

Get outside and enjoy the world!



Bonus Content!
Unfold, flip over, and refold for another set of prompts!

Nature Journaling Guide: Pocket Full of Prompts



Welcome to the wonderful world of Nature Journaling!



The practice of nature journaling enhances observational skills, improves attention and awareness, refines focus, and develops mindfulness. Nature journaling can be done outside, indoors after an outing, or from a window view. It is an accessible nature activity that gives everyone the ability to learn about the world around them. The practice of journaling helps develop a personal sense of place within a particular space, area, or region.

Creating a nature journal is an act of historic preservation; capturing natural phenomenon and specific moments in time through descriptive writing, photography, and sketching.

Metadata

Beginning each nature journal entry with a metadata header is a great habit to instill. Metadata is a snapshot of vital information. It generally includes date, time, location, and temperature. It can also include weather, moon phase, wind speed/direction, etc. This information can quickly be captured in a series of numbers and icons.

Common Weather Icons used in metadata



Phases of the Moon as seen from Earth



- ### Other Supplies to Consider
- Hat/sunglasses
 - Mosquito net/bug spray
 - Sunblock
 - Boots & jacket
 - Walking stick
 - Folding stool/travel chair
 - Flashlight
 - Binoculars/birding scope
 - Camera
 - Backpack
 - Other
 - Reusable water bottle
 - Reusable bag (to pick up trash/litter)
 - Hand sanitizer/wipes
 - Emergency whistle
 - Clips/hooks/Carabiners
 - Additional small notebook for notes
 - Additional art supplies
 - Field guides/Quick Guides/Maps
 - Pocket thesaurus
 - Snacks

PERFORMANCE - or - PROGRESS

Perfection

- 15** Bird walk: Go out for a 20 minute nature walk. Look and listen for any birds. Describe the shapes. Report bird sightings on ebird!
- 16** Flower study: Select a flower. Sit outside on a partly cloudy day. Draw and describe in great detail.
- 17** Nature memories: Write about your favorite memory of being outdoors. What is similar/different to where you are now?
- 18** Head in the clouds: Sit outside on a partly cloudy day. What shapes do you see in the clouds? Draw and describe!
- 19** Nature memories: Write about your favorite memory of being outdoors. What is similar/different to where you are now?
- 20** Organize and label to make your own mini herbarium!

Nature Writing Prompts

- 1** Spend 15 minutes Go outside, observe, and complete these sentences. Select 1 natural item. Sketch and write about it in detail.
- 2** Explore 3 shapes. What natural materials created the shapes? How do you think they formed?
- 3** Kickstart your writing. Don't forget to start with your metadata and an observational pause.
- 4** Color walk: Explore only what is below your knees, and above your head. Sketch them. Compare and contrast 2 natural items. Do you usually see these things?
- 5** Look high, look low! Explore only what is below your knees, and above your head. Sketch them. Compare and contrast 2 natural items. Do you usually see these things?
- 6** Compare and contrast 2 natural items. Sketch them. Do you usually see these things?
- 7** Identify all of the trees in your neighborhood. Bonus: describe leaves of each.
- 8** Notice as many details as possible in one location. Describe with vivid adjectives.
- 9** Go for a 20 minute nature walk. Come inside and describe your experience and observations from memory.
- 10** Animal tally: Sit in one location for 30 minutes. Identify, list, and count how many animals you observe.
- 11** Describe the weather. Describe one location for 30 minutes. Identify, list, and count how many animals you observe.
- 12** Sound Map: Sit in one location for 20 minutes and map out all of the sounds you encounter.

