

JOURNALING ACTIVITY PROMPT 1 AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PROMPT 1: Comparison

This prompt was adapted from *How to Teach Nature Journaling*. These instructions are similar to verbal directions you might give learners (using a whiteboard, as shown) as you offer examples of how they could record information.

Instruction:

Your goal is to compare two types of plants, recording in your journal as many differences and similarities as you can. Begin by choosing two types of plants that are sort of similar to each other—such as two different types of trees, small shrubs, grasses, or flowers.

When you find two plants to compare, begin to look for differences and similarities. Observe the plants' leaves, their branches or stems, where they grow, how tall they are, their colors, etc. Show what you learn in your journal by using words, pictures, and numbers.

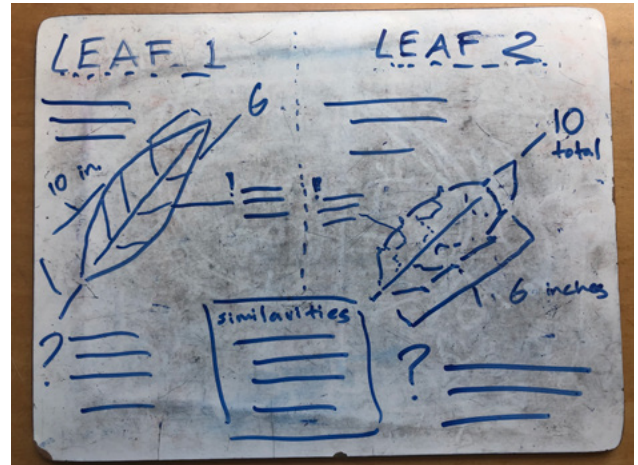
Don't worry about making a pretty picture, spelling things correctly, or knowing what the plants are called. Your goal is to notice as many differences and similarities between the two plant types as possible.

You might choose to use one page of your journal to focus on one plant type and the opposite page to focus on the other plant type. Or, you can divide a page in half if your paper is large enough. You can also list any similarities you notice in the middle, between your two drawings.

If your plants are smaller than your paper, you could make a life-size drawing. If your plants are bigger than your paper (such as a tree or a bush), you don't have to draw the whole plant. You could just show a leaf and what a section of the bark or stem looks like. To sketch your leaf, try pressing it against the paper; tracing the edges of the leaf; and then filling in details with words, pictures, and numbers.

Comparison Discussion Questions:

- What were some of the differences you observed between the two plants? How were the structures or plant parts (such as leaves, bark, or branches) different from one another? What differences were there in overall structure and growth pattern?
- Pick one type of structure or plant part (such as a leaf, bark, or branches) to focus on. How are the two structures different from each other? How might they function or work differently to help the plant survive?



JOURNALING ACTIVITY PROMPT 2 AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PROMPT 2: Mapping

This prompt was adapted from *How to Teach Nature Journaling*. These instructions are similar to verbal directions you might give learners (using a whiteboard, as shown) as you offer examples of how they could record information.

Instruction:

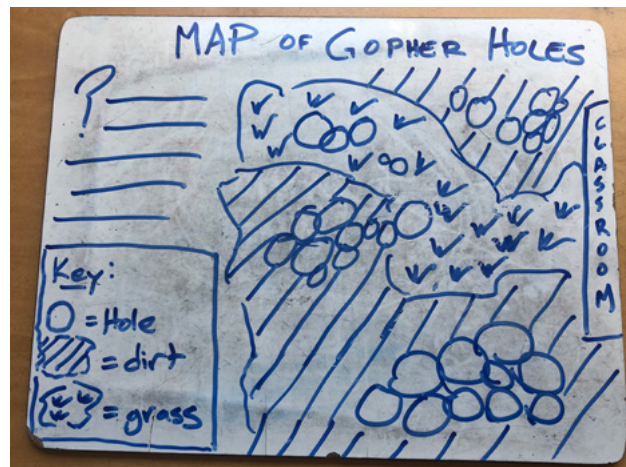
Your goal is to make a map to show where different types of plants appear in this area. Use symbols on your map to show the location for each type of plant or landscape feature and include a key where you describe what each symbol means. Map symbols can be letters or simplified shapes (e.g., a clump of lines to indicate grass, a circle to show the location of a tree).

Map symbols should not be detailed drawings because the goal is not to show the details of every single thing; it is to show their location. The symbols should be easy to draw and distinct from one another. They could also be letter codes (such as GH for gopher hole). You can add additional key elements as you go. You don't need to know the names of species of plants or other features to add them to your map. You only need to be able to tell them apart from one another. If there is a plant (such as a grass) or something like dirt that covers a very large area, you can use hatching lines or a grid to show this.

