



SUMMER | Air Temperature: Reading the Heat

Summary:

Thermometers are one way that we measure the temperature of the air. In this lesson, your growing gardener will learn how to read a thermometer so that they can begin to use temperature data to make garden decisions.

Before Visiting the Garden:

Gather: A thermometer, scissors, old magazines, a red pipe cleaner, a clear straw, a ruler, card stock, glue or tape, and a dark pen or marker

Explore: “No.5/ No. 22” by Mark Rothko: Do the colors in this painting seem hot or cold to you? Is there anything in this painting that reminds you of a thermometer?

Read: *Heat Wave* by Eileen Spinelli & Illustrated by Betsy Lewin

In the Garden:

Gardeners use temperature data to decide how best to care for their plants. They know if it is going to be hot, they might need to shade their plants. Or if it is going to be cool, they might need to shelter their plants. Learning to read a thermometer is a skill that you'll use inside and outside the garden as you decide how to care for your plants and what kind of clothes to wear in the morning!

Questions to Explore:

- Can you tell if it is hot outside? Cold? What helped you decide the temperature?
- Have you seen thermometers around your neighborhood? (At the bank, in your car, on a thermostat?)
- Do you think a higher number on the thermometer means it is cold or hot outside?

Activity:

1. First, assess today's weather. Ask your gardener what they notice. Encourage them to be as descriptive as possible.
2. Next, take out your thermometer and show them today's temperature. Help them answer the question of whether a higher number tells us if it is hot or cold outside. Now we'll build a practice thermometer:
3. Cut out images from your magazine of things that are hot and cold, such as a fire or an ice-cream cone.
4. Use a ruler to draw a straight line the length of your straw on the piece of cardstock, marking zero about a quarter of the way up the line. Then, fill in temperatures north and south of zero.
5. Glue or tape your straw next to the temperature line.
6. Insert the red pipe cleaner into the bottom of the straw, making sure to leave part of it exposed so you can move the temperature up and down.
7. Now, practice reading different temperatures! When your thermometer reads warmer, ask your gardener to show you images of warm things and vice versa with cool things.

Beyond the Garden | Exploring Patterns in Temperature

- Start noticing the thermometers in your neighborhood. Can you read them together?
- If you get a local newspaper, flip to the weather section with your gardener. At the beginning of the week, cut out each day's forecast. Plot the temperatures along your homemade thermometer. Does it look like it's going to be a mostly warm week? A cool week?
- Pick a day with different weather from your first garden visit and return to the garden to see if you notice any changes in your plants.

Continue Exploring | Supporting Materials

Temperature: <http://www.weatherwizkids.com/weather-temperature.htm>