

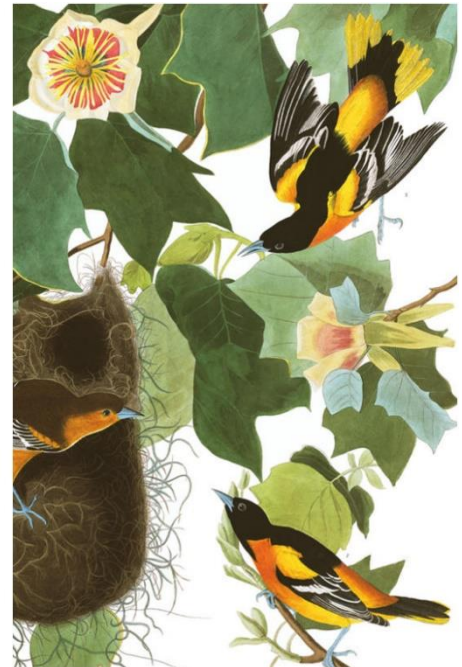


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**GRADE: 2**

Students will be able to use various materials and tools to observe and describe the aesthetic characteristics of plants and animals within their local habitats.

**Nature Journaling:** The practice of drawing or writing in response to observations of nature.



**Organism:** an individual animal, plant, or single-celled life form.

**MATERIALS:**

Four artists' books from the Center for Art + Environment:

- Lita Albuquerque, *Artist Book*, 2006
- Jeanette Hart-Mann, *Handmade Field Journal*, 2000
- Larry Mitchell, *A Voyage to the Antarctic Peninsula*, January – February, 2011
- Cedra Wood, *Field Journal*, New South Wales, June 2011

Presentation

Nature Journal Station

- Nature Journal Cover
  - Suede or faux leather
  - Elastic straps
- Field Notebook
  - Lined, dotted, gridded, and blank precut paper
  - Cardstock covers
  - Two-hole punch
  - String
  - Golf Pencils

Illustration Station

- 1. Draw
  - Drawing Pencils
  - Paper
  - Simple images or samples of local wildlife
- 2. Print
  - Predrawn organism
  - Polystyrene foam sheets
  - Pencils
  - Tracing Paper
  - Watercolor paper
  - Tape
  - Inkpad or block printing ink and brayers
- 3. Colorize
  - Watercolor paints or pencils
  - Water cups
  - Brushes

- Color images or samples of local wildlife

Calligraphy Station

- Poetry
  - Nature poetry books or examples
  - Pencils
  - Pens
  - Paper
- Calligraphy
  - Precut quill feathers or steel nib pens
  - Inkwells and washable ink
  - Calligraphy alphabet examples

Exploration Station

- Magnifying glasses
- Sample Collection Packets
  - Brown paper
  - Glue sticks
  - Scissors
  - Envelope templates
  - Pencils
- Rubbings
  - Selection of hard natural surfaces: leaves, bark, wood, stone, replica fossils
  - Paper
  - Crayons
- Flower Press
  - Selection of local plant life
  - Large multilayer flower press for multiple plant samples

**TIME:** 2 Hours

**LESSON:**

**ENGAGEMENT:**

Show students the artwork of naturalists like John James Audubon. Ask them what they see and allow a few minutes for small group discussion. Develop the conversation by posing and discussing a selection of questions:

How would an artist have created images like these without photographs to reference or an easily transportable art studio?

Why would someone spend so much time carefully documenting these animals?

Is this practice of documenting nature artistic or scientific?

Do we still study the natural world in the same way?

What practices are the same or different?

Open the dialogue to include the entire class – encouraging the idea that skillful exploration, observation, and documentation are key to both scientific and artistic study.

### **EXPLORATION:**

Introduce students to the practice of nature journaling. The internationally recognized Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art is home to a number of contemporary journal studies, which will be presented during the 2019 NV STEAM Conference workshop. The Center, an art history and research library, may be contacted directly for additional viewings or further assistance on the interdisciplinary practice of nature journaling.

