



My Bird Journal

Introduction

Journaling gives kids the opportunity to use drawing and writing together to show their observations, document their discoveries, pose questions, note their ideas, and learn to see and hear more. Keeping a bird journal is a great way to get your Bird Buddies outdoors to explore and record their responses to and reflections about the natural world and keep track of what they're learning. Get Bird Buddies' started on their journals with information that will help them identify birds and provide them with some of the words they'll need to record their observations.

Supplies

- Blank spiral notebook or sketchbook (or fold 10 sheets of paper in half and staple along the fold create a booklet)
- Bird Buddies journal cover (optional)
- Writing tools
- Drawing materials



Get kids thinking ...



ASK: What is a journal? Have you ever kept a journal? Who else might keep a journal? Why?

Talk about how scientists and naturalists keep field notes and journals of their observations and experiments. Writers keep journals of their observations and feelings about people and places.





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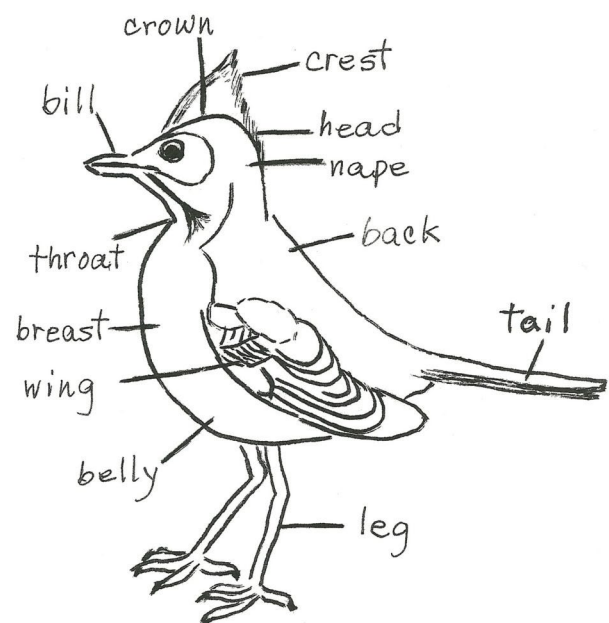
Let's get started!

STEP 1: As you pass out blank notebooks, let kids know that their journals can look however they want them to look! Kids can freely draw, write, or add photographs. It can be a place to brainstorm, keep notes and vocabulary words, make lists, sketch, or write poems. Tell them it is their place to write and draw their observations, thoughts, questions, and ideas, and as Bird Buddies, they will have a chance to make all kinds of observations.

STEP 2: Make writing and drawing materials available and ask kids to sketch a picture of a bird from memory in their journal. As kids sketch, help them understand that they don't ever have to draw beautiful "perfect" pictures — their journal's best use is to document their observations and draw what they think is important to remember.

STEP 3: After they've finished sketching, let kids pair up and compare their bird pictures. Have pairs share what the birds in their drawings have in common and what's different. As a group, chart of all the similarities and differences. From these lists and your discussion, choose words that help you draw a bird and all its key parts for the group. **ASK KIDS** to help and refer to **PARTS OF A BIRD** to label your bird's key parts.

STEP 4: Have kids add the Parts of a Bird to their journal. Let them know that knowing these parts will help them to better describe, sketch, or even identify the birds they will get to observe. Kids may also want to include some additional notes in their journal about things that could be helpful in identifying or journaling about birds they see, such as noting size or visual field marks — things you can see on the bird, such as wing bars (white bars on the wing), eye-rings (rings around the eyes), patches of color, spots on the breast, leg type, and bill type.





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GET THEM THINKING MORE ABOUT HOW TO USE THEIR BIRD JOURNALS:

Keeping a prompt or series of prompts in your journal can help you get started if you are feeling stuck. Try these sentence starters:

- I see ...
- I hear ...
- I wonder ...
- I was surprised by ...
- I feel ...

When using your journal out in the field, include the date, location, and weather information with each journal entry in order to be able to compare your observations.

When making field observations, answering these questions can help you include detailed descriptions in your journal:

- How does it move?
- What does it sound like?
- What is its habitat? Where does it spend its time?
- Was it alone?
- What is unusual about the way that it looks? Does it have interesting patterns or colors?
- What are its main colors?
- What does it eat?

More journal activities

WILDLIFE PROJECTS FOR KIDS: MAKING A NATURE JOURNAL (GREAT STEMS)

greatstems.com/2013/05/wildlife-projects-for-kids-making-a-nature-journal.html

HOW TO TEACH NATURE JOURNALING (JOHN MUIR LAWS)

johnmuirlaws.com/product/how-to-teach-nature-journaling

OPENING THE WORLD THROUGH NATURE JOURNALING (CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY)

cnps.org/education/students/parents-teachers/nature-journaling-curriculum-request

DRAW WITH A PARK RANGER: SPOTTED OWL (YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK)

nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/upload/howtodrawanOWL.pdf

DRAW WITH A PARK RANGER: STELLER'S JAY (YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK)

nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/upload/howtodrawaSTELLERSJAY.pdf

