

Nature Exchange

How to... Nature Journal

What is a Nature Journal?

A nature journal is a recording of what you see, experience, and feel about the natural world. It includes both drawings and writings. Nature journaling helps you uncover nature's patterns, see new things, and record what you've experienced. Each journal is unique. There is no right or wrong way to nature journal, just have fun!

Getting Started:

To begin your nature journal, grab a piece of blank paper and a pencil, go on a nature walk, and draw the following on your paper:

Crouch down and draw 2-3 objects you find on the ground. Draw them at actual size. Don't spend too much time on the drawings (no more than 5 minutes each). Label the objects or write questions about them.

1. Stand up. Move around and draw what you see at your eye level (tree/ bush leaves, insects on trees, etc). Label the objects or write questions about them.
2. Look up. Draw what you see (tall trees, birds, clouds, etc). Label the objects or write questions about them.
3. Step back and draw the whole landscape using simple shapes. Label what you see.

Nature Journaling Tips:

- Do not judge your drawings- remember you are a scientist studying nature.
- Write about what you experience with your senses. What do you hear, see, smell, feel, and taste?
- Follow your instincts and choose objects that really interest you.
- Practice drawing more than 1 object per page. It is ok if they overlap. You may see interesting connections when you pair objects together.
- Here are some drawing techniques for you to use in your nature journal:

Blind contour- look at your object and draw the outline of it in one continuous line without looking at your paper.

1. Gestures- quick sketches of the object, especially good for objects that may move.
2. Diagrammatic drawing- detailed drawing of a single specimen.

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Have you traded with us before? Yes No

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Email address: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: ____

Birthday: _____ Boy ___ or Girl ___ Are you a Kidspac member? Yes No

Nature Exchange

How to... Bird Watch

Discover the secret world of birds. We see these amazing aviators all the time, but who are they and what are they doing? Some birds create aerial displays with their curious flight patterns; while others perform a dance to attract a mate or defend their territory. Create a field notebook and let us know at the Nature Exchange which birds you spotted and what they were doing! Find out what our avian friends are up to while you are on a hike or simply sitting in your backyard.

How to Identify a Bird:

Size: Compare the size of the unknown bird to a familiar bird (i.e. sparrow).

Shape: Is it plump or slender? What shape is the bill? What shape is the tail (i.e. long, short, forked, squared)?

Color: What is the brightest color on the bird? What is the color of the bill? What colors are around the eyes? What color are the legs?

Habits: Does the bird walk or hop? Does the bird climb down a tree trunk headfirst or hang upside down at the tip of the branch? Does it feed on the ground or in the trees?

Flight: Does the bird fly straight or zigzag?

Voice: Each bird has its own unique song. Can you identify the sounds? Is it short and high-pitched or long and low-pitched?

Field Marks: Look for tail patterns, eye rings, eye stripes, rump patches, wing bars, and breast markings.

Keeping a field notebook:

Many times a bird flies off before it can be identified in a field guide. So instead of grabbing for your field guide, sketch what your bird looks like. Here are some helpful hints.

- Make a quick sketch of your bird – don't forget to note its color, habits, size, shape, and any field marks.
- Note the songs you hear and see if you can identify the bird by its song.
- Have a field guide nearby, so you can identify your bird.
- Try to count how many bird types there are and how they act.
- Remember to write the date and your location.

Bird Checklist:

These are some of the birds that have been spotted around Kidspace. Can you find them?

- Cooper's Hawk
- Mourning Dove
- Anna's Hummingbird

- Red-Tailed Hawk
- Western Scrub-Jay
- Orange-Crowned Warbler

- American Crow
- Bushtit
- House Finch