



Create A Field Journal



Make a journal to help you explore the world around you!

No matter where you explore, you need a way to record what you find and observe. People often use field journals to help them remember details.



Materials Needed:

Field Journal Pages printable (or make your own), scissors, construction paper, popsicle stick or sturdy twig, rubber band, colored pencils or markers. *Optional:* hole punch.

Instructions:

Step 1: Print two copies of the field journal pages, and cut along the dotted lines to make a total of eight sheets. If making your own, cut two sheets of white paper into quarters. Cut two pieces of construction paper, each about 4.5 inches (11.5 cm) long by 6 inches (15 cm) wide, for the front and back covers.



Step 2: Put the field journal pages between the covers, and line up the edges of the papers. Use a hole punch or scissors to make two holes along the edge, about 3 inches (7.5 cm) apart. *Hint:* If the stack of papers is too thick, you can make holes in the pages one at a time. Just make sure the holes line up!



Step 3: From the back, pull one end of a rubber band through one hole, and the other end through the other hole. Poke a twig or popsicle stick through the ends of the rubber band (see picture).

Alternatively, you can staple the pages together.



Step 4: Decorate your field journal with colored pencils, markers, or other craft materials. Be creative!

Step 5: Take your field journal with you as you explore. Record your observations in words and pictures. See the next page for ideas!

Using Your Field Journal



Constantine Samuel Rafinesque's journal, 1818. Image: Smithsonian Institution Archives.

There are many ways to keep a field journal. Some people record their observations with charts and lists, while others write long, detailed descriptions. You can sketch simple pencil drawings, paint colorful images, or draw maps or diagrams. You can write everything on one page, or divide it into multiple pages.

Your field journal will be unique, reflecting your personal style. Experiment with different methods to find out what works for you!

Tips for Keeping a Field Journal

- Every time you explore, write down some basic information, such as the date and time of day, location, and the weather.
- Think of some questions to help you get started: What do I see? Do I see anything that surprises me?
- Record your observations in words or pictures. Be detailed; you never know what information will be important later!
- Use your senses. In addition to what you see, record what you hear, smell, and feel. (Never smell or touch anything that might be harmful!)
- Write down questions you have about what you observe.



Field notes by Martin H. Moynihan, 1958. Image: Smithsonian Institution Archives.



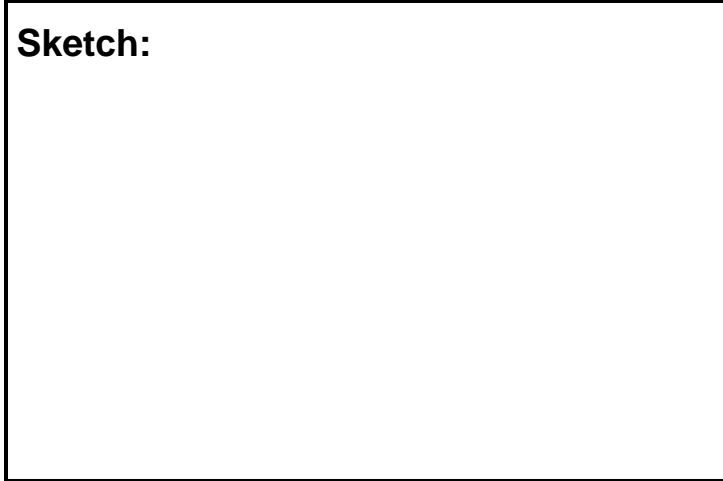
Page from one of Charles Darwin's notebooks. Image: UC Cooperative Extension.

Discover more about field journals:
siarchives.si.edu/about/field-book-project

Field Journal

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Sketch:

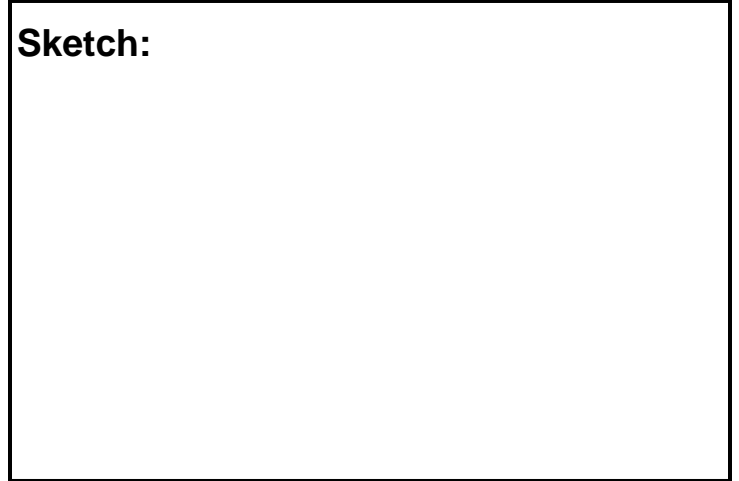


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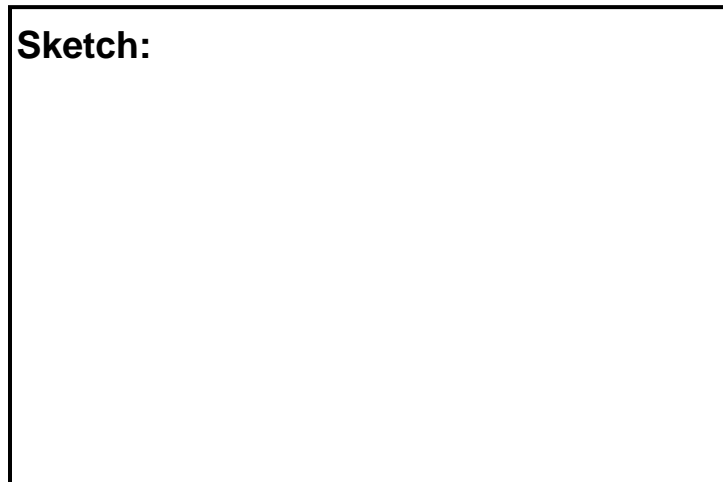


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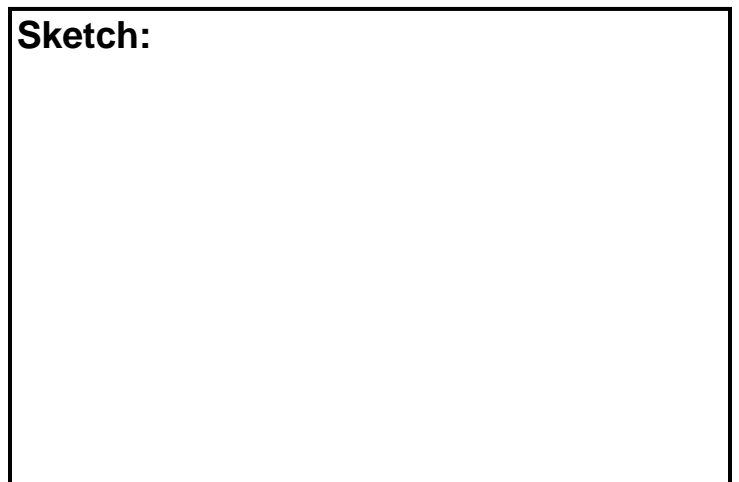


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