



Lichen Poetry



Introduction

I like to think of a lichen as a farmer and their crops. Lichen is a close relationship between an algae and a fungus. The fungus is the “farmer” and the algae is the “crop”. Fungi need to find their nutrients from other things to survive. Sometimes they decompose a log or eat a piece of old bread in your refrigerator. When a fungus forms a relationship with algae, the algae can provide the nutrients the fungus needs to survive. This is because algae is a plant and makes its own food from energy from the sun (photosynthesis). This is great for the algae too because the fungus provides a protective structure to live on. When farmer fungus decides to strike up a relationship with an algae crop we call it **mutualism**- being together is mutually beneficial, they both get something they need!

Materials

For this activity you will need:

- A lichen
- A copy of the lichen poetry sentence frames and investigation page (attached)
- A magnifying lens (optional)

Activity

1. Research: Look through books or search online for pictures of lichens. Notice what they look like and where they are often found growing.
2. Go outside! Go explore your yard, your neighborhood, a nearby park or your schoolyard in search of lichens! Look at and touch the lichens as you explore, but leave most all of them where they are growing.
3. Collect one lichen. After you have explored and found many lichen in your outdoor spaces, choose one that you would like to take a closer look at.
4. Take some time to look closely at your lichen. Record what you notice, what you wonder and what it reminds you of.
5. Using the poetry structure provided use creative language to describe in your own way the lichen you found.
6. Share your poem with someone you care about.

Investigating Lichens

I notice...	I wonder...	This reminds me of...
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Types of lichen:

Fruticose

- Shrub-like
- Branching
- Hair/beard-like



Crustose

- flat
- dust-like



Foliose

- leaf-like
- distinct top and bottom sides



MY LICHEN

By _____

My lichen is as smooth as _____,

As hard as _____,

As soft as _____.

My lichen moves like _____,

And reminds me of _____.

My lichen makes me feel _____,

It's home was _____.

My lichen's name is _____.

I  lichen!