

Nature Journal: prompt for intentional time outside

Ideas adapted from Project Learning Tree



During times of social distancing, other opportunities arise to be intentional and connected with ourselves and our environment. For the next couple of weeks, Yampatika will be posting a weekly “Nature Journal: prompt for intentional time outside”. All you need for this activity is a journal or notebook, a writing utensil, a few minutes to sit outside, and your awakened senses.

Today’s **Nature Journal: prompt for intentional time outside** is called: Sound Map

Find a peaceful spot to sit outside with your journal and draw yourself in the middle of the page. With your eyes closed, identify surrounding sounds. Open your eyes and record on the page relative to where you are sitting all the sounds you hear. Use shapes, pictures, words, and questions to record the sounds around you. Make as many sound maps as you want in different locations. Share your maps with your family members and talk about the different things you observed. You will be surprised how much more we notice when we are intentional with our senses!



Today’s **Nature Journal: prompt for intentional time outside** is called Ecosystem Explorations

Find a place by a body of water, also known as a riparian ecosystem. It can be a creek, river, pond, wetland, or reservoir. In your journal make a T-chart with the labels Abiotic and Biotic.

Abiotic (never living)	Biotic (living, or once living)
●	●

Walk around the body of water and observe what you see. Record everything you see, hear, smell, or feel in one of these columns. Use pictures and words to describe your observations. Examples of items that would be categorized abiotic are water, wind, and most

types of rocks. Examples of items that would be categorized biotic include: fish, macro-invertebrates, and logs.

Then find another location with no bodies of water close by such as a sagebrush field, an Aspen grove, a sub-alpine forest, etc. And make your T-chart again with your Abiotic and Biotic labels. Record everything you sense in your T-chart. Share observations with your family members and discuss the differences in biotic and abiotic factors in these two different ecosystems. Ask the question: Does water influence the amount of biotic factors in an ecosystem? Talk about biodiversity changes with water quantity and availability in an ecosystem.



Today's **Nature Journal: prompt for intentional time outside** is called: What happened here?

Have your child imagine what their home looked like 100 or 1,000 years ago. What might they hear, see, smell, or touch now, that they wouldn't have sensed then? Have them use pictures and words to describe what they are thinking. After the journal entry is done, research together the history of your area and compare and contrast ideas.



Today's **Nature Journal: prompt for intentional time outside** is called: One Object

Today you and your kids will be naturalists. Walk outside and each of you will find one object from the natural world. Ideally each person finds a different object (such as a pinecone, branch, rock, etc.) You will study this object in great detail. Sketch your object, measure how wide, and long it

is in varying sections of it. Describe and depict, colors, textures, smells. After you have written and sketched as much detail as possible, wonder who interacts with this object? Where did it come from? How long will it be here for? Ask all the questions you can about this object and write down ideas as descriptive as you can.

When all members of the family are done journaling and studying their object, gather to play charades with the objects you explored. Use your descriptions to help others guess what object you studied. Then share your objects and journal entries. Have fun being a naturalist!