

Introduction to Nature journaling – A sequence of lessons to develop students' observational skills and document their findings in their local environment.

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**Number of lessons:** 5

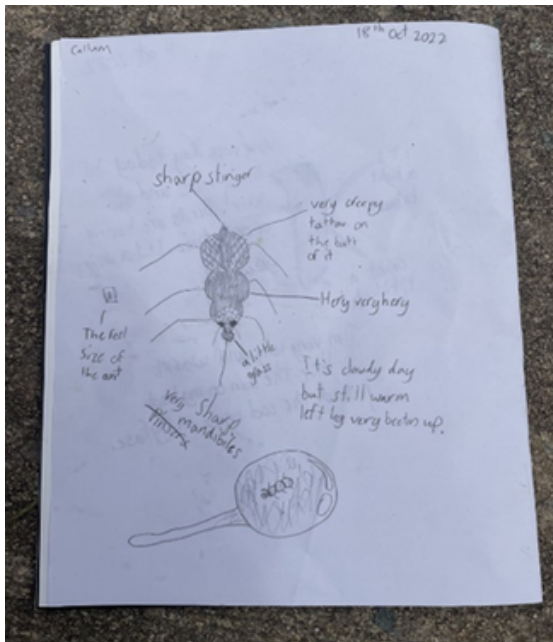
**Year Level(s):** 4

**Australian Curriculum content descriptions:**

- Living things depend on each other and the environment to survive [ACSSU073](#)
- Science involves making predictions and describing patterns and relationships [ACSHE061](#)
- With guidance, plan and conduct scientific investigations to find answers to questions, considering the safe use of appropriate materials and equipment [AC SIS065](#)

**Achievement standard:**

They describe relationships that assist the survival of living things and sequence key stages in the life cycle of a plant or animal. They identify when science is used to understand the effect of their actions. They use formal and informal ways to communicate their observations and findings. They describe ways to conduct investigations and safely use equipment to make and record observations with accuracy.



## Lessons 1-5

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### Context

I have found that my students really enjoy lessons we teach outside. Teaching nature journaling to my students has given me the opportunity to teach across the curriculum; subjects including science, literacy, arts, and numeracy play a key role in nature journaling. These sequences of lessons are provided to encourage more teachers to take their students outdoors and appreciate our local environment.

### Materials and equipment

- Nature journals
- 'Cloud window' templates
- Pencils, water pastels, coloured pencils, rulers, erasers

### Safety Advice

- Please be SunSmart when outdoors.
- A cart is convenient when taking materials for an outdoor classroom experience.

## Objectives

- Students will understand the purpose of nature journaling and learn how to observe.
- Students will learn the basics of how to create their own journal.
- Students will develop their observational skills by spending time being introduced to different aspects of their environment.

## Introduction

This is a great way to get your students exploring the grounds within the school. If you are lucky enough to have a 'naturescape' like we do, it is a wonderful space for exploration. This sequence of lessons will hopefully engage and also encourage students to continue their love of nature by communicating with their families and wider communities with their project.

The lessons cover a diverse group of ideas. This is just the foundations; you can create a more detailed unit of work based on each lesson plan provided.

# Lesson 1

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## Warm up activity and provocation (5-10mins)

- Begin the lesson with a whole class discussion by asking the students to share their favourite plants, trees, bugs that they have seen. Share these ideas on smartboard.
- Discuss the importance of plants in our lives, such as providing oxygen, food, and shelter for animals and insects.

## Introduction to nature journaling (10mins)

- Explain what a nature journal is and show different types of nature journals (both my LSA and I have our own. So, we could show these examples to the students).
- Discuss the purpose of nature journaling, which is to observe and document plants, birds, insects, and other interests in the natural world in an artistic and scientific way.
- Watch a video to show other forms of visual stimulus (link provided at the end of this document).
- Before heading outside, show the students a video about weather. In the back of each student's book, provide them with a 'weather window'. The students can then observe the sky and the cloud formation each time they head outside for nature journaling. A weather window does not have to be too complicated, but the students enjoyed looking at the sky with their template.

This is like one we have used.



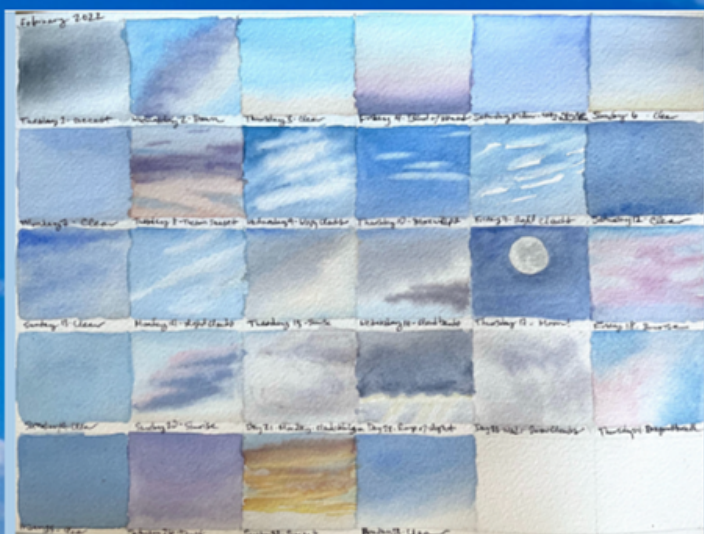
### Nature journaling activity

- Before heading outside, make sure you have all the equipment the students require for completing the activity.
- Take the students to an area with trees, plants, or shrubs. Instruct them to choose a plant or tree and observe and document their findings in their journals.
- Encourage them to use their senses to gather information about the plant.
- Instruct them to draw detailed pictures of the plant they have chose and write descriptive notes about its features, such as leaves, flowers, and bark.

