What do you observe about woodland plants?

- moss
- leaves
- soil

The tree seedling and the moss are different.
tree seedling

needles
leaves
roots

And the moss is soft.

Tree seedling is poki.
The ping pong ball and the rubber ball is the same because they are bouncy. The ppb and the rb are different because the ppb is small and the rb is big.
The balls are the same. The RB and the PPB are round balls. Sound balls are roll and balls are sphere. The Ping Pong ball bounce high. The Rubber ball bounce lower!
The ppb ball is not a good bouncer and the rb ball is a good bouncer and the ppb ball can mover and the rb ball can mover too. And the red ball is bigger one and but the whiter one is litod and the ppb and the red is a good sinh but the ppb ball is not a good sinh and the and the rb ball is different too.
First Grade, Sample A—Organisms Unit: Eva

- The teacher has modeled how to set up these entries on facing pages: date, focus question, and scientific illustration of moss on the left-hand page and illustration of a tree seedling on the right-hand page. After students have observed and discussed both plants, the class makes a class box and T-chart as they discuss the similarities and differences of the two. Then students write a comparison.

- Eva has included some accurate details in her illustrations, which she has also labeled accurately. She writes a title for each drawing so that other scientists will know what she has been observing. In the moss illustration, she seems to have added some three-dimensional perspective. Even kindergartners can learn how to draw three-dimensional illustrations if the teacher models how to do it and then gives students opportunities to practice the skill. Students enjoy drawing this way and doing so helps them communicate more details about their observations.

- In her comparison, Eva focuses on texture: “The tree seedling and the moss are the different because the moss is soft and the tree seedling is pokey.” This is an important difference, and she reports the corresponding property for each plant. Many students would write about the properties that stand out to them (for example, “The moss is soft and the tree seedling is long and skinny.”). Eva is learning her third language, English. The class box and T-chart and a writing frame help support her as she writes this entry independently.

First Grade, Sample B—Balls and Ramps Unit: Henry

- Students have been observing and discussing the properties of different balls. During their shared reflection discussions, they have made a class chart of the balls and their properties. Just before this writing session, they make a class box and T-chart to organize the similarities and differences between two balls. After a shared-writing minilesson, the teacher removes the shared writing and students write their entries independently. To simplify the writing, the teacher has them abbreviate the names of the two balls.

- Henry has written a clear and accurate comparison, following the Compare and Contrast writing frame. The next step for Henry is to add more similarities and differences to his writing.

First Grade, Sample C—Balls and Ramps Unit: Joshua T.

- Joshua includes five accurate similarities (including that both balls make sound when they bounce) and one difference. He uses “balls are” as his own frame, which indicates that he knows there is a structure to the language even though he is not using the teacher’s writing frame. He is, however, including words from the class box and T-chart. This student receives special education services in reading and writing, and does this writing independently.
First Grade, Sample D—Balls and Ramps Unit: Kylie

• Kylie includes one accurate similarity for the two balls: they both can move. She includes three accurate differences: “The ppB [Ping-Pong ball] is not a good bouncer and The Rb boll [rubber ball] is a good bouncer”; “The rad [red—i.e., rubber—ball] is bigtr [bigger] one and but The wrt [white—i.e., Ping-Pong ball] one is litod [little]”; and “The ppB and The rd is a good sinr [spinner] but the ppB ball is not a good sinr.” She contrasts the properties by category (for example, bounciness, size, and ability to spin).

• Kylie wrote this entry using very little scaffolding. She would benefit from following a writing frame so that she learns how to organize her writing. Having a copy of the frame at her desk might make it easier for her to follow it (the frame was at the front of the room).