

# Nature Journal Activity



When you are making observations, it is important to write them down so you can remember what observations you made, how those observations made you feel, and what you were thinking about when you made the observations. You can do this by making a nature journal.

Grade Level	K -2 and up
Activity Length	5+ Class periods, 20-30 min each
Materials	Copies of worksheets. Blank paper for the students to do the 5 day Nature Journaling activity.

## Science and Engineering Practices:

- Planning and carrying out investigations
- Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information.
- Analyzing and interpreting data

## Disciplinary Core Ideas: (LS2) Ecosystems

### SEEd Standards

#### Strand K.2: LIVING THINGS AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS

- K.2.1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate** information to describe patterns of what living things (plants and animals, including humans) need to survive.
- K.2.2 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate** information about patterns in the relationships between the needs of living things (plants and animals, including humans) and the places they live.
- K.2.3 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate** information about how living things (plants animals, including humans) affect their surroundings to survive.

#### Strand 1.2: THE NEEDS OF LIVING THINGS AND THEIR OFFSPRING

- 1.2.2 Construct an explanation** by observing patterns of external features of living things that survive in different locations.

#### Strand 2.2: LIVING THINGS AND THEIR HABITATS

- 2.2.1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate** information about patterns of living things (plants and animals, including humans) in different habitats.

# How to Use this Activity



Explain to students that they will be keeping a Nature Journal. Explain to them that in a nature journal people write down what they see in nature and often make drawings. Share the story of Maria Sibylla Merian. Discuss why it is important to draw plants and animals in nature, without plucking them or capturing them.

Next discuss the five senses with students. Together have students make observations using each sense in order. Then, either alone or with help, they can write down one observation for each sense on the **Making Observations** worksheet. Remind them that it usually isn't safe to taste things in nature, and that is why the sense of taste has been left out. Ask them if they know why they shouldn't taste things in nature.

Next watch the Youth Teaching Youth videos about making Nature Journals.

Finally, do the 5-day Nature Journal Activity work sheet. It should be done at a student's own pace. Students will need their own paper. Set aside class time to take your students outside onto the playground to explore or have them work on this activity at their house. Remind students to be creative, and share your students' work and discuss the differences in their journals.

Using this lesson for Distance Learning Options:

During an online about nature journals. Then go through all the steps above. Either provide copies of the worksheets to students or have them read them online. Younger students will need adult help in making observations.

## Alternative Activities

Provide copies of all worksheets to students who do not have access to videos. Students will also need blank paper in order to do the 5 day Nature Journal. Younger students will need adult help.

# Nature Journal

## Maria Sibylla Merian



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature journals often use drawings. When people draw nature, fossils, and other things for science, they are being scientific illustrators.

One important scientific illustrator was Maria Sibylla Merian, a German naturalist who lived from April 2, 1647-January 13, 1717. She drew pictures of plants, animals, and insects in Amsterdam and Germany in Europe and Suriname in South America. There were not a lot of women working as scientists while Maria was alive, but Maria's skill as an artist and her love of nature helped her become one of the first scientific illustrators.



"Metamorphosis of a Butterfly"  
by Maria Sibylla Merian

Unlike many scientists in the 1600s and 1700s, Maria did not like to pluck flowers, catch insects and kill and pin them, or collect any of the living things she drew. She wanted to draw them living in their natural habitats.

One of the most important things she did was being one of the first people to watch and draw the metamorphosis, or changing, of caterpillars into butterflies. Because of this, and the many insect facts she found out by drawing, many consider her one of the most important early entomologists, or someone who studies insects.



# Nature Journal



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Making Observations

There is lots to see and learn when you go out and explore nature! You can learn things about nature by using your eyes to look, your ears to hear, your nose to smell, and your hands to touch. When you learn things using your senses, you are learning through observations. We are not using the sense of taste right now, because you should not taste things in nature.

Before you start making a nature journal, practice making observations. Draw or write down one thing you observe using each sense.



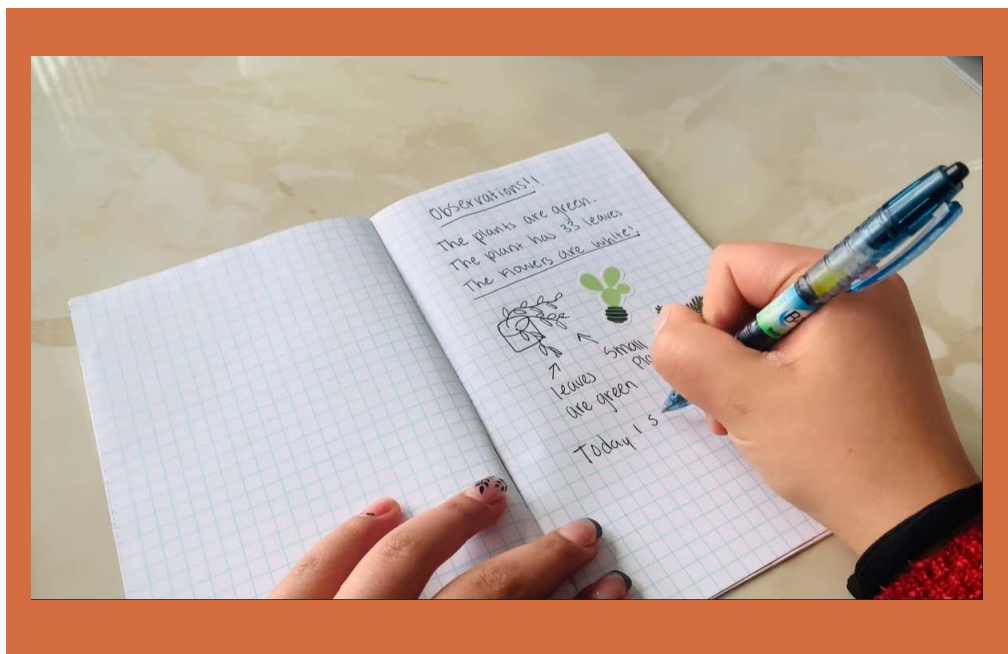
# Nature Journal



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

When you are making observations, it is important to write them down so you can remember what observations you made, how those observations made you feel, and what you were thinking about when you made the observations. You can do this by making a nature journal.

There are many ways to make a nature journal! You can use a spiral bound notebook, a composition notebook, staple together a bunch of printer paper, or fold a piece of paper in half to make a booklet. It doesn't matter what it looks like, it only matters that there is enough room to draw and write in your notebook.



Watch the videos of our Youth Teaching Youth and Teen Explainers creating and using Nature Journals for inspiration!



# 5 day Nature Journal



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Day 1: Draw a picture of the environment.

Is there any water in this environment? Is there any food in this environment? Is there a place for animals to find shelter? What kinds of living things could live here?

Day 2: Draw or write about one plant in your environment.

Why is this plant growing here? Does this plant need people to help it grow? How does this plant make you feel?

Day 3: Look around and find an insect, spider, or other bug.

Draw this living thing. What was it doing in this environment? What kind of living thing is it? Can you think about what life is like for this living thing?

Day 4: What is the weather in this environment like today?

Can you draw the weather today? Imagine what this environment will look like during summer, fall, winter, and spring. Draw the environment during a different season.

Day 5: Think about how humans live in this environment,

Draw some things that humans can do in this environment. Think about these things humans do. Do they interact with other living things like plants, insects, and animals?

There are many different ways of writing in and making a nature journal. Be creative as you observe the outdoors!

