



Nature Journaling

Age 8-11 | Art

Recording observations

Overview

Recording what we notice in the natural world can give opportunities to pursue curiosity and take notice of what is around us. Journaling at regular intervals supports learning about the seasons and offers opportunities to develop deeper curiosity about the natural world.

Resources

- A natural area with a choice of seating options
- Drawing paper or notebooks
- Pencils and watercolour paints
- Optional: magnifying glasses, binoculars, rulers, sit mats

Activity

1. Share images of individual pages from a variety of nature journals to show that the finished pages can be very different, with the focus being enjoyment and observation rather than the end product.
2. With pupils, select a calm, quiet area with greenery and space to sit individually and observe surroundings.
3. Invite pupils to find something that takes their interest, large or small, and use drawings, words and some data to record it. Remind them that this is an individual nature adventure and offer some ideas for getting started, such as:
 - Get up close to a leaf, a feather or berry, perhaps add measurements or think about what it reminds you of.
 - Draw around something or see how it feels in your hand, do a texture rubbing of it and describe it in words.
 - Make a map of the walk you took to get here, noting the nature you saw or heard.



- Find a collection of related objects in an area. Draw or write about them, ask some questions about them or make some guesses.
 - Zoom out to something big, like a tree or a field, then zoom in on a small thing like a cobweb or a stone.
 - Make a list of sounds and add drawings of the real things or what you imagine – it is ok for it to be funny.
 - Find something new to you, draw it, find out its common or local name and scientific name. Note down the habitat and season.
4. After a while, take a pause and ask pupils to share ideas for giving a structure to their journal page. Examples: giving the page a title; noting place and time or season; using boxes around drawings and words; using arrows; adding a border; thumbnail landscapes to help fill the page; using a limited palette of colours.
 5. At the end of the session, instead of asking pupils to show their journal page, ask if they are thinking, seeing or feeling differently about nature? They may offer to show their page to you or to others.

Suggested outcomes for learning

We understand you will tailor this activity to the learning needs of your pupils. Here are some outcomes and extension ideas that other practitioners have used this lesson idea to reach.

- To observe and record thoughts and feelings in and about nature
- To extend curiosity about the natural world, using drawing and words as tools

Subject area	Topic	Ideas for further exploration
Literacy	Nature Vocabulary	Explore rich vocabulary in <i>The Lost Words</i> by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris
Religious Education	World religions	Compare the importance and role of nature in world cultures and religions
Technology	Design	Combining words and pictures for different purposes – posters, packaging labels, slides