Before you begin, pick out a few important landmarks to add to your map, such as a building or a picnic bench. Use these as reference points to help you place other features on the map. If any questions occur to you as you make your map, record them.

Mapping Discussion Questions:

- What did you learn about the distribution of your plants through making your map? Where were they and where weren't they? What patterns did you notice?
- What might have caused some of the patterns of distribution you observed? Why do you think the plants you mapped were in some places and not in others?



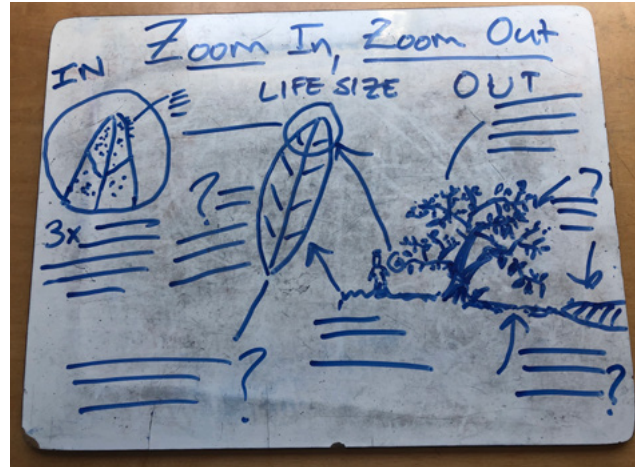
JOURNALING ACTIVITY PROMPT 3 AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PROMPT 3: Zoom In, Zoom Out

This prompt was adapted from *How to Teach Nature Journaling*. These instructions are similar to verbal directions you might give learners (using a whiteboard, as shown) as you offer examples of how they could record information.

Instruction:

Your goal is to observe a plant from different perspectives, or points of view, to see what you can notice. Pick a smaller plant—about the size of your journal. Start by looking at the plant and recording a few details about it through a life-size drawing and through writing. You don't have to make a pretty picture of the plant—make a quick sketch and record some observations of the plant.



Next, pick one plant part—such as a leaf, flower, bark, or stem—to zoom in on and do a close-up drawing. To show that this is a close-up drawing, you might want to put a circle around that feature on your life-size drawing and then make a larger circle next to that and make your close-up drawing inside the larger circle. Use words and numbers to add some observations.

Then, zoom out and start to look at everything around the plant. Are there other individuals of this plant type close by? Where does this type of plant grow? Where does it not grow? What is the soil like around this plant? Where are leaves found on this plant? Where aren't they found? Describe what you find below or around the plant. Is there any evidence of herbivores eating this plant or evidence of other interactions between the plant and the environment? Would you expect this plant to look any different in another season?

Record what you learn by using words, pictures, and numbers and use more of whichever is easier for you. When you're looking at the plant from far away, you could show its surroundings in a drawing or describe them in words. Use arrows and labels to describe evidence of interactions you see between the plant and its surroundings.

Zoom In, Zoom Out Discussion Questions:

- What kinds of details do you notice when up close? When far away?
- What things in the surrounding environment might impact or influence your plant? How do you think your plant is connected to the surrounding environment?
- How could you use this zoom in, zoom out approach in other journal entries? to help the plant survive?

JOURNALING ACTIVITY PROMPT 4 AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PROMPT 4: Field Guide

This prompt was adapted from *How to Teach Nature Journaling*. These instructions are similar to verbal directions you might give learners (using a whiteboard, as shown) as you offer examples of how they could record information.

Note: For this activity, it can be useful to offer learners an example of a field guide before they begin.

Instruction:

In a moment, you will have the opportunity to pick one plant part—such as leaves, bark, stems, seed pods, or fruit—to focus on as your subject for this activity. Then, in your journal, make a field guide of this plant part.

A field guide usually shows a picture and some information about unique features and characteristics of each subject.

Field guides show different species—not individuals from the same species. If you choose to focus on leaves, for example, you will describe one leaf from three or four different plant types or species.

Use words, pictures, and numbers to describe each subject and to show similarities and differences between different types of plant parts. To start off with, try to show at least three subjects in your field guide.

If you're not sure where to begin, record a few *I notice* statements or observations of each plant part. Or to get started drawing, try tracing each plant part. Don't worry about making a pretty picture of your subject—focus on making a lot of observations.

Field Guide Discussion Questions:

- What were some of the similarities and differences between the subjects you recorded in your field guide?
- Are there any features or structures that are shared by several or all of your field guide subjects? If so, describe them.
- What are some possible explanations for the similarities and differences you saw?
- Did you notice anything interesting as you made your field guide or did any cool questions arise?

