

## Collecting Field Notes & Data as a Scientist!

All ages! (Just modify for the child, based on ability to write. 😊)

**Learning Objective:** This activity is used to teach children about qualitative and quantitative ways to collect data by OBSERVING (& also interviewing people with questions). This is a great activity to utilize in a public space, like a park or, like where I conducted it, a farmer's market! It also is a great possibility for a mini classroom field trip, taking the kids out to the playground, the library, or the lunchroom for a temporary "field" activity!

### Supplies:



Mini notebooks, blank but multiple colors (NOTE: Invest in **bigger** than the ones I used, which were about 4in x 2in)

Science-themed pens

Packs of alphabet stickers

Packs of multi-type stickers

### Method:

1. Adorn the front of each colored notebook with the alphabet stickers in the form of "Field Notes." (In the case of having a bigger notebook, my plan was to go halfway through the notebook and mark the second half of their pages as "Interviews.")
2. Allow child to pick whatever color and a science pen to go with it!
3. Explanation: Like a scavenger hunt! Complete each prompt, and you get to pick a sticker. (The more in-depth observations are, they get an extra sticker.)

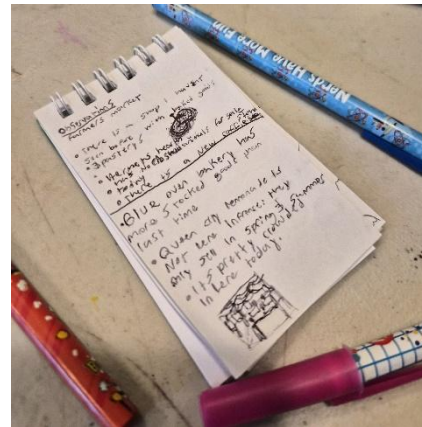
### Run-down on ethnography, observations, field notes, & interviews!

"Ethnography" is the detailed observation of a group of people or a community. (Example: observing those at the farmer's market!) Researchers take "field notes" when observing everything they see (in the field! Which in this case, is the market.)

They also interview people in the community to get insights on what they (the researcher) want to know!

Qualitative researchers use these because they are looking for *quality*. They ask people about their emotions and experiences. Quantitative researchers look for numbers, *quantity*. They are more likely to study how many people fall within, for example, a certain answer on a survey.

NOTE: *This was a hard one to explain quickly. Being younger and eager (and having a lot of kids come at once), their execution was not overly “proper” in regards to ethnography/observations/field notes. But we had some really interesting choices in regards to it... One little girl went with her mother and kept track of which people in the market liked the color orange over any other color. Another little girl observed and carefully drew three people among the market booths. An older girl took careful notes while observing and rattled off a variety of observations to me: i.e., there were three booths that weren't at the market that day that she usually noticed, the bakery stand had more baked goods stocked than last time, a lemonade stand was not there (she writes, “Inference: they only sell in spring & summer”).*



### Prompts for kids:

*(These should be put on a bigger poster board, so that they're visible to older kids and parents if, in my case, only one person is running the Science Harvest booth.)*

### Interviews

- 1) Write down what you want to “investigate.” (Are you interested in how people feel about the market moving to the park? Are you interested in everyone’s favorite colors and if more people at the market like one than another?)
- 2) Interview one person in the market about their job. (Possibly have them ask at least 3 questions of the person.)
- 3) Interview one person in the market about their feelings towards *something*.
  - a. Examples: ice cream, selling food, cats and dogs, having a sibling or a lack thereof...

4) BONUS: Interview the program coordinator! (In my case, they interviewed me!)

*Observations/Field Notes*

- 1) Sit within the market for at least one minute and draw OR write what you see.
  - a. Try this in three different angles/locations.
- 2) To follow this up, what was something you *noticed* in these observations? Try to go deeper than just “the woman was selling jam,” or even “the jam comes in multiple flavors”!
  - a. Example: Two people were yelling. How were they yelling? Did their voices sound angry? Happy? What do you think this might mean?

Feel free to improv if inspiration takes you!

This activity was developed by Annika Baldwin, University of Cincinnati graduate student and Center for Public Engagement with Science intern.