



Nature Journal

Summer 2020



Ventura County is a place unlike many others in the world. In fact, the weather, beach and sunshine are why many people like to live in California. This is because it is part of a **Mediterranean Climate**.

This means that in Southern California the **winter** is *cool* (but not cold enough to snow) and *wet*, and **summer** is *hot* and *dry*.



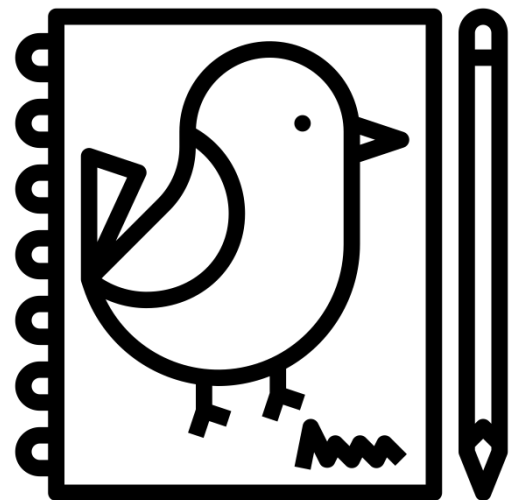
Plants and animals have changed, or **adapted**, over time to survive these conditions. **Scientists** study these adaptations to understand what makes plants and animals unique. You can be a **scientist** too!

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) is a way to use your **Science** and **Art** skills together! One way that scientists learn is through observation. By looking at a plant or animal to study what it does, you can learn a lot.

One way scientists have done this is through **journaling**. Journaling is good for you in many ways. By keeping a journal you are more likely to remember what you learned in the future!

Journals can have more than just writing in them, they can include **pictures**, **drawings**, or even **maps**.

Follow along to create your own **Nature Journal** and study the plants and animals in your own community.





Step 1: Getting Started

1. Find your Materials, you will need:

- Journal, sketchpad or paper.
- Pencil, sharpener and eraser.
- *Optional:* colored pencils, water colors, crayons, markers, etc.

2. Go Outdoors.

- Choose one place to visit. How does it change over time or by season?

3. Stay Focused.

- Keep it simple, every detail matters!
- *Start small:* choose a leaf, bug, animal, or even a cloud.

Things to Remember:



- There are no right or wrong answers!
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Build your observation and drawing skills over time.
- **Take notes.** Record what you see or any questions you have:

Animals—What is it doing? How many arms, legs, eyes, etc. does it have?

Plants—Does it have leaves, fruit, or flowers? What other plants are nearby?



Step 2: Drawing

Tips for Drawing:

Take your **time!** Drawings are made one line at a time.

Use an **eraser**. Don't be afraid to make mistakes in pencil!

