Uncovering the Everyday*
Exploring Hidden Lessons in the Everyday world—indoors and outdoors

A resource from the Out of Eden Learn initiative at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education

What: A flexible activity that helps us to slow down and explore the complexity of the world around us.
Where: In your local indoor and/or outdoor environment.
For whom: Preschool age through adult, working individually or in partners.
Timeframe: 20-90 minutes, depending on how long you spend on each step. Do the activity once, or try it multiple times on different days, exploring different themes listed in the box below.
Facilitation: Self-facilitated, or lightly facilitated by a peer/teacher/caregiver.

Uncovering the Everyday THEMES

- **Hidden beauty**: Find something beautiful that often goes unnoticed.
- **Everyday design**: Look for things that have been carefully designed that you don’t usually pay attention to.
- **Everyday jobs/hidden work**: Find evidence of work someone has done, or a job someone has, that often goes unnoticed. For example, maybe it is something someone built, delivered, transported, repaired, or takes care of.
- **Everyday systems**: notice a system you normally don’t think about. (A system is a group of interacting parts that move or work together to make something happen.)
- **Hidden nature**: Notice plants or animals thriving in an unlikely place.
- **Hidden distance**: Look for things that might have come from far away. They can be human-made things, or things in nature.
Step 1: Uncover the Everyday (20-45 minutes)

a) Choose a theme from the list above. With a partner or by yourself, take a walk in your local environment (indoors or outdoors) and find several examples of the theme.

b) Select one or two examples to carefully observe and describe: For instance, take pictures or make a video, make a drawing, create a list of descriptive words, write a descriptive paragraph or poem, make a song or a dance, or make a 3D model.

c) Think up two interesting questions about what you have observed. Write them down.

Step 2: Share your findings (20-45 minutes)

- If you are in a class, or part of a group of people doing the same activity, come together online or in person and share what you found. Discuss your questions. What new ideas do you have about the theme?

- If you like, share with a wider online community: Follow Out of Eden Learn on Twitter @OutofEdenLearn. Share your short video, illustration, pictures, sculpture and/or story on social media using #EdenLearn and #UncoveringtheEveryday!

Facilitation and Extension ideas

- Work with a partner of a different age or generation: older/younger sibling; parent, grandparent.
- If you are teaching an online class, assign the activity as homework, then share together online.
- Make up your own themes, or invite guests such as neighbors, grandparents, or other experts to suggest a theme. Just to spark your imagination, here are some possible guest-created themes:
  - An etymologist: hidden bug life
  - An anthropologist: everyday customs
  - An architect: everyday built environments
  - A journalist: hidden story opportunities
  - A kindergartener: places to play

*Uncovering the Everyday is inspired by the Out of Eden Learn (OOEL) project. For similarly themed activities and curricula, see the Out of Eden Learn website. For short activities, visit OOEL’s Activities for All page. For longer learning experiences, visit OOEL’s All Curricula page.*