- ### Supplies
- A Notebook
 - Blank is recommended
 - Hard cover for durability
 - Spiral-bound is more adaptable when out in the field as it can lay flat without cracking the spine.
 - Drawing and Writing Tools
 - Pencil & pencil sharpener
 - Mechanical pencil
 - Drawing pens
 - Colored pencils (optional)
 - Travel watercolors (optional)
 - Nature Study Tools
 - Hand lens/magnifying glass/loupe
 - Small ruler
 - Retractable measuring tape
 - Water/timer
 - Thermometer
 - Tweezers
 - Scissors
 - Bag/pouch/envelope/net

Phenology Wheel:



Wheels have been used to track time for thousands of years. Creating a phenology wheel is a way to track observations through time. The wheel can be divided into even parts. The wheel could be used to track each month of a year. They can also be divided into the days of a month, or different seasons. You can add moon phases, temperatures, etc. They can be great to add to any journal!

Nature Poem in 7 steps!

- Select your subject
- Brainstorm everything that comes to mind about a topic you are passionate about. Create an idea map.
- Develop a theme
- What lesson or message do you want to weave into your poem?
- Create an extended metaphor
- Create a Venn diagram to compare your subject to the theme
- Add figurative language
- Select 2+ literary devices to use



- Select the structure of your poem
- Will it have a rhyme scheme or be a type of poem (haiku, limerick, etc.)?



- Write your poem (1st draft)
- Edit and rewrite at least 3 times.

How to Get Started

- Select a good outdoor space (or place with a view of the outdoors)
- Prepare your naturalist kit and ready your supplies
- Find a comfortable place to make your observations from, or record in your journal once you are back inside
- Give yourself time to relax, listen, and settle into the space. Focus your awareness and give your mind time to be curious
- If you have trouble getting started, use a prompt to kickstart your session
- Include metrics in your entries, such as measurements, tallies, counts, etc.



- !Naturalist, etc.

Color Walk

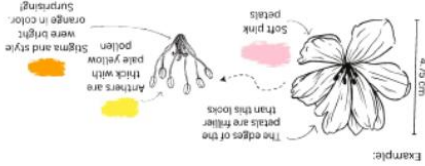
How many colors can you find and describe on your nature walk?



Basic Drawing Tips

Drawing is a universal language. A major part of a nature journal is capturing observations with drawings and sketches. This is a skill which will be developed through practice to improve and progress. Focus on how your sketch captures the details and information (including labels, measurements, and side notes).

Start your sketch with light pencil strokes to build up the basic shapes. Then go in with a darker line or pen to define the lines. You can erase your guidelines at the end, or keep them for aesthetic purposes.



Sound Map

Any nature walk is a full sensory experience. However, we have become accustomed to ignoring some of our senses. Creating a sound map of an area can help highlight the sense of hearing. Once settled into a location, close your eyes and take a few minutes to just listen. Focus on this one sense, and then record your observations in your nature journal. Mark an X for your location, then record the sounds with icons, sketches, labels, and/or markers.



Elements of Journal Entries

- Surroundings & location information
- Record the date, time, temperature, weather conditions, the phase of the moon, the place/location (coordinates when possible)
- Take a moment before starting to sink into the location and just observe
- Optional: jot down first impressions
- Observations
- Select something to describe in detail
- Describe what you are sensing (sight, smell, sounds, textures, etc.)
- Drawing/Sketching
- Record any thoughts/questions
- Sketch what you see. Add details, labels, measurements to the drawings
- Make leaf rubbings or take photos for later reference
- Collect (optional and sparingly)



- Consider only what has fallen or died naturally. Be sure to follow all legal guidelines of the location.

How to draw a dragonfly



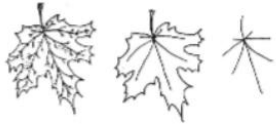
Find the basic shapes and guidelines to orient your lines. Follow the steps, building on your main sketch. Start with light pencil, then go back in with darker pencil or pen to define the drawing.

How to draw an oak leaf



Find the basic lines to orient your drawing. Dark usually have one main vein running all the way through the leaf with several smaller veins branching off. Use the guidelines and add details to finish.

How to draw a maple leaf



Find the basic vein lines to orient your drawing. Maples usually have 5 main veins all coming from a central spot near the stem. Follow around each vein to create the pointed lobes of the leaf. Then add details and shading. To get the shape of the outside edge of a real leaf, you could do a leaf rubbing or trace it.