### Reflection

- Have students share their nature journal entries in small groups.
- Discuss what they have observed about their tree or plant and the importance of documenting nature.

## Nature journaling challenge.

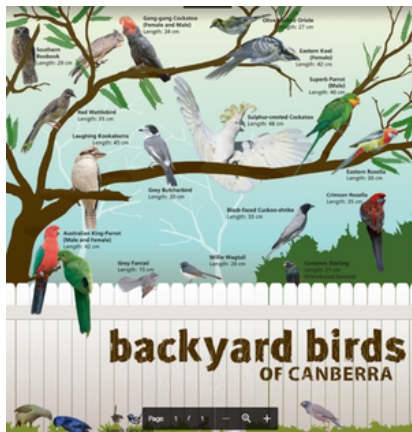


Observing a part of the sky every day for a month

[Cloud type video](#)

[Images](#)





### Reflection

- Students share their findings and display the journals for others to see.
- Students to discuss the categorization of each feather and decide on the bird it belongs to.

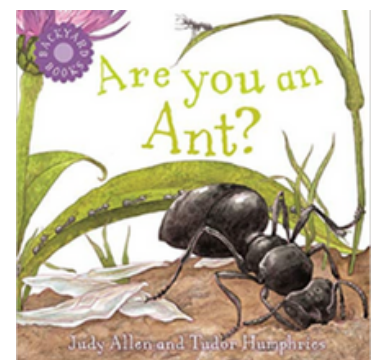
## Lesson 3 – Bug Hunting and Sketching

### Objective

Students will learn how to identify and sketch different types of insects.

### Warm up activity

- Read the book, 'Are you an Ant?' by Judy Allen.
- Discuss the book and compare the similarities and differences of ants and us.
- Discuss the anatomy of an ant.
- Make sure the students have a word list for the different body parts of an ant and possibly discuss other insects and the anatomy.



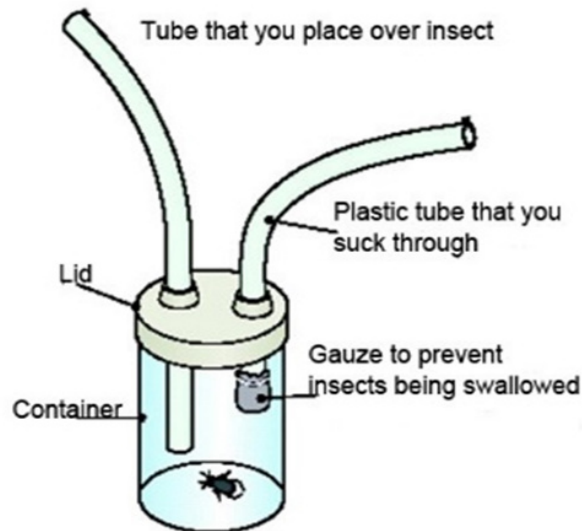
### Nature journal activity

- Students to head outside with their journals and other materials needed, including magnifying glasses.
- Students are encouraged to observe the ants. Detail what they see in their journals.
- Students attempt to measure the ants and document findings with drawings in their journals.
- Encourage students to move to a different location and find more ants to observe in their natural habitat.
- Students are encouraged to document any differences or similarities in the behaviours of the ants.

Return to the classroom and share findings of the ant investigations with the class or in small groups.

## Lesson 4 – Creating a pooter

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- Explain to students that a pooter is a device used to safely catch and observe insects up close.
- Begin by showing students examples of pooters and explaining how they are used.
- Provide each student with the materials needed to create their own pooter.
- Demonstrate how to make a pooter by cutting a straw into two pieces, about 10 cm in length.
- Attach the other straw piece to the bottom of the container, forming a mouthpiece.
- Instruct students to assemble their own pooters using the provided materials.
- Take the students outside to practice using their pooters to capture insects.
- Explain how to use the pooter to collect and observe insects and encourage students to practice using it in the field.
- Encourage students to observe the captured insects carefully and document their findings in their nature journals.
- Students to note what it was like catching the insects and then observing their behaviour.

Return to the classroom and collect feedback from the students on using pooters.

# Lesson 5 – Insect Classification and Categorization

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## Objective

Students will learn about insect classification and practice categorizing insects based on common characteristics.

## Materials

Reference books on insect classification, pencils, erasers, nature journals.

## Procedure

- Review with students the concept of classification and explain its importance in organizing and understanding the natural world.
- Introduce the basic classification system for insects, including major groups like beetles, butterflies, ants, etc.
- Provide reference books on insect classification and their nature journals.
- Instruct students to select a group of insects and classify them based on common characteristics, such as wing structure, mouthparts, or habitat preferences.
- Guide students to create a classification chart or table in their journals, categorizing the insects they have observed.

## Resources

### Worksheet:

Just nature journal books

### Useful links:

Introducing students to the nature journal idea - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueil4T29frw>

Cloud video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMagDRCpJ14>

Making a basic pooter: <https://www.natgeokids.com/au/home-is-good/make-a-super-pooter/>