

ABC's of Nature Journaling (from a John Muir Laws workshop) Lesson for all age groups

Teaching Point: Nature Journaling is for anyone. By learning some basic concepts, you can get started with your own nature journaling. The first part of this lesson can be taught prior to going into the field (offsite) or on site in a meeting area.

Time: 60-90 minutes depending on age of participants (15 minutes for the mini lesson, the rest for the field sketching and debriefing)

Materials: Notebook, pencil, or clipboard with paper and pencil for each participant. A large poster/easel and pens for the instructor to jot the ABC's as he/she/they tell them to the group and one poster size example showing a sketch with the ABC's in action.

Architecture	Lesson Script
Set <i>1- 2 minutes</i>	<p>One way to enjoy nature is to slow down and notice the details of structures, the patterns and shapes, the color and shades, the intricacies we take for granted. Recording what you see using pencil and paper will allow you to see more deeply.</p> <p>Nature Journaling is a way for you to practice your scientific observation skills through art and it is a way for you to learn more about nature while enjoying being outside.</p>
Teach <i>10 minutes</i>	<p>There are many people who carry nature journals with them while hiking. They find a spot to sit, sketch, and jot what they notice. John Muir Laws is a local artist who has published several books and has a website with lessons about nature journaling. Today we are going to use some of his basics to get you started.</p> <p>This lesson is called the ABC's of Nature Journaling: Provide students with paper, clipboard, and pencil so they can jot the bold words onto their paper for reference before heading out to draw. If possible, have a big poster of a sketch that uses the ABC's so that you can point to each as you write.</p> <p>A= Accuracy- Try your best to draw shapes you see with accuracy (don't rush or just scribble) Really look at what you are drawing.</p> <p>B= Big- Try to fill the page. Think about ratios you are setting up with size 1:1 if it can fill the page, for smaller items make them bigger maybe 4:1 or if it is too big shrink it to maybe 1:2 Also, consider zooming-in on a section of the item to show greater detail that you do not want to draw for the entire drawing.</p> <p>C= Color/shading- If you have color pencils add color, if not add shading to enhance</p> <p>D= Descriptive- Use words to annotate your sketch. If you get frustrated because you cannot draw a part well, use words to help out. Describe shapes, sizes, things you notice, don't worry if your words become lines of poetry- that is even better. Note things such as size, time of day, where you are, direction the wind is coming from, weather, etc.</p> <p>E=Explain/Expand- While you draw you may notice things and come up with questions. Jot these too. "I notice...." "I wonder why..." "This reminds me of..."</p>

<p>Active Engagement</p> <p><i>15- 45 minutes</i></p>	<p>Leader makes sure the group members are spread out so that they will be less likely to interact with others. Provide a new sheet of paper if necessary or use the back of the paper.</p> <p>The best way to journal is to sit quietly in a way that you are comfortable enough to stay put for at least 20 minutes. You will remain quiet and focus on what you are drawing. Find an object of interest to draw like a rock, branch, leaf, acorn, shell, etc. Use the ABC's as you sketch.</p> <p>Remember you're doing this to notice and record what you see, not to be the best artist. When and if your brain starts talking negatively to you "I cannot do this, this does not look right..." shut it off and continue looking at your subject, just trying your best.</p> <p>Be sure to annotate your drawing with thoughts and ideas. Consider using sentence starters "I notice..." "I wonder..." "This reminds me of..."</p> <p>Leader walks around to check in with individuals as needed and to provide any support.</p> <p>After specified time, depending on the age group, call the group back. Have each group member place their drawing in one or two circles on the ground.</p>
<p>Debriefing</p> <p><i>10-15 minutes</i></p>	<p>Allow time for a gallery walk so everyone can see what others have sketched. We will now look at each other's work and see how each person incorporated the ABC's of journaling as part of their sketch. Be prepared to describe strengths you see in journaling. For example, you might say. "I noticed how one person wrote down the date, time, and location." or "I noticed how this one really filled the page and made the picture big for us to see."</p>
<p>Credits</p>	<p>John Muir Laws • Nature Stewardship Through Science, Education, and Art</p>