

**IMPORTANCE OF EXCURSION CLASSES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
NATURAL SCIENCES**

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Abstract: Excursion classes in elementary education play a crucial role in teaching natural sciences by providing experiential and hands-on learning opportunities. These outdoor activities enhance students' understanding of scientific concepts through direct observation and real-world engagement, catering to diverse learning styles. Excursions inspire curiosity, promote critical thinking, and develop environmental awareness, fostering responsible citizenship and a love for nature. They also strengthen teamwork, teacher-student relationships, and interdisciplinary learning while improving students' physical and mental well-being. By bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical experiences, excursion classes create a dynamic and holistic educational environment that nurtures future scientists and environmentally conscious individuals.

Keywords: Excursion classes, natural sciences, experiential learning, environmental awareness, critical thinking, elementary education.

Excursion classes have long been recognized as one of the most effective teaching strategies, particularly in the natural sciences. Elementary education plays a foundational role in shaping the learning habits and curiosity of young minds, and it is during this stage that children begin to explore and connect with the natural world. Natural sciences, which encompass biology, ecology, geology, and environmental studies, are best understood through direct interaction and observation. Excursion classes provide this opportunity by taking learning beyond the traditional classroom setting. These field trips allow students to experience real-life environments, fostering a deeper understanding of scientific concepts, inspiring curiosity, and promoting environmental stewardship. One of the primary benefits of excursion classes in natural sciences is that they make learning experiential. The traditional classroom often relies on textbooks, diagrams, and lectures to teach concepts like the life cycle of plants, ecosystems, or the water cycle. While these methods are valuable, they can fail to provide a concrete, hands-on experience. Excursions bridge this gap by enabling students to see, touch, and engage with the subjects they are studying. For instance, a lesson on plant diversity becomes far more impactful when children visit a botanical garden, where they can observe different plant species, learn about their characteristics, and even interact with expert guides. Such experiences are likely to be remembered more vividly than lessons taught solely within the confines of four walls.

Furthermore, excursion classes cater to diverse learning styles. Every child learns differently; some students excel with auditory explanations, others with visual aids, and many through kinesthetic, or hands-on, experiences. In natural sciences, a subject that often requires observation and practical understanding, excursions provide a platform for kinesthetic and visual learners to thrive. Observing a butterfly's metamorphosis at a nature reserve, testing the pH of a river's water, or identifying soil layers during a field visit appeals to students who struggle with traditional modes of teaching. This inclusivity ensures that no child is left behind and that all students develop a meaningful understanding of scientific concepts. Excursions also enhance

students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Field trips present real-world scenarios that require students to observe, analyze, and draw conclusions. For example, visiting a wetland allows students to observe an ecosystem in action—interactions between plants, animals, and their environment. Teachers can guide students to identify how human activities might impact this ecosystem, prompting them to think critically about conservation. Similarly, field trips to geological sites or science centers can challenge students to apply their classroom knowledge to interpret what they observe. Such activities encourage analytical thinking and problem-solving, which are critical skills for future scientific learning.

In addition to fostering cognitive skills, excursions in natural sciences inspire curiosity and a sense of wonder. Natural science is inherently fascinating because it explains the world around us—from the smallest insects to the vastness of ecosystems. However, this wonder can sometimes be diminished when students are limited to textbooks and indoor teaching. Excursion classes reawaken a child's innate curiosity by immersing them in the wonders of nature. A trip to a forest, for example, exposes students to wildlife, plants, and natural phenomena that spark endless questions and observations. "Why do birds migrate?" "What role do insects play in pollination?" "How do trees grow so tall?" Such questions lead to a deeper interest in science and encourage students to seek answers, fostering a lifelong passion for learning. Environmental awareness and stewardship are additional critical benefits of incorporating excursions into natural science education. In an era where environmental challenges such as climate change, deforestation, and pollution are becoming increasingly significant, it is crucial to teach children the importance of protecting the natural world. Excursions connect students to nature on a personal level, helping them develop empathy for the environment. When children visit a polluted river or observe deforestation in a local area, they are more likely to understand the consequences of human actions and feel compelled to act. They begin to see the relevance of concepts such as conservation, recycling, and sustainability. This awareness plants the seeds for responsible citizenship and environmental stewardship at an early age.

Excursions also help strengthen the teacher-student relationship and foster collaborative learning among peers. The informal and engaging atmosphere of field trips allows teachers to interact with students on a more personal level, which can create stronger bonds of trust and encouragement. Students, too, learn the importance of teamwork and cooperation. Activities such as collecting samples, conducting group experiments, or working together to identify species require students to collaborate and communicate effectively. These skills are not only essential for science education but are also invaluable for personal and professional development later in life. Another often overlooked advantage of excursions in natural sciences is their ability to improve students' physical and mental well-being. Spending time outdoors has been shown to reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance focus. Elementary school students, in particular, benefit from time spent in nature because it breaks the monotony of the classroom routine and encourages physical activity. Activities such as walking through a forest trail, climbing small hills, or exploring a shoreline promote healthy movement while engaging the mind. Moreover, the excitement and enjoyment associated with excursions help students associate science with fun and exploration, leading to a positive attitude toward the subject.

Excursion classes also support the development of interdisciplinary learning. Natural sciences are not isolated subjects but are closely linked to mathematics, social studies, and even

art. For example, a field trip to study a river system may involve measuring water levels (mathematics), understanding its historical significance for local communities (social studies), or sketching the landscape (art). By integrating multiple disciplines, excursions help students see the interconnectedness of knowledge, fostering a holistic approach to education. In conclusion, excursion classes are invaluable in elementary education for natural sciences. They transform abstract classroom lessons into meaningful, hands-on experiences, cater to diverse learning styles, and encourage critical thinking, curiosity, and environmental stewardship. Excursions allow children to connect deeply with the natural world, inspiring a lifelong love for science and nature. At a time when environmental awareness is crucial, field trips play an essential role in shaping responsible citizens who understand and appreciate their environment. Moreover, these outdoor learning experiences promote teamwork, physical well-being, and interdisciplinary connections, making them an integral part of a well-rounded education. To fully realize the benefits of excursion classes, schools and educators must prioritize and integrate them as a regular component of natural science education. By doing so, they can foster a generation of curious, thoughtful, and environmentally conscious individuals.

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