

My Nature Journal

Create Your Own

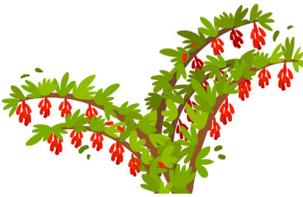
Quick! Can you answer these questions?

1. What birds did you see last week?
2. Can you describe one wildflower or tree blooming near your home?
3. What have the animals that live near you been up to lately?

If you can, hooray! If you can't, that's okay. You can use a nature journal to describe neat things you see, hear, smell and touch outdoors. It can also help you keep track of changes that are going on with the plants and animals around you.



You can keep a nature journal no matter where you are...in your backyard...in your schoolyard...in a park...looking out a window...anywhere!



If you had fun writing in this nature journal, purchase a spiral notebook and make a special journal just for your memories. Just remember to look, listen, feel, and have fun in nature!

Today's date is: _____

The time is: _____

What is the weather like?

Where are you exploring?

Who are you with?

What is special about this place? Record what you are observing with sketches, pictures, words, seeds, leaves...anything! But please be careful not to remove or disturb any natural items that might be useful to the critters you are observing, like nests, feathers and wildflowers...

Go On A Scavenger Hunt

Below is a list of things you will find outdoors. Check off the ones you have found. Draw pictures of your adventure so you can remember the fun you had!

See:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dandelions | <input type="checkbox"/> Butterfly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blade of grass | <input type="checkbox"/> Squirrel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acorn or other nuts | <input type="checkbox"/> Birds nest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seeds or seed pod | <input type="checkbox"/> Ant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil | <input type="checkbox"/> Unusual shaped leaf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal tracks | <input type="checkbox"/> Beetle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hole in a tree | <input type="checkbox"/> Feather |

Feel:

- Tree bark
- Prickly plant
- Wet mud
- Rotten wood
- Wind blowing on face
- Texture of rocks

Smell:

- Pine tree
- Flower
- Mud
- Green grass
- Fresh air
- Cedar tree

Watch: Ant moving something

Nature Journaling

Making a Nature Journal

Supplies

Cardboard

Combination of printer, notebook, scrapbooking, construction, colored and repurposed brown paper

Scissors

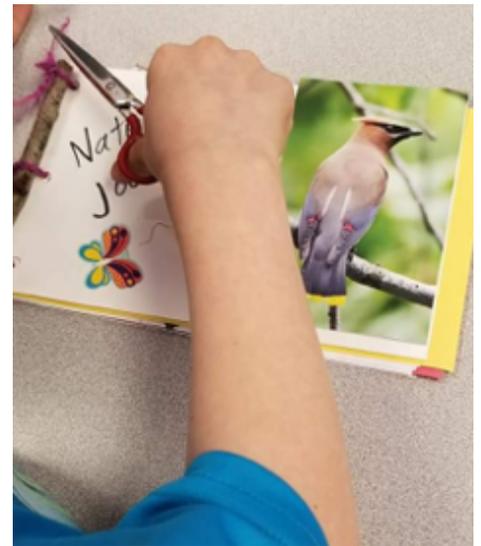
Paper punch

Yarn, string, or cordage

Decorations

Directions

1. Use cardboard and a combination of printer, notebook, scrapbooking, construction, colored and repurposed brown paper.
2. Cut the paper slightly smaller than the cardboard. Some of the papers may have shapes cut out, edges trimmed with pinking shears, flaps or pockets. (The cardboard for the cover may be in two pieces or in one larger piece folded in half).
3. Use a paper punch to make holes in the papers and the cardboard that will line up.
4. Allow participants to select a stack of mixed papers and bind them together using yarn, string, cordage or similar. Be careful not to tie them too tightly, or it may be hard to turn the pages. You may want to add a stick along the front edge before you tie it all together. This adds strength and goes along with the nature theme.
5. Once the journals have been tied together, they may be personalized with drawings, words, cut outs, stickers, etc.
6. Interest may be added by cutting a hole from the edge or center of a page, making a flap or pocket, drawing a frame or other elements of interest.



Journaling is a way to express and record observations. A journal may serve as a science notebook or even a diary. It may be filled with words, drawings or a combination of the two. Encourage youth to take their journals and something to write or sketch with on an exploration. Allow each person to find something that they are interested in investigating, or direct the investigation if you desire. Encourage them to use their senses and consider the following:

- How does it look, feel, smell, sound?
- What do you notice about it?
- Does it remind you of anything?
- What does it make you wonder?



Allow time for observation and exploration, and then encourage the students to record their thoughts in their nature journals. These may be in the form of words including descriptions, lists, questions that come to mind, thoughts or even poems. They may be simple sketches or detailed drawings with labels naming organisms, describing where something was found, etc. Rubbings may be made of leaves, bark, feathers or other objects instead of collecting them.

They may want to record the date and location explored, and could even draw a map.

You could stop briefly at several points along a hike, or allow each child to select a place to sit and experience nature on their own for a brief time. This, and the distance away from others will depend upon the age and comfort level of the individuals, but can be a very impactful experience. Gather the group to share and help them to combine their experiences to formulate a story of the day that illustrates a larger and more complete picture.