

Collecting Data by Watching

Elaboration 2 · Gathering data through observation

ELABORATION FOCUS

Acquiring data through observation by watching what happens over a set time, such as the birds that visit the school grounds or the weather each day, and tallying what is seen.

LEARNING INTENTION I can collect data by watching carefully and keeping a tally.

Observe

Watch

Tally

Record

Time

1

Decide What to Watch

Step 1: choose one thing to count. Step 2: name the groups before you start.

2

Set the Time

Step 3: agree how long you will watch. Step 4: everyone uses the same time.

3

Tally as You Go

Step 5: mark each one you see. Step 6: count the tallies at the end.

MODEL · BIRDS SEEN IN TEN MINUTES

Each bird is tallied as it is seen, and an other group catches anything unexpected.

Bird seen	Tally	Total
magpie		6
galah		4
dove		2
other		1

Record each one as you see it, because it is very hard to remember them afterwards.

TEACHER MODELLING ROUTINE

I do → We do → You do

WATCH FOR

Watching for different lengths of time, which makes the counts unfair to compare.

REMEMBER

Say it to students as: "What are you counting, and how long will you watch for?"

MATERIALS

Clipboards, tally sheets, timer, window or outdoor space, bird or weather charts.

Teacher note: observation data is the easiest place to show why the method must stay the same for everyone. Two groups watching for different times cannot fairly compare their counts.