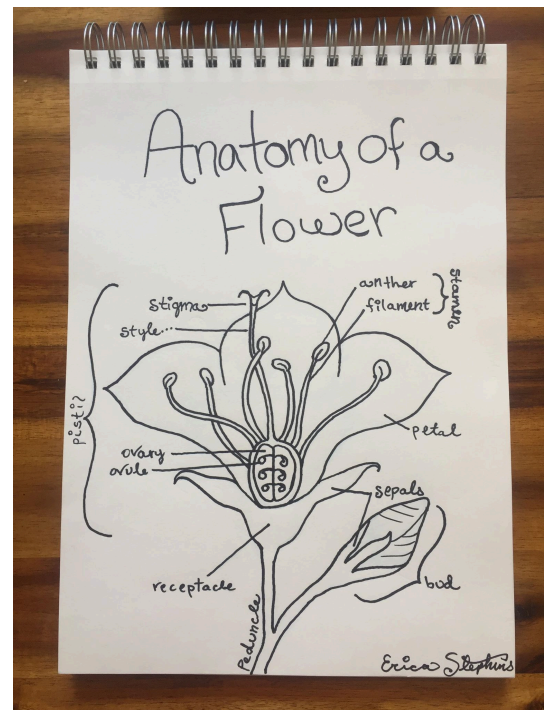


# Nature Journals

Nature journaling is a great way to observe closely the natural world. Using little more than a piece of paper and some writing utensils, anyone can hone in on their scientific as well as artistic skills. By identifying and carefully sketching any living organism, participants can also form a closer connection to the natural world.

## Directions.

- 1) Start by acquiring a sheet of paper, notebook, or notepad along with a pencil and some colored pencils.
- 2) Step outside and observe as many living organisms—plants, animals, fungi—you can find and choose one that is most interesting to you or one you would like to know more about.
- 3) Begin a "species account" by first writing the name of your chosen organism in the top left corner of the page. If you do not know what kind of organism you are observing, that's okay! You can either briefly describe the kind of organism (e.g. red bird) or look it up later.
- 4) Begin a sketch of your organism of interest using a pencil. In doing so, pay attention to small details of the organism such as color streaks, veins, leaf patterns, etc. This trains our eyes to better identify and appreciate the complexity of our organism and makes us better scientists in the process.
- 5) Using colored utensils, color your sketch as closely to your organism as possible. Remember that observing and documenting subtle traits is more far important than being a great artist.



- 6) OPTIONAL: After completing your sketch, if you so desire, you can research your organism using field guides, books, and internet sources and jot down on your paper information related to the organism's natural history such as habitat, behavior, and range.

**Follow Up Questions:**

- 1) Were there any features of your organism that you noticed that ordinarily you might not have noticed?
- 2) Can you explain aspects of your sketch to others?

