

Overview

What is an outdoor classroom? It is a gathering place for teachers and students to integrate nature into learning within the school grounds. It brings learning to life by situating formal learning within a school's natural environment and giving students the opportunity to get outside and experience nature.

Design Rationale

Studies have shown that outdoor classrooms can make learning more effective because they allow students to explore and learn in a more comfortable and relaxed outside setting—especially on nice days. Imagine being able to have your math class outside while you get fresh air while you learn. Imagine how your powers of observation would increase as the seasons change and birds and bugs fly by. Imagine planting your own gardens and landscaping your learning space in harmony with native plantings.

Problem Scenario

Your teacher has invited your group to design an outdoor classroom for your school. This space must be accessible to all students, be functional for teachers to conduct a lesson, and be must sustainable and easily maintained by you, the students, with minimal assistance from your teacher, staff, and community volunteers. You must create a prototype of your design and share it with the class.

Success Determinants

Success will be determined by:

- Alignment of your ultimate prototype to your design
- Alignment to design motto: “Make it smaller, stronger, do more, be easier to use, be cheaper, be clean, be greener.”
- Appropriateness of the plantings to your local environment and weather conditions
- Functionality of the classroom
- Originality and creativity of the design
- Sustainability and ease of maintenance

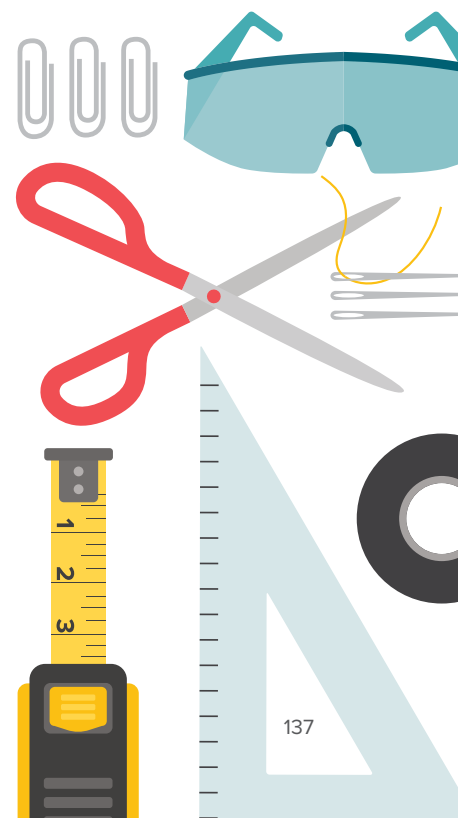


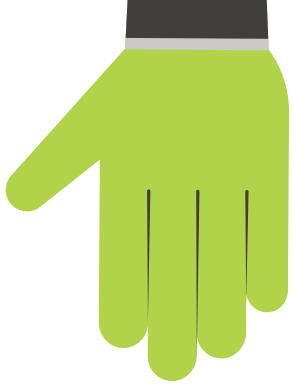
Suggested Grade Level

- Upper elementary through to secondary school
- Possibly primary grades with adult assistance

Suggested Subject Area

- Citizenship—including school culture/community
- ADST
- Science
- Social Studies





Parameters

- You may use the tools provided to you in the classroom pantry.
- You must complete a display panel, which includes your design thinking sketch, your prototype, your design notes, and your reflections on the activity.
- You must consider how to make your prototype colourful, intriguing, and sustainable.
- You must use some of all the items in the participant group kit in some way.

