates, how to follow the school schedule, classroom expectations, etc. This lesson is an orientation for using the outdoors as a learning space including how to be safe while exploring and enjoying the outdoors with its elements and living things. As outdoor educators, we've even found that students who struggle with behavior in a formal classroom setting get the most out of the informal outdoor education setting.

Environmental Education for early learners is about cultivating a positive, caring attitude towards the environment and should incorporate sensory exploration of the natural world. Natural objects can be brought indoors for developing motor skills and sensory exploration. They can also be used as manipulatives for math skills (grouping, sorting, ordering, classifying, counting, etc.), sensory experiences, construction and building, and scientific inquiry (NAAEE).

Oxbow Education follows an inquiry-based and exploratory learning methodology, embracing child-led curiosity and inspiring a sense of connection and caring for the natural world. Oxbow typically offers field trips, in-class lessons, and summer camps. And, through a grant initiative funded by the EPA, Oxbow will be working with Frank Wagner Elementary School Kindergarten students and their teachers to provide monthly Environmental Education experiences in the class, at Oxbow, and at a new school greenspace to be developed through the project.

Building a group contract with students at the beginning or prior to an outdoor learning opportunity is useful to ensure participation, comfort, and safety for outdoor learning.

### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

(Intro will be co-delivered with K teachers and Oxbow Educators)

Oxbow educators will be introduced by the teachers, and educators will explain their roles at the farm as both farmers and teachers. As a way to share a bit about themselves, Oxbow educators share what vegetable they would be and why.

Oxbow educators will explain a little bit about the EPA grant project and that Oxbow and FWE Kindergarten classes will learn together and learn from each other every month—sometimes on the farm and sometimes in the classroom.

Introduce the theme statement: **“Nature can be my classroom and farmers can be my teachers!”**

Start with a discussion, ex: “Today we are going to learn about two different settings, or places, that we spend time: the outdoors and the indoors. Can anyone describe what the outdoors means or a place that is in the outdoors?” Begin to build a definition: the outdoors may be on your walk home from school, in a park near your house, outside during recess, at a farm, or anywhere else that isn't inside. The outdoors can also be described as nature. Ask students for an example of something we might find outside? Ask students what people do outside?

Continue discussion about inside, ex: “So now we’ve talked about the outside, can anyone describe what indoors means or give an example of an indoor place? Can someone give an example of something we might find in a classroom? What do people do in a classroom? Today we’re going to sort through some things and place them into two categories, things that belong outside, things that belong in a classroom.”

**Activity:**

**15 minutes – (Inside, Outside, In Between) Activity:** Students will stand near a long line taped to the ground. Explain that one end represents inside, and the other end represents outside, making the middle in between. Share that this is a spectrum, which means we can use it to understand where something might belong by giving it a position on the line. Instruct them to think about where each item you’ll be sharing belongs and move their own bodies on the line where they think it belongs—either inside or outside or in between! Note: students might be likely to follow where their friends go, so another adaptation would be to have them close their eyes and point to the direction, either inside or outside, just be sure there’s no rough physical contact. Begin with using the examples of tangible objects they’ll be working with on their sorting mat. Ask open-ended and reflection prompts: Show me where you like to play the most; show me where you learn; show me where you do math; show me where you find wood; show me where you find food; show me where you listen, etc. In order to transition to lower energy, send students back to their seats and then practice by having them point to where items belong, rather than standing.

**10 minutes – (Indoor/Outdoor Sorting Mat) Activity:** Working at their desks individually, students sort items into “outdoor,” “indoor,” and “in between” categories on sorting mats. These items include tactile real-life examples (pinecones, rocks, pencils, books, etc.) and pictures of objects/concepts like a student learning, a teacher, different behaviors, bugs, animals. *Note:* talk about the behavior/conceptual pictures before beginning so that students know what they are first. Educators will circulate the room, asking questions as the students do the sorting activity, “Where does this item belong?” “Why does this item belong outdoors?” “How do you know?” “Have you seen/done something like this outside?” “Where do you spend time learning?” “Where does your family spend time?” If students finish early, they can draw their own objects or behaviors in the outside and inside categories. If an object or behavior can be found outdoors and indoors, it can be placed on the line.

*A kindergarten student uses manipulatives and a sorting mat to determine where certain objects and behaviors might be found: outside, inside, or in-between!*



**10 minutes – (Inside/Outside Venn diagram) Meeting back on the carpet and using projection camera or Active Board (or other ways to display to the group), create a Venn diagram with colorful overlapping circles (i.e. a blue circle and a red circle creating a purple circle in the middle). Using the examples from the previous two activities, sort items into their circles but find overlaps for things that can belong in both, including learning, teachers, plants, etc. **Challenge question introduced:** Where does food come from? Hand out snack and pose the question, “Where did this come from?”**

**20 minutes** (*CommuniTree group contract*- see CommuniTree write up for additional details.) Hand out snack. This contract is created as way to set expectations for the group and its individuals. Early on in getting to know your group, take the time to form this contract with them. Have the group help in coming up with the content of the agreement. Determine ahead of time if you'd like to use a talking stick. Discuss: What do they hope to gain? (These are the fruits of the tree.) What do they want to leave behind and not have as part of this experience? Are there things that will get in the way of us having a good time together? (These are the rocks that might block the roots of the tree.) What will make our group strong? (These strengths are the trunk of the tree.) How should we "bee" to uphold this agreement, or what behaviors or actions do we need in order to be successful? (The "bees" of Frank Wagner Elementary: Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Responsible.) If a group member strays from the contract, you can bring it back to remind them, and hold the group members to this contract. If you take it seriously, so will they. For early learners, offer sentence stems to assist in generating input for each part of the tree.

