



# Lesson Plan

## The “6-W” Questions

**Note:** This is a generic lesson plan that can be used with any *Natural Inquirer* or *Investi-gator* article. For more generic lesson plans covering a variety of reading science strategies, see <http://www.naturalinquirer.org>. Generic lesson plans can be found by clicking on “Education Resources.”

In this lesson plan, students will read a *Natural Inquirer* article and write short summary notes from each section. Students will then create “6-W Poems” that reflect their understanding of the article.

**Time Needed:** 2 class periods

### Supplies needed for each student:

A *Natural Inquirer* article.

A copy of the graphic organizer on page 31.

A blank lined piece of paper.

A pen or pencil.

### Period 1:

#### Background:

If students are not already familiar with the following questions, introduce students to the “5-W” and “1-H” questions used by investigators from many fields. These are also called the “6-W questions.”

The “6-W questions” provide a formula used in investigative reporting, police investigations, and all kinds of research. These questions are regarded as basic to inquiry and information gathering. They provide a way to get the “full” story on something. Each of the questions is an interrogative question.



### The six W questions are:

Who is it about?

What happened?

When did it happen?

Where did it happen?

Why did it happen?

HoW did it happen?

The “6-Ws” were memorialized by Rudyard Kipling in his *Just So Stories* (1902), in which a poem accompanying the tale of “The Elephant’s Child” opens with:

I keep six honest serving-men

(They taught me all I knew);

Their names are What and Why and When

And How and Where and Who.

(The background information above was adapted from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five\\_Ws](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Ws).)

Give each student a copy of the graphic organizer. As students read the *Natural Inquirer* article, have them complete the graphic organizer for each section. Students should answer as many questions as possible for each section, but may find that some questions cannot be answered for a section.

Students may also find that there is more than one answer to some of the questions. They can include as many answers as they want, or they may focus on one or two. If they need help to get started, complete the “Introduction” as a class exercise.

Assessment Rubrics for the graphic organizer and the poem are given at the end of the lesson plan. You may use either or both rubrics.

## Period 2:

Students will review their graphic organizers and if needed, may scan parts of the *Natural Inquirer* article that they read in the previous period.

Introduce “the 6-Ws Poem” form to students. This is a form of non-rhyming poetry in which all 6 of the W questions are answered. Students will use their graphic organizer (and the *Natural Inquirer* article if needed) to write their poem.

Line 1—Who or what is the poem about?

Line 2—What action is happening?

Line 3—When does the action take place?

Line 4—Where does the action take place?

Line 5—Why does this action happen?

Line 6—How does the action take place?

Here is an example of a “6-Ws Poem” from the *Natural Inquirer* article from the “Woolly Bully” monograph. Note that the questions may be answered in any order, and a question may require up to two lines:

Scientists interested in water and trees (Who)

Put meters in trees and streams (How)

They measure the flow of water (What)

In Western North Carolina (Where)

While the trees still live. (When)

How much will flow in streams (What)

When a tiny insect kills? (Why)

Note that an almost infinite number of poems could be written from one article, depending on the focus taken by the poet.

After students have written their poems, they should share them with the class. Other students can provide interpretations of what each line means and which “W” question is being addressed. Poems may be posted on the wall and electronic copies can be shared with the *Natural Inquirer* by sending to [Jessica@naturalinquirer.org](mailto:Jessica@naturalinquirer.org).

## Assessment Rubric for Graphic Organizer

Each section is worth 25 points (100 points for the entire organizer). Score each section in this manner:

- 1 question answered correctly: 10 points
- 2 questions answered correctly: 12 points
- 3 questions answered correctly: 15 points
- 4 questions answered correctly: 18 points
- 5 questions answered correctly: 22 points
- 6 questions answered correctly: 25 points

## Assessment Rubric for 6-W Poem

1. Number of lines written (0-6 points, 6 is the maximum score for this item)
2. Number of lines answering a unique “W” question (0-6 points)
3. Evidence of correct comprehension for each “W” question answered (0-6 points)

Scoring on a 100-point scale:

- 0: 0
- 1-5: 25
- 6-10: 50
- 11-15: 75
- 16-17: 85
- 18: 100

This lesson plan was created with ideas from [http://www.mnelsonhome.com/Poetry%20ex%20forms\\_of\\_poetry.htm](http://www.mnelsonhome.com/Poetry%20ex%20forms_of_poetry.htm).

# Graphic Organizer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Six W Questions

### Introduction

Who?	Where?
What?	Why?
When?	HoW?

### Methods

Who?	Where?
What?	Why?
When?	HoW?

### Findings

Who?	Where?
What?	Why?
When?	HoW?

### Discussion

Who?	Where?
What?	Why?
When?	HoW?