



Museum of Natural History & Science Gallery Guide for *Nature's Trading Post*

Nature's Trading Post encourages exploration and stewardship of the natural world through respectful observation and responsible collection. In *Nature's Trading Post*, look around, look closer, touch, ask questions and open the connection between individuals and their environment.

Concepts: Earth cycles, respectful observation, responsible collection, sustainable use, stewardship

Background Information:

Do you have a fascination with the weight of rocks in your pocket? Or did you crawl along the sidewalk to follow the movement of a beetle? *Nature's Trading Post* nurtures curiosity about nature and facilitates the act of **respectful observation** and **responsible collection** through our trading process. We accept objects for trade that meet our established trading guidelines. We accept only natural objects—rocks, fossils, leaves, clean animal bones—and do not accept man-made objects or things that are icky, meaty or smelly. Even if we cannot keep your object, we will still discuss and give points for sharing any natural object. We have extensive resources to research a specific object or any aspect of nature, from insects to weather. You don't have to trade anything to explore and interact with our staff in *Nature's Trading Post*, but if you want to trade objects as a class, please make a reservation through the Information and Reservations Department (513-287-7000).

Responsible collecting from the natural world involves learning to collect data and practicing **stewardship** and **sustainable use**. The most important science data to collect is the location of where an object was found. We also discuss the uniqueness and quality of objects. *Nature's Trading Post* facilitates **stewardship** of our environment. We discuss how the processes and organisms of the natural world are interconnected through **Earth cycles**, including food webs, cycles of water and air, geological history and more. We include our responsibilities as strands in these relationships. *Nature's Trading Post* facilitates practicing **sustainable use** of natural objects and resources. We discuss taking what we want or need while leaving behind enough for replenishment and the enjoyment of future generations.

Vocabulary:

Earth cycles – the complex and connected processes sustaining and changing the Earth and its life. These cycles include food webs, the water cycle, the carbon cycle, the rock cycle and more

Respectful observation – studying and gathering data about a specimen with little or no disturbance to the specimen or its surroundings

Responsible collection – gathering samples, examples or data on a specimen with as little disturbance to the specimen's population and surroundings as possible

Stewardship – in environmental terms, the responsibility, management and sustainable use of Earth resources

Sustainable use – the consumption of resources while supporting and maintaining the resources' replenishment and continued availability

Focus Questions:

1. Choose a natural object to observe. Where was your object found? What is special about your object? Where does your object fit into a process or cycle of the Earth?
2. Discuss and define stewardship. How can students be stewards of their school or neighborhood? How can students be stewards of the Earth?
3. Continue to discuss the webs and cycles of nature. Students choose their favorite food and trace it back through an Earth cycle. Where do your favorite food's ingredients come from? What Earth cycles are involved in making your favorite food? Where do people fit into the processes that made your favorite food?