

# River Stories

## Tell the Story of Your Own Journey Along the San Antonio River



This lesson plan comes from a series of lessons developed in conjunction with the Moving Waters Workbook. These art-making activities are based on the principles of the [Visual Thinking Strategies](#), a student-centered, discovery-based method that uses art to teach thinking, communication skills, and visual literacy to young people.

Teaching art and environmental awareness through the VTS provides students with open-ended forums for discovery and reflection. The lessons are designed to be experimental and flexible, focusing on the process over the final product. Learn more about the VTS and how you can get involved on our website [04ARTS.ORG](http://04ARTS.ORG).

### Goals

To develop students' observation skills and sensory awareness

### Objectives

- To grow students' awareness of the nature that flourishes in urban landscapes
- To explore the use of photography to create personal narratives, and records of experience
- To experience and document the San Antonio River in new and individual ways
- To become acquainted with the history of botanical illustration

## Materials

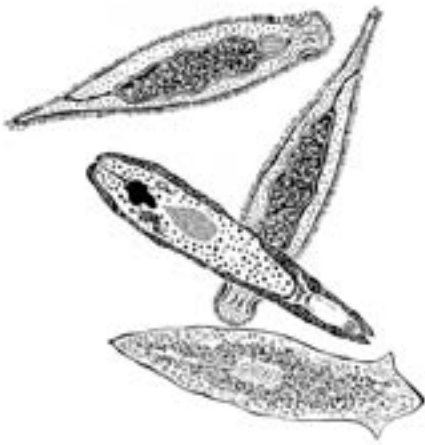
- Cameras-disposable, digital, etc.  
(there should be at least one camera for every three students)
- Poster board
- Glue sticks

## LESSON DESCRIPTION

This is a two-part project requiring a field trip to the San Antonio River, and an in-class art-making component. If you are unable to take your students to the river, a walk around the neighborhood, or even just around school grounds will work as well. This lesson is designed to help students to become aware of the existence of nature in urban landscapes, so almost any area will work. Students will have the opportunity to document their discoveries, and collage them into a visual narrative or timeline of their experiences in nature.

## LESSON PROCEDURE

### Introduction



Introduce the lesson by discussing the work of artists who have explored their relationship to nature in their artwork. Some good artists to research and use in your discussion are:

STACY LEVY

ALBRECHT DURER

LIZ WARD

ANDY GOLDSWORTHY

DAVID HOCKNEY

RONI HORN

After discussing the ways in which these artists have addressed nature in their work tell the class they will be documenting their own, personal relationship with nature through a walking trip along the San Antonio River, or around the neighborhood, or wherever you plan to take your class. Encourage your students not to talk, to listen to the sounds of their environment, and to document the things that capture their attention. Encourage your students to look for

big things, and small things, loud things and quite things. Remind students that after their pictures are developed they will be developed and collaged into a record of their experience during the walk.

### **In-Class Art Making**

After the pictures have been developed provide each student with the images they took, a large piece of poster board and a glue stick. Encourage student to arrange the pictures in anyway that makes senses to them. If they want to, allow students to include explanatory or identifying text in the project.

### **Reflection**

Have students present their photo-collages to the class. Ask the students,

*What's going on in this picture?*

*What do you see that makes you say that?*

*What more can you find?*