

Journaling Outdoors

- Take a natural object (a leaf, a blade of grass, a tree) and describe it as a completely as you can. Included might be color, shape, use, size, design, similarity or difference to other objects, etc.
- Compare two natural objects. How are they different besides size? How are they alike? What do they resemble?
- Imagine using a natural object for a design. How would it be used as a basis for a couch, a chair, material for curtains, material for clothes, a tool?
- Compare an object to yourself. A leaf breathes, has veins, has an outside skin, grows, and is a certain color. What are the similarities and differences?
- What other natural places have you been in and what did they mean to you? Were you ever in a forest, a zoo, out camping, in the backyard? What do you remember and what did that experience mean to you?
- Look up. Observe the sky or the trees overhead. Take a few minutes and watch the changing pattern of shade or clouds. What do the clouds resemble? What makes them change? You have changed in the last year — everyone changes all the time. How are you different or the same now as you were a year ago?
- Start naming things – tree, grass, clouds, etc. Where did these names come from? Choose one name and imagine a story that tells why that name is what it is. Think up a new name for an object. What is it and why does it seem like a good name?
- All the plants have ordinary names and Latin names. Do you know any of these scientific names for plants? Plants are parts of groups called a genus. All maple trees are in the same genus (Acer). All roses are in the same genus (Rosa), etc. Get a tree leaf and check a field guide to find out what genus our leaf belongs to. Draw a picture of your leaf in your journal. Write its Latin name under it. Look to see if any other plants have similar leaves.

- Describe something in order: a tree from the bottom up, or the top down; a field or beach from the left to the right. Think of things like color, size, shape, and number.
- Close your eyes and feel a tree or a stick. What does it feel like? (rough, hard, smooth, bumpy) — what does it smell like? (forest, woody, dirt) What does it remind you of? Feel it again. What did you miss the first time?
- Imagine and design a garden, a house, a room, or a car. Talk about space and how it's used, colors, objects, uses, and people who might be in your designed area. What would you need to know to design this area? How can you learn what you need to know to do this?
- Listen. Listen some more. What natural sounds do you hear? Now write. Don't think about spelling or grammar or commas—just write. If you run out of words, just listen and write about what you hear. It could be silence.