

Introduction to Nature Journaling

Taking time to draw and observe nature encourages students to notice small details and to learn more about what they are drawing. These exercises are a great introduction to nature journaling and drawing outside.

Background

Nature rarely poses for a drawing. Leaves move with the wind and animals quickly scurry by even the quietest observer. The exercises below help train a nature artist to draw quickly while watching their natural subject in action and it will encourage students to observe nature quietly and closely.



Materials

- Plain white paper or bound journal
- Writing utensil
- Clipboards

Procedure

- Find a space at the Atlanta Botanical Garden for the drawing activity.
- Have the students find a stationary natural object like a leaf, flower or rock that they find interesting. Encourage them to find something simple to draw for the first few exercises.
- Give the students one minute to draw their natural object without looking at their piece of paper or removing their pen or pencil from the paper. Remind them that this is just practice and that it is ok if the picture is not perfect.
- Give the students another minute to draw the same object. This time, they can look at their paper, but they cannot remove their pencil or pen from the paper. This can be done on the same sheet of paper or on a different sheet. The two previous exercises are to help them learn to draw quickly while watching their natural model.
- Next give the students 5 seconds, then 10 seconds, and then 15 seconds to draw the same object. During these quick drawings, they can look at their paper and pick up their pencil or pen. These quick drawings help train the students to draw quickly.
- Afterwards, find a beautiful space in the Garden and give the students as much time as possible to quietly draw the landscape or interesting small object. They may look at their paper and pick up their pencil or pen.