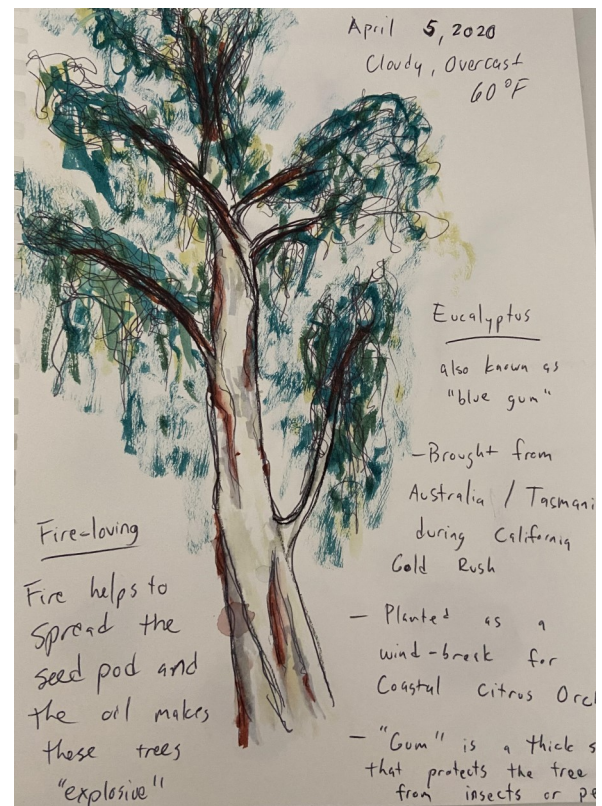
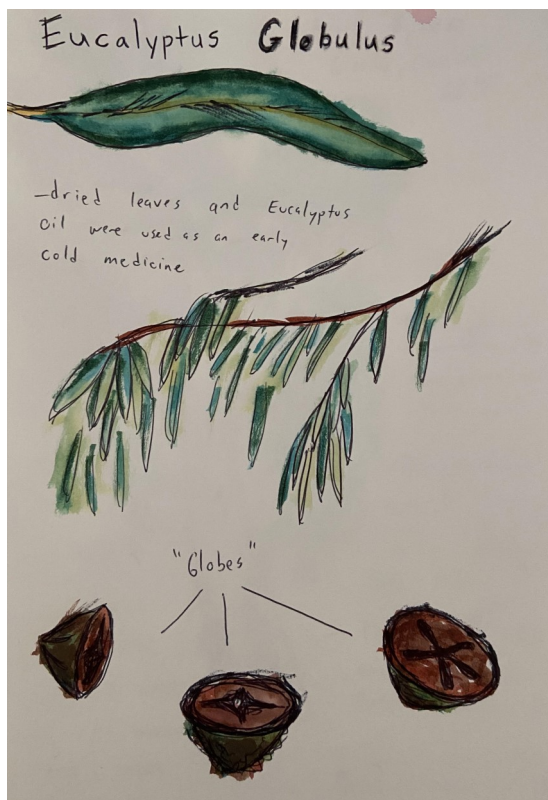
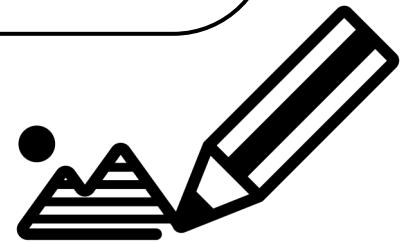
Pay attention to **detail**. Every plant or animal is different in some way!

Take a **picture**. Then you can finish your drawing later.

Do your best. You will get better over time.

Have fun! Learn about different plants and animals in nature.

Examples:



Step 3: Learn More!

First, write down everything you know about your subject in your Nature Journal.

What do you know?

What would you like to know?

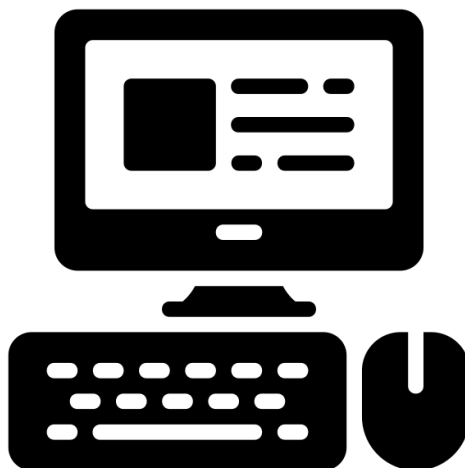
Then think about what you would like to learn!

Write down any questions you have, and then find the answer from **books**, **internet-research**, a **teacher** or **parent**!

To learn more or to identify your plant or animal, we recommend:

Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, Native Plant Database: smmtc.org/plantofthemonth/

iNaturalist, Community Nature Database:
www.inaturalist.org/





Step 4: Collect and Share your Findings!

When you are done, share your Nature Journal with friends or family! Tell them all about the plant or animal you studied and everything you learned as a scientist.

If using a journal keep it and if using paper put pages together in a folder.

Remember, if you plan to keep being a scientist and artist, add to your nature journal every week. Practice makes perfect!

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