



## STEM Challenge: Writing in a Nature Journal Story Book Science at Home Activity

### What you need

- Notebook
  - If you don't have a notebook, instructions for creating your own notebook for a nature journal are included in the final pages of this activity guide.
- Pencil, pen, or other writing utensil

### Preparation

**Step 1.** Gather materials.

**Step 2.** Use your journal to record your observations while exploring a natural area or other outdoor space. You can make observations indoors, too! Record what you notice while looking out a window or observing a potted plant growing indoors. The possibilities are endless!

### What to do

A good entry in a nature journal contains many important notes and details. This information will help you remember everything from your explorations. Don't forget to include the following information when writing in your journal:

- Your name
- Date and time
- Location and directions, in case you want to explore the same area again!
- Information about your explorations and adventures, such as your companions, the weather, and your observations, too! Observations can include the plants and animals you see, as well as other interesting information. You can draw pictures to illustrate your observations.
- Lastly, don't forget to explain your reason for exploring!

Don't forget to number the pages in your journal. This makes searching in your journal an easy task, especially when you want to read about your previous explorations and observations!

### What is happening?

Everglades National Park is a special national park because it was the first national park created specifically for conservation of its plants and animals. Many people fought for the Everglades to become a protected area, including Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Marjory Stoneman Douglas spent several years studying the Everglades and wrote her book *The Everglades: River of Grass* using her research notes.

Information from "Marjory Stoneman Douglas" from *America's Everglades - The largest subtropical wilderness in the United States* from National Park Service (NPS).



Image of Marjory Stoneman Douglas from Florida Memory.



## Nature Journal

### What you need

- Cardboard or another strong, durable material for front and back cover of journal
- Scrap pieces of paper: computer paper, construction paper, and/or brown paper bags
- Scissors
- Materials to combine pieces of journal like hole punch and string or stapler and staples
- Materials to decorate like stickers and markers
- Writing utensil

### Preparation

The instructions below describe how I made my nature journal, but you can use whatever materials on hand. For example, if you don't have a hole punch and string, then use a stapler to combine your materials! The possibilities are endless!



**Step 1.** Collect materials. Make sure you have two equal size pieces of strong, durable material for the front and back cover of the journal. I cut one piece of cardboard in half for my two pieces.

**Step 2.** Take scrap paper and fold in half. Make sure the folded paper is the same size as the front and back cover. Align the folds of all the scrap pieces of paper so they line up with the spine of your journal. (You need to make sure you can open and turn the pages of your journal like a book!) You may have to cut the edges of your scrap pieces of paper to make them fit between the covers.

**Step 3.** Double check that all folds line up with the spine of the journal – the part of the journal that is tied together and keeps the pages from falling out. You want to make sure that you can turn the pages of your journal. Then use a hole punch to punch holes in the scrap pieces of paper. If you use a lot of paper, you might have to hole punch a couple sheets of paper at a time – just make sure the holes in each paper line up!



**Step 4.** Punch holes in the front and back covers of your journal. Make sure they line up with the holes made in the scrap pieces of paper found inside the journal covers!



**Step 5.** Place the scrap pieces of paper between the front and back covers of the journal, and line up the holes of all the pieces of your journal.



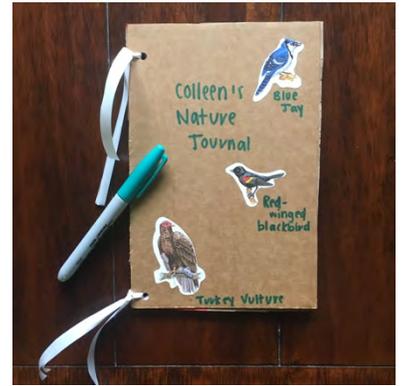
**Step 6.** Thread string through the holes.



**Step 7.** Pull the string – but not too tight! You want to make sure that you can open your journal and turn the pages without ripping the paper. Once you pull the string, tie knots in it. This will keep your journal from falling apart.



**Step 8.** Gather your decorations!



**Step 9.** Add decorations to your journal. Put stickers on the front cover. Draw your favorite plants or animals. Decorate the front cover with a fun pattern. Don't forget to put your name on the journal!

### What to do

Use your nature journal to record questions, observations, or any ideas you have while exploring outside. For every entry in your journal, make sure to include the following: your name, date and time, location, and any other interesting information like weather at the site or anyone who is with you during your exploration.

### What is happening?

Nature journals, or field journals, help scientists make notes while they are studying in the field. They can write or draw anything that they observe so they will remember it for later. The notes they make can help answer questions or make sense of things they see.