

Lesson Plan: Leaf Detectives

Materials Needed

- A variety of leaves (collected from outside or a park)
 - Magnifying glass (optional, but fun)
 - Collection bag or bucket
 - Paper (white and construction paper)
 - Crayons (with paper peeled off)
 - Child-safe scissors
 - Glue stick or tape
 - Clear contact paper (for an alternative activity)
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Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Find and collect different kinds of leaves.
 - Use words like "big," "small," "pointy," and "round" to talk about leaves.
 - Sort leaves by one feature (like color or size).
 - Create a piece of art using real leaves.
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Lesson Structure

Part 1: Introduction - Becoming a Leaf Detective (5 minutes)

Hook

Educator says: "Guess what? We have a special mission today. We are going to be Leaf Detectives! A detective is someone who looks for clues to learn about things. Our clues are all around us... on the ground and on the trees! What do you think our clues are?" (Pause for answer). "That's right, leaves! Let's get ready to investigate."

Stating Objectives in Kid-Friendly Language

Educator says: "As Leaf Detectives, our job is to:

1. **Find** lots of different leaves.
 2. **Look** closely at their colors and shapes.
 3. **Make** something beautiful with our leaf clues!"
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Part 2: Body - The Detective Work (15-20 minutes)

I DO: Modeling How to Be a Leaf Detective

Educator says: "Watch me first. I'm going to pick up a leaf clue." (Pick up a leaf). "Hmmm, I'm looking closely. This leaf is green. It feels a little bumpy. It has lots of little lines. See?" (Point to the veins). "It has pointy edges. This is a very interesting clue!" (Use the magnifying glass for dramatic effect if you have one). "Wow, the little lines look so big now!"

WE DO: The Leaf Hunt & Sorting

Educator says: "Okay, Detective, it's our turn to find clues together! Let's go on a leaf hunt."

- Go outside or to a pre-made pile of leaves indoors.
- **Guided Practice:** "Can you find a BIG leaf? Great! Let's put it in our collection bucket. Now, can you find a tiny, SMALL leaf? Wow, you're a great detective! Let's find a red leaf! Now a yellow one!"
- After collecting for 5-7 minutes, bring the leaves to a central spot.
- **Sorting Together:** "Look at all our clues! Let's sort them. Let's make a pile for all the green leaves here. And let's make a pile for all the brown leaves over here." (Work together to sort the leaves by color).

YOU DO: Creating Leaf Art

Educator says: "You have done amazing detective work! Now, you get to choose how to make special leaf art with your clues. You can make a leaf rubbing or a leaf person."

Activity 1: Leaf Rubbing

1. "Choose your favorite leaf."
2. "Put the leaf on the table."
3. "Put a piece of white paper on top of it."
4. "Hold the paper still and rub the side of your crayon all over it. Look! A ghost of your leaf is appearing!"

Activity 2: Leaf Person or Animal

1. "Choose a big leaf for a body."
2. "Glue it onto your paper."
3. "Find smaller leaves for arms, legs, or ears."
4. "Glue them on to make your own leaf creature!"

The educator provides materials and support as the child creates their art. This is a great time for formative assessment by asking questions.

Formative Assessment Questions: "Tell me about the leaf you chose. Is it smooth or bumpy? What color is it?"

Part 3: Conclusion - The Case is Closed! (5 minutes)

Recap and Share

Educator says: "Great job, Leaf Detective! Let's look at what we did today. We went on a leaf hunt, we

sorted our leaf clues by color, and you made amazing leaf art!"

Show and Tell

Educator says: "Now, tell me about your art. What is your favorite part? Can you show me your favorite leaf that you used?"

This sharing serves as a summative assessment, confirming the child can identify a leaf and talk about it.

Reinforce Takeaways

Educator says: "Leaves are so cool! They come in all different shapes, sizes, and colors. Next time we go for a walk, let's keep our detective eyes open for more interesting leaf clues!"

Success Criteria

- The learner was able to find and pick up at least three different leaves.
- The learner could point to a leaf and describe it with at least one word (e.g., "big," "red," "pointy").
- The learner created a piece of art using a leaf.

Differentiation & Adaptability

- **For a Younger Learner or One Needing More Support (Scaffolding):** Focus only on the sensory experience. Feel the leaves, crinkle them. Pre-select two very different leaves (e.g., one big green and one small yellow) and talk only about those. For the art, help guide their hand during the crayon rubbing.
- **For an Older Learner or One Needing a Challenge (Extension):** Introduce more advanced vocabulary like "veins" and "stem." Try to match the leaves to the trees they came from using a simple chart or app. Count the points on the leaves. Try sorting by a second characteristic, like shape (pointy vs. round).
- **Adapting for a Group/Classroom:** The leaf hunt can be done on the playground. Sorting can be a group activity on a large floor mat. The "You Do" art portion can be done at learning centers where students choose their activity.
- **Alternative Activity (Less Mess):** Instead of glue, use clear contact paper. Lay a piece sticky-side up on the table (tape the corners down). Let the child arrange their leaves on the sticky paper. Place another piece of contact paper on top to seal it, creating a beautiful suncatcher.