*A classroom CommuniTree displays seasonal additions and group contract components. Each student signs the agreement with a leaf.*

A paper tree model will be placed in each classroom for gentle reminders and can be a place to collect "Oxbow moments" to document any quotes, projects, and pictures connecting the student to Oxbow. Once all input has been heard to add to the CommuniTree, have all the group members sign it using their leaf-shaped cut out and taping it to where it belongs on the tree.



**Tip:** To tie into the tree theme with future lessons, debrief options: Rock, Stick, Leaf! Rock: something that rocked, Stick: something that will stick with you, Leaf: something you will leaf behind that might fit well on the CommuniTree.

### **Using the CommuniTree Contract for Group Management: Inquiry/Guiding Questions:**

Why do you think the \_\_\_\_ (object/activity) belongs in the outdoors/indoors? (Have students use "I think \_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_." sentence stem.)

Have you seen something that looks like this (Venn diagram) before?

Could this \_\_\_\_ (object/activity) be or happen inside without any help from the outdoors?

Is there any part of this object/activity that comes from the outside?

What is that object made from? Does that material come from outside or inside?

What is a farm?

What is a classroom?

What about behaviors like running or yelling?

### **Conclusion (10 minutes):**

Discussion: What did we notice at the beginning of class? Was it hard or easy to sort items between the outdoors and indoors? Put some examples up on the screen and allow students to call out (or raise hands, educator's choice!) and discuss decisions.

Lots of things in nature can only exist outside, and some things can only be found inside, but a lot of what we learn can also be learned outside. Some things and some behaviors like learning or teaching or writing (also including notebooks, people, and family) can happen outside or inside! Oxbow is an outdoor classroom, and OxEd staff are outdoor teachers, who can also teach inside. Together we will learn both inside and outside about nature. **“Nature can be my classroom and farmers can be my teachers!”**

However, the outdoors is different than inside. How? Weather, no walls or roof, trees, plants, animals, cars, pokey plants, general safety. It’s important in any learning place that we behave in a way that is safe, respectful, for us, our teachers and those around us, including natural living things like trees and animals.

These are the safety rules we need to remember every time we’re at Oxbow or learning outside here at school:

1. Careful where your feet go! Feet and plants don’t go in the same place.
2. Wait to be invited before picking
3. Hold and Pick It [sing the song]
4. Living playground structures are for plants to climb on, not humans.
5. Stay together with your group
6. Coyote howl means it’s time to gather together!

Leave teachers and students with the challenge question, “What is a farm?”

**NGSS topics & Practices:**

Dimensions from Framework	What students are doing
<b>Science and Engineering Practices (SEP)</b> -Engaging in an argument from evidence  -Constructing explanations	Students will be asked to explain why they have sorted each item into each place & give an experience or reason why they have sorted each item into those places. They will be asked to draw upon real experiences and observations.  Through group discussion and use of a Venn diagram, students will be able to explain why they believe an object/behavior/concept belongs in the “inside,” “outside,” or “in between” area.
<b>Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCI)</b>	
<b>Crosscutting Concepts (CC)</b> - Patterns	Students will interact with different natural items and will be asked to describe the purpose of that item in the outdoors.
<b>Performance Expectation (P.E.) supported:</b>	

**Five E Learning Model:**

<p><b>Engage:</b> How does the lesson pique the learner’s interest and allow them to express their existing thoughts and opinions on the subject?</p>	<p>Students do their own sorting of “inside” vs. “outside” items—some are physical objects and others are more conceptual and intangible. Students will also express their ideas on items that belong inside or outside as they move their bodies from one point to another along a spectrum in the classroom.</p>
<p><b>Explore:</b> How does the lesson allow students to interact with each other and observe their surroundings. Does the lesson include problem solving or coming up with an answer to the question?</p>	<p>Students share ideas as a group as we build the Venn diagram together. Students collaborate to create the Oxbow CommuniTree group contract. Students are taught that learning can happen inside and outside.</p>
<p><b>Explain/Elaborate:</b> How does the lesson help students make a connection between new and former experiences. How does the lesson encourage students to record, reflect, and explain their new understanding to others?</p>	<p>Students reconsider what makes a “classroom” and where their food comes from. Many might say food comes from “indoors” in a grocery store, but that food started “outdoors” on a farm. By using the <i>Inside, Outside, In Between</i> spectrum, students can be asked why they chose that spot for the object/concept they were asked about.</p>
<p><b>Evaluate:</b> How will the students be encouraged to reevaluate their understanding of the phenomena and demonstrate what they have learned?</p>	<p>By revisiting their sorting of objects/concepts and having an “in between” column in the sorting activity and using a Venn diagram, students will start to reconsider certain concepts that can be both inside and outside. They can then apply this information and the expectations set out in building the CommuniTree when they’re on the farm.</p>

**Enrichment/Expansion:**

Build on more expectations on the CommuniTree

Learn about apples and the lifecycle of an apple tree

Learn about trees and seasons

Explore the question “what is a farm?” and investigate where familiar foods come from

**Resources:**

NAAEE: Guidelines for Excellence Early Childhood EE Programs.

<https://naaee.org/eepro/publication/early-childhood-environmental-education-programs-guidelines-excellence>