Ask the students which part of the natural world they would love to study? What would they include in their journaling kit and why? Would their kit change, depending on the topic or area of study? What would be ideal or impractical to include?

Introduce the art project to the students. Explain that they will be using a range of different tools and practices to create their own nature journals. Each station will offer them an opportunity to create another fundamental segment of their journal and learn a new artistic technique.

1. The “Nature Journal Station” is tasked with selecting the pages needed for their field notebook; placing them between two cardstock covers; and securing them. A two-hole punch can be used to pierce the top short edge of the notebook. String looped horizontally between the holes will bind the pages together.

Using a template, a journal cover can be cut from fabric. An elasticated string is used to secure the contents, including the field guide, within the wraparound fabric cover.

2. At the “Illustration Station,” students will trace photocopied images or personally draw samples of local plants and animals. Reversing the images and taping them in place on a polystyrene foam sheet, students will etch their picture into the foam by firmly retracing the drawn image with their pencil. Students will ink their newly created etched foam stamp on a stamp pad and firmly apply it to their watercolor paper. Once dry, they can colorize their image with watercolor pencils.

3. Students will use the “Calligraphy Station” to write their own nature poetry. A short poem can be written in pencil then pre-cut turkey feather quills or steel nib pens can be used to trace the letters with ink. Fun sample poems and calligraphy alphabets can be provided to help inspire the students.

4. Finally, students at the “Exploration Station” will make a simple envelope for collected natural samples. They will produce crayon rubbings of various natural surfaces and select a plant sample to be placed in the flower press. This final stage can be fulfilled indoors or outdoors as part of the elaboration stage.

### **EXPLANATION:**

The ability to identify plants, animals, and the broader properties of the environment they inhabit is fundamental to successful ecological study. Fortunately, scientists today can refer to centuries of documented natural history. This is thanks to field guides, nature writings, published journals, identification charts, and artworks meticulously crafted by naturalists from past to present. We can credit much of our understanding of the natural world today to this historical practice of mapping our environment. The nature journal perfectly exemplifies the intersectional qualities of art and science, and the valuable results of passionate interdisciplinary study. A naturalist could be anyone inspired by the observation and interpretation of diverse systems within the natural world. In this sense, the role and motivation of the artist or the scientist is nearly indistinguishable.

### **ELABORATION:**

In small groups, have the students discuss their journals. Filter through the classroom and encourage conversation about the techniques learned and ideal places to apply them. Where are the students going to use their journals? What are they going to study specifically? What samples might they collect?

Take students outdoors (or to an “exploration station”) to begin making observations and building their journals.

### **EVALUATION:**

Once back in the classroom, engage with the students on their findings. Encourage discussion of their discoveries and recording techniques. Did anyone find a unique organism during their exploration? As a group, were there any organisms which were repeatedly found? What did they learn about the ecosystem around them? What would they like to observe and study further?

### **EXTENSION:**

1. Set the students the task of taking their journals home for the weekend and using them to study their local wildlife. Once back in the classroom, allow students to examine the work of their classmates. Did everyone study the same ecosystems? Did everyone make observations in the same way? What variety can we see in the wildlife and subjects studied? What challenges did students face while working in the field and how did they overcome them? Could any of these quick studies be turned into a larger work of art? Using drawing, painting, or printmaking techniques, allow the students to convert one of their favorite wildlife observations into a fully embellished work of art.

**Bonus Standard!** ART: VA:Cr3.1.2a Discuss and reflect with peers about choices made in creating artwork.

2. John James Audubon is known to have tricked a fellow naturalist by sharing descriptions of fictitious animals. Could the students, based on observations of their surroundings, produce a picture and description of an imaginary creature? Challenge them to design an

organism which could realistically live in local habitats but might have some advantageous and eccentric features. See who can collectively make the most convincing and exciting fabricated find.

**Bonus Standard!** ART: VA:Cr1.1.2a Brainstorm collaboratively multiple approaches to an art or design problem.