

GEN Journaling: Tools of a Naturalist

Essential Question(s):

What is a Nature Journal?

How can you study nature using your senses?

At a Glance:

Learners realize their senses and body parts are tools for observing nature and nature journaling.

Background Information:

The recording of natural phenomena goes all the way back to drawings on cave walls and paintings on animal hides. These are examples of the first nature “journals”. People would record explorations, successful hunts, and specific happenings of each season. Explorers and naturalists kept logs of their journeys and discoveries through nature journals. Drawings and writings were used to describe new species of plants and animals, as well as distribution and behaviors. Famous scientists, explorers, and naturalists who used nature journals include Charles Darwin, Lewis and Clark, Henry Thoreau, William Bartram, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, and John Muir.

Location: Classroom and outdoors

Objectives: *Learners will*

- 1) explore creative aspects of journaling.
- 2) discover how to use their senses and body parts to study nature.

Skills: reflection, creative and technical writing, questioning, expression, perception

Supplies:

- Journal or ‘Tools of a Naturalist’ worksheet
- Pencil or pen

Subjects: science, language arts, art.

Time: 25 minutes

See *How to Make a Nature Journal* in the Ecosystem Module for further background information and instructions on how to make a nature journal.

Procedure:

1. Discuss the history of nature journaling with learners and how it has enhanced scientific study. Tell learners that nature journals may be kept in a strictly scientific manner; as a relaxed, leisure activity; or as a combination of the two. Introduce the topic ‘Tools of a Naturalist’.

Tools of a Naturalist

A Naturalist is someone who studies nature. Naturalists use many tools in studying nature, such as binoculars, cameras, tape recorders, rulers, tweezers, and most important, journals. You don't necessarily need all these physical tools to go out and study nature because you already have them in or on your body. For example, your eyes are your binoculars and camera, your ears can listen for sound, and your fingers are great tweezers. How else can you use your senses or body parts to study nature? Make a list of your senses and body parts that may be useful in studying nature. Then write how they are used to explore your outside world. After you have discovered the great tools you have, go outside and use them. Use all of your tools to write about the day and what you see around you. “I think I just felt something blow in my “Wind Detector” (my hair)!”

2. Allow learners to find a quiet place outside with their journals and/or 'Tools of a Naturalist' worksheet.
3. Give learners time to read through and complete the journaling activity (15-20 minutes).
4. Gather learners back together and allow those who want to share to discuss their journal entries.

Discussion:

How are nature journals used to aid and enhance scientific study?

How can you use your senses to study nature?

What other 'tools' did you use to explore your natural surroundings?



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Senses and Body Parts	Use in Studying Nature