

Summer at the Library 2022

MAKE WAVES



Grades 3-5

Nature Note Taking

Intrepid scientists, adventurers and dedicated readers of all kinds have used note taking as a way to record life's events for a long time. Take a page from their book and personalize your own field journal before settling in to observe the sights and sounds around you.

What will you learn?

- Reasons why scientists document what they find, observe and collect
- Observation and documentation skills by creating and using a field notebook

Materials:

- Notepad or collection of paper for binding
- Art materials for decorating
- Writing utensils: Pencils, colored pencils, crayons

Instructions:

- Select a notepad.
 - If you're using a collection of loose paper to make your notebook, poke holes along one edge of all the pieces of paper. It helps to do this to all the pages at one time. Bind your notebook using string, yarn, or anything else on hand.
- Using the art materials, such as glitter, sequins, crayons, markers, etc, decorate the front page/cover of your notepad. Make sure to include your name! This is your field journal, make it your own!
- Open your notebook to the first blank page. Make sure to record the date at the top!
- Consider the types of information you will record based on your current surroundings: are you inside or outside?
 - If you're looking at an inanimate object you might consider: how long or wide it is, the color, texture, shape, smell, movement, and so on.



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- If you're observing people or animals, you might consider: how many are present, how loud is it, where are you, what time of day is it, what's the temperature?
- You may even find that many of these questions or prompts apply to both types of observations!
- Use your notebook whenever you notice interesting things while you're out in the world or inside your home.

Reflection Questions:

- How might your observations change based on where you are or what you're observing?
- What kind of patterns, if any, do you notice in what you observe?
- How could observations help create change in our world?
- What types of things do you notice most often?

Explanation:

Field scientists, like you, call the notebooks they use to record observations “field notebooks,” but books or pads used to record observations have many different names and are used by many different types of people! This tool is a very basic, but important one, for scientists because it allows them to monitor both what they notice in a specific moment and change over time. The ideal field notebook captures the data (your observations) so that there is no question about what took place: this notebook will serve as your information source when you're crunching numbers in the lab, looking for patterns, or however else you will use your data!

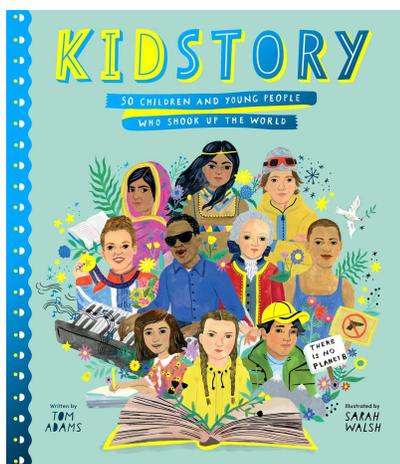
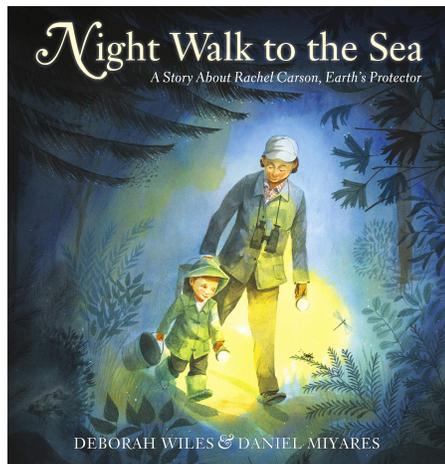
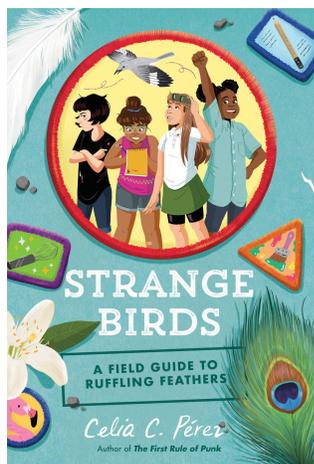
A field notebook typically contains three different types of information: descriptions, interpretations and reflections. A description is the written account of the event and will contain the details as accurately as you can recount them. Interpretations are how you understand what has happened: it's information from your perspective! Interpretations are subjective and let you consider why something is happening in addition to what is happening. Finally, reflections are a change for you to share what the event, situation or item means to you.



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More to Explore at the Library:

Field notebooks lend themselves to revolutions and big changes! Take a look at the titles below for inspiring examples of field notebooks in action.



Guide by Alexandria Abenshon.