

**Grade Level:**

5th

**Time:**

40-50 Minutes

**Season:**

All

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to...

- Sit still, comfortably, and quietly outside
- Make and record observations

**Key Concepts:**

- Mindfulness
- Observation

**Materials:**

- Notebook or journal
- Pencil

# Seton Watch/Sit Spot

## Summary

Through quiet observation you can see how the world around you naturally moves. Many conservationists' first steps were to observe and reflect what is happening around them. Learn about two conservationists then use their methods to observe and reflect on what is happening in the outside world around you.

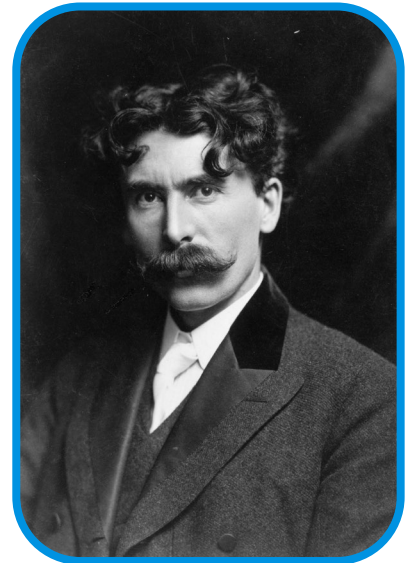
## Background

**The Seton Watch** is named for Ernest Thompson Seton. Ernest Thompson Seton was born in England in 1860. When he was six-years-old his family emigrated to Canada settling in Lindsay, Ontario. Growing up he would often retreat to the woods to study and draw wildlife.

He combined his love for wildlife and art and attended the Royal Academy of Arts in London where he was able to master the art of depicting animal forms. He became a successful and highly regarded wildlife illustrator for many of his own books and others.

Seton helped found the Boy Scouts of America and England as well as the Woodcraft League of America.

He was often distracted by the natural world around him and would spend his time with wildlife instead. Seton would collect specimens of flora and fauna, learn bird songs, or simply observe wildlife behavior.

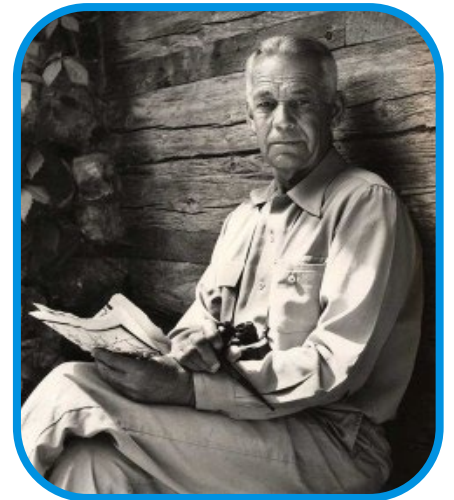


White Horse Hill National Game Preserve



## Background (continued)

**Sigurd Olson** was born in Illinois in 1899. He spent most of his childhood in northern Wisconsin and formed a lifelong attachment to the outdoors. He earned a bachelor of science degree from University of Wisconsin. Later he returned for graduate work in geology and earned a master's degree in animal ecology. Sigurd taught high school and became dean of the Ely Junior College. He resigned in 1947 to become a full-time writer and professional conservationist.



Sigurd Olson fought to keep dams, roads, and even airplanes out of the Quetico-Superior wilderness area. He worked closely with the National Park Service and many other organizations like the Wilderness Society, which he later became the president of.

He helped draft the Wilderness Act and played a key role in establishing many national parks and national wildlife refuges.

Sigurd Olson would spend much of his time outside listening to the world around him. In his home in Ely Minnesota, he would often go outside and sit, write, and observe.

Both Ernest Thompson Seton and Sigurd Olson spent time outdoors observing and reflecting the world around them. They learned about how wildlife, plants, and the environment would interact with itself, and the role people played. Their first steps to conservation were simply observing and reflecting.

Through quiet observation students can witness what is happening around them. Taking out the distractions of technology and others, what will each student notice?

## Set-up

1. Identify a designated natural area for the students to sit quietly and comfortably.
2. Observe the conditions for the day, if it is windy/cold you might need to have winter gear ready or be prepared to observe for less time.
3. Each student needs a journal or notebook and a writing instrument.



# Procedure

1. Ask students to tell you what a naturalist is. If needed, ask them to identify and define the root of the word naturalist (nature). What kind of job is that? (scientist) what does a naturalist do? (observes nature, writes things down, shares discoveries with others)
2. Ask students to tell you the qualities of a naturalist. How does a naturalist behave outside? A completed list includes prepared, quiet, observant, patient, curious, respectful, full of wonder, inquisitive, in the moment, and sharing. Students should record this list in their notebook/journal.
3. Discuss what it means to be mindful in nature.
4. Introduce the students to naturalists like Ernest Thompson Seton and Sigurd Olson.
5. Outside students will individually and quietly observe and record what they see, hear, smell, feel, and wonder in nature.
6. Direct students to set up their journal page in class using the table below. They should also include their name and date.
7. As a class head out quietly to a predesignated area. You can give the students prompts of things to look for as you are moving to your destination. *What are the birds doing as you get closer? Listen for rustling in the branches.*
8. Have each student spread out so they cannot talk to each other and get comfy. Instruct them that they are to remain in this spot until we are done, and it is time to go.
9. During the first three minutes the students should observe what is happening using their senses. We substitute sense of wonder for taste!
10. After three minutes, students should write about their observations. Ask them to write as if they are talking to their journals and to not use "I" statements.
11. After they are done writing, they may begin to sketch one thing near them in detail. They should choose something that will be in their area for awhile. (no birds, fast moving insects, etc.) Their sketches are meant to enhance what they wrote. If they didn't write about it, then they shouldn't sketch it.
12. Once they are back in the classroom, break the students into small groups of three or four and invite them to share their observations.
13. After, have the groups share their experiences with the whole class. Did anyone observe the same thing or have similar experiences?
14. Ask the students how they felt being still and quiet outside? Did they notice a difference when they were walking to the location than when they were sitting and observing?

Time	Temperature	Wind	Location



## Vocabulary

- **Sit Spot:** a place where you can go and be alone with nature.
- **Mindfulness:** a type of meditation in which you are intensely aware of what you are sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation of judgement.
- **Observation:** watching, listening, asking questions, documenting, and analyzing.
- **Flora:** plants of a particular region or habitat.
- **Fauna:** animals of a particular region or habitat.
- **Naturalist:** any person who studies the natural world.

## North Dakota Curriculum Standards

This lesson supports these standards.

### Science:

5-PSI-3 - make observations and measurements to identify materials based on their properties. (making observations and measurements)

### Language Arts:

5.W.5 – Use narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, description, pacing) to write pieces that describe a well elaborated real or imagined event in a sequence that unfolds naturally.

5.L.2 – Recognize and use previous grade levels' parts of speech in simple, compound, and complex sentences.

### Pre or post lesson extensions:

Review the terms noun, adjective, verb, and adverb.

Read *Guess Who My Favorite Person Is?* By Byrd Baylor

Create a word bank sharing students' observations and descriptions.

## Resources

- Ernest Thompson Seton:
  1. <https://ernestthompsonseton.com/ernest-thompson-seton/>
  2. [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ernest\\_Thompson\\_Seton](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ernest_Thompson_Seton)
- Sigurd F. Olson:
  1. <https://listeningpointfoundation.org/sigurd-olson/>
  2. [https://vault.sierraclub.org/john\\_muir\\_exhibit/people/sigurd\\_olson.asp](https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/people/sigurd_olson.asp)

x