

My nature connection

NATURE JOURNAL

GRADES: K+
TIME: 40-60 min.

WHAT IS A NATURE JOURNAL?

Nature journals are books that we use to record our observations, feelings, and thoughts about nature. Our nature journals can contain drawings and notes about what we have experienced in the great outdoors.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Paper
Staples or yarn/string
Pen or pencil
Markers or crayons
Scissors
Clothes for outside
Comfortable walking shoes

ACTIVITY

INTRODUCTION

Nature journals are a great way for us to record our observations about nature in a way that makes sense to us. When used throughout the year, nature journals can be a great to track how the environment changes throughout the seasons.

Educators can use nature journals as a compliment to assignments that involve observation and identification in the outdoors. Families can use nature journals as a way to engage more with the natural world and think critically during walks or hikes.

Students will:

1. Create and decorate a nature journal using found items from the outdoors
2. Explore local nature
3. Make nature-based and scientific observations

SETTING
Indoors
and
Outdoors

STEP ONE: CREATE THE JOURNAL

Grab a piece of construction paper. This will be the front cover of the nature journal. On this piece of paper write "[INSERT NAME] Nature Journal" and add color and designs/drawings to personalize it. Make sure to leave room to put found items from your nature walk on the cover.

After you're happy with the cover place it face down on the table. Next grab about 5 pieces of printer paper and put them on the cover. These will be the pages for drawing, notes, and observations.

Finally, put another piece of construction paper on top. This will be the back cover.

Flip your stack of pages over so the decorated cover is face up followed by the sheets of printer paper and the sheet of construction paper.

Now it's time to bind the book. Use staples to bind the pages or cut holes using a hole-punch and use string, yarn, braided grass to weave the book together.

Be sure to clean up your work space before going outside!

STEP TWO: NATURE ADVENTURE AND COLLECT FOUND ITEMS

Now that we have a great looking nature journal, it's time to fill in the pages!



Ask students to go on a walk around their neighborhood (with a guardian or with their permission) with their nature journal. They could explore a park, forest, river, lake or they could walk along a sidewalk or their backyard. There are also lots of virtual hikes that they can go on! See the next page for additional resources.

If students are going on a walk, ask them to practice social distancing rules by maintaining at least 6 feet of space between themselves and other people.

Before the begin to journal remind them to put today's date on the top of their page. As they explore nature, ask them to write down their observations and feelings about what they're seeing.

Use the five senses to guide observations. We want to respect nature, so please remind youth to not harm any living species, plant or animal. Ask students to try and write down 3 observations and 2 drawings during/after their walk.

WRITING AND DRAWING PROMPT IDEAS

What is the weather like today?

Is it sunny or cloudy?

How do the outdoors look, smell, feel different than from a few months ago?

What sounds do you hear?

What does the air taste, smell, feel like today?

What animals did you observe in your explorations?

What plants, flowers and trees did you observe in your explorations?

Plant seeds somewhere and make daily reflections by writing and drawing your observations.

What are the shapes of the clouds that you see?



CONNECTING WITH QUESTIONS

What is something you noticed on your nature walk that you never have before?

Did you go on a virtual hike? If so, how was the environment different than the one we experience in Minnesota?

What's one question you want to answer with the help of your nature journal?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

Use your nature journal on virtual hikes using the videos linked below.

Moraine Lake, Banff National Park, Canada:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seWRWp7HKU0>

Glacier National Park, Montana:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7GkebUe6XQ>

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKlym2jliGI>

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

take a short survey at:

campfiremn.org/mynatureconnection

or here:

Kids Survey - [click here](#)

Teachers/Parents Survey - [click here](#)

EDUCATION STANDARDS

Social Emotional Learning Competency: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness

Grade Level

Science Education Standard

Grade K

2.1.1 Students will be able to represent observations and data in order to recognize patterns in the data, the meaning of those patterns, and possible relationships between variables.

Grade 1

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Grade 2

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Grade 3

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Grade 4

1.1.1 Students will be able to ask questions about aspects of the phenomena they observe, the conclusions they draw from their models or scientific investigations, each other's ideas, and their information they read.

Grade 5

1.1.1 Students will be able to ask questions about aspects of the phenomena they observe, the conclusions they draw from their models or scientific investigations, each other's ideas, and their information they read.

Grade 6

2.1.1 Students will be able to represent observations and data in order to recognize patterns in the data, the meaning of those patterns, and possible relationships between variables.

Grade 7

2.1.1 Students will be able to represent observations and data in order to recognize patterns in the data, the meaning of those patterns, and possible relationships between variables.

Grade 8

2.1.1 Students will be able to represent observations and data in order to recognize patterns in the data, the meaning of those patterns, and possible relationships between variables.

Grades 9-12

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