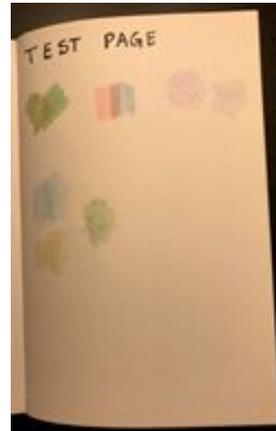
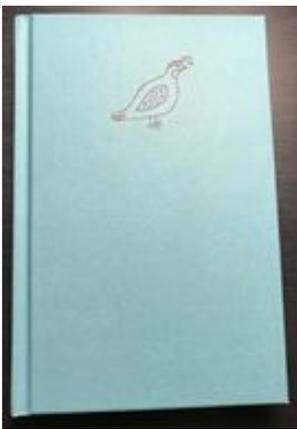


Nature Journaling: Week 1

Prompt 1 – Introduction to Nature Journaling

Nature journaling is a way to keep a record of what you observe and experience in nature. It is a tool to help you remember those experiences. You do not need to be a scientist or artist to enjoy nature journaling, you just need to be curious. Here are some tips to get you started.

First, you need to pick your nature journal. Use either a **blank notebook** or print a nature journal from our website. Be sure to decorate it and to label the inside with your name. It is a good idea to keep some blank pages at the end to test new art materials, like paint, markers, and colored pencils. There should also be a table of contents, so you can easily find specific pages. It can go at the beginning or the end, just leave enough room to label each page. Each page should include a page number, date, weather, temperature, location and the time of your observations.



Prompt 2 – Outline Only

When starting a nature journal, it is important to not get too hung up on all of the details. Your journal is meant to describe an area at a single point in time. One of the best ways to represent something you see in nature is through a contour drawing. This type of drawing focuses on the shapes of objects.

For today's activity, find an object in nature, like a tree or bird, and draw the outline. As you draw the outline, your **pencil** should stay on the paper. The whole drawing must be a single continuous line. Be sure to focus on the outline of the object, and spend most of your time looking at the object, rather than the paper. Draw the object as many times as will fit on a journal page, just be sure to keep your old drawings as a reference.



Prompt 3 – Colorful Nature

The colors found in nature tend to be surprising. Not all leaves are the same shade of green, and a single bird feather can have many different colors. We will explore some of those colors found just outside your door.

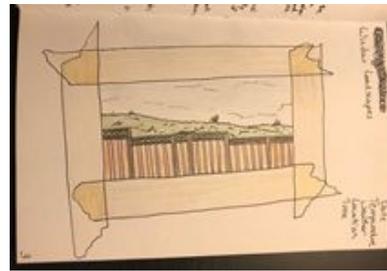
For today's journal entry, you will need a box of **colored pencils** or **crayons**. Open up their container, close your eyes, and choose 5 colors. Color a small swatch of each in your nature journal. Now head outside and find something with that exact color, like a rock, plant, or animal. Be sure to either draw a picture or write about which objects had those colors. Were there any objects that surprised you?



Prompt 4 – Window Landscapes

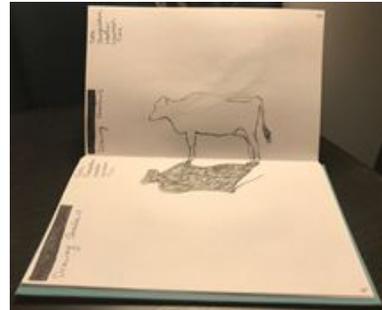
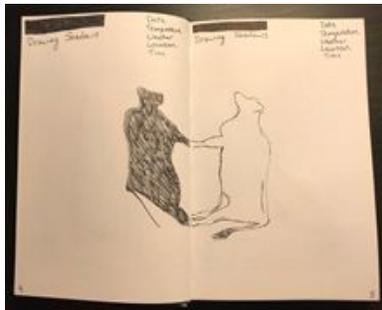
This is a great rainy day activity, but it is just as much fun on a sunny day. You will need **masking tape** and **dry erase markers** for this activity. There is a lot of nature out there, and this activity will help you capture it in small doses. Be sure to ask an adult for permission before you do this activity.

Make a square out of masking tape on any window in your house. It can be any size but it usually helps to start with a smaller box. Then, take a dry erase marker and draw the outlines of what you can see when you look through the tape box on the window. Remember, farther away have less details than the closer objects. You can then erase it, look through the box at a different angle, and draw the horizon again. Once you feel comfortable tracing the landscape of the window, draw a box in your journal the same size as the one on the window. Then draw what you see in your journal.



Prompt 5 – Drawing Shadows

Today we will be looking at different shapes found in nature. For this activity, you will need to use the full spread of 2 pages in your notebook. Head outside to a park, backyard, or patio and look for something that casts a shadow. Once you find your favorite shadow, use a **pencil** to draw the shadow on the left side of the notebook, and draw the object casting the shadow on the right. The seam of your journal is where the shadow, and the object casting the shadow meet. Once you are finished, you can open the journal at a 90 degree angle. This will make it look like the object is casting a shadow on the other side of your journal.



Prompt 6 – Getting to Know a Leaf

At first, the idea of starting a nature journal can be overwhelming. To make it little more manageable, let's take a very close look at something small. Head outside to your backyard, patio, or a local park and find a leaf. Choose a leaf from off of the ground or observe a leaf connected to a plant. Remember not to pull leaves off of living plants and if you see leaves of three, let it be.

Once you find your leaf, take 15 minutes to record everything you notice about your leaf. This can include drawing and writing. Be sure to add details about how it feels or smells. Note any tears, or holes made by animals. Feel free to trace your leaf, or part of your leaf, and fill in the details. Describe the color, size, shape, and more. Include enough detail that someone could pick your leaf out of a group of leaves, just by what you included in your nature journal. You do not have to be the world's best artists to nature journal, you just need to make as many observations as possible.

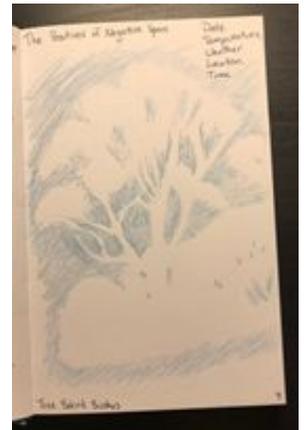


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Prompt 7 – The Positives of Negative Space

Today, we will explore negative space and how important it is to nature journaling. When you are drawing something from nature it is important to look at the shape of the object, but also the empty space around it. As you head outside, look for an object with a complicated outline, like a tree or small plant. Take some time to really look at this object, and notice the empty space around it. Instead of drawing the outline of the object in your journal, start shading in the negative space until it leaves only the outline of the object.

Without all of that negative space, you would not be able to draw that object accurately.



Resources

- <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/free-preview-nature-journaling-and-field-sketching/>
- <https://blog.prepscholar.com/contour-line-art>
- <https://johnmuirlaws.com/resources/>
- <https://www.plt.org/educator-tips/nature-journaling-ideas/>
- <https://www.artinstructionblog.com/an-introduction-to-negative-drawing-with-mike-sibley>
- <https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/NatureJournal.pdf>