

Objective

The Junior Ranger will learn how to create a nature journal, and use those skills to better understand the world around them by using observation skills, writings, and creating artwork.

Topic(s): Planet Earth

Materials List

- A journal, notebook, or other paper that can be attached together that is set aside for only nature journaling
- Pencil – other drawing utensils such as colored pencils are not mandatory, but could add to your journal
- Your observation skills! This can include the senses sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell.

Background Information

The natural world around us is full of constant change and excitement! Many times as we walk through the park or even in our own yard we don't notice the changes happening around us to the plants, animals, and weather and everything big and small has an impact on each other. Nature journals are a great way to learn how to see these changes and notice patterns over time. As you move forward with future Junior Rangers lessons, your nature journaling skills will come in handy. If you would prefer to keep all of your Junior Rangers activities together, you can record your answers, artwork, and ideas for future lessons in your journal.

Instructions

Sometimes it's easier to journal by using prompts to get you started. Below is a list of prompts to help you along the way. If you enjoy your first nature journaling experience, we encourage you to keep it going by using the other prompts and creating your own as well.

What to start each journal entry with:

- Date
- Location

- Time of Day
- Weather

Prompt Suggestions

- Wildlife doesn't only exist in the wildlands! Look around for signs of wildlife to draw and/or write about in your journal – this could include chew marks in plants, tracks, scat, or nests. Try to identify what species left the wildlife sign that you've identified.
- Who is new this week? As seasons progress and change new species of plants and animals come and go. Identify something new happening this week. This could include flowers in bloom, baby birds making their way out of the nest, or tadpoles growing their legs. If you would like to continue with this prompt in the coming weeks, continue to keep an eye on the same thing you initially journaled about to observe how it changes over the season.
- Create a map of your observations that day including the path you walked and where you saw different types of plants, animals, and natural features (rocks, water, etc.). When you look at all of your observations together in map form, it can often answer questions such as "What type of habitat am I in?" and "What does the food chain in this habitat look like?"
- Find a plant or flower to sketch and research. After drawing the plant, find out what species it is and write down what you find interesting about it.