

Nature Journaling

Ages 6 & up

Journaling has long been recognized as a beneficial practice. We know time spent in nature can have a positive and long lasting effect on our physical and mental wellbeing. Nature Journaling brings them together in an activity that inspires mindfulness, creativity, and a deeper connection to nature.

Nature journaling is a record of thoughts and observations of the natural world through writing and drawing. It can be a record of wildlife sightings and scientific observations, or of feelings and experiences. Often it is all of those things combined, a diary of a growing relationship with nature.

Nature journaling helps children (and adults) slow down when outdoors and take in their surroundings. It offers opportunity for focused observations and unbridled curiosity.

Journaling together as a family can be a rewarding experience. It is a lovely way to relive the day's activities while sharing observations, perspective and thoughts with each other.

Bring a pad and pencil on your next outing and see what happens.



Supplies:

- * Something to write with
 - * A piece of paper or use our pocket journal template below
- Once you discover what type of journaling you enjoy then you can decide what supplies you will need, if any. If you like to write, try lined paper, or draw, try a sketchbook. Experiment with pens, pencils, watercolours, and markers. It may be helpful to have things like a ruler, magnifying glass, or binoculars.

Getting started

- * Start with the date, time, location and, perhaps, the weather.
- * Focus on one thing, keep the focus small and notice the details. Use all your senses. Quiet observation and curiosity are key.
- * Write about it as if writing a letter to a friend. Write a story for yourself. Try prose or poetry or a combination of both. Complete sentences are optional. Note unanswered questions in the journal for later research.
- * Draw pictures, quick sketches or detailed drawings, add photographs.
- * Notice how things make you feel. Maybe the smell of pine in the air brings back a fond memory, write it down.
- * Avoid limits on what you can or can't do when journaling. There is no wrong way to do this. Keep your journal with you, add to it frequently. Make "nature time" a priority.

Tip: Stay comfortable while sitting on the ground or a damp log with a Sit-upon. Place a few sections of a newspaper, or the entire edition, in a plastic grocery-size bag so the paper (folded in half) lies flat. Fold the bag closed and seal with duct tape. You have a waterproof, insulated Sit-upon to tuck in you adventure bag, ready for your next outing.



How to make a simple, pocket-sized Nature Journal.

- * Cut the page in half along the solid line.
- * Put the top half on top of the bottom half, and fold along the dotted line to form a booklet.
- * Add as many inside pages as you like. Use blank paper, lined paper or a combination of both.
- * Punch two holes on the fold using a hole punch.
- * Bind the pages together with round-head brass fasteners or ribbon. Add more pages as needed.

2020 - GET OUT! Kids' Club
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Nature Journal

By _____

Nature Journaling Ideas

Select one place that you revisit and record the changes that occur there season after season.

Tracking the sunrise and sunset for a week

Record the visitors to a bird feeder during the day by time

Take measurements and field notes of animal tracks, were they walking, running, hopping?

Create a full log of your favourite hiking trail, detailing as much as possible

Compare two different species, like white and red pine

Measure each snowfall, keep a rain gauge

Track and sketch the phases of the moon or the movement of a constellation

Make a colour chart of all the different colours in a tree's bark

Follow a snail's trail, write a story about its trip

Use a magnifying glass and zoom in on something tiny

Watch ants tend to their aphid farms

Tracking the growth of a plant over time.

Try group journaling. How do different people see the same tree?

Look at the same scene from different angles or distances. What is in the foreground, vs. the tree line, vs. far in the distance?

Document the different types of pine cones in your neighbourhood

Record the visitors to a bird bath

Make a sound map - see Sound Map

For more inspiration check out johnmuirlaws.com and *Keeping A Nature Journal* by Clare Walker, Leslie & Charles E. Roth.