

## **Leaf Observations**

4 leaf collection bags  
2 large magnifying lenses  
40 chubby crayons  
30 small magnifiers  
30 rulers  
15 mini field guides  
15 Creek Trees guides

## Leaf Observations

### Guiding Questions

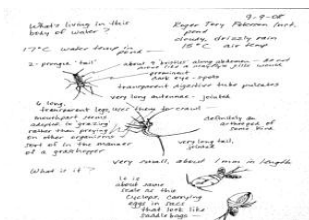
Ask students to draw their school campus and share work with others. Explore the level of detail shared and ask questions about things that may have been overlooked.

Have students list all the things a naturalist might do while studying a natural area. Discuss with students what level of detail and observation a naturalist might try to achieve and why.

Pass out sample pages of naturalists' journals and have students share what interesting things they discover. Ask students to describe the different methods and tools that a naturalist may have used in observing, collecting, and recording a natural study area.

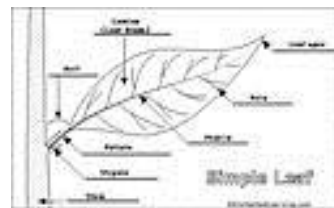
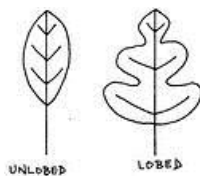
### Content

A traditional page in a **nature journal** may consist of quick studies of plant and animal life sketched out as rudimentary line drawings and used as an inventory of an ecosystem.



**Naturalists** approach their study by using the process of **inquiry**, which is more systematic than simply asking questions. The **inquiry** process begins with observation and asking questions and ends with asking more questions!

Your own backyard contains many varieties of plants, each with their own story to tell: some are ancient residents of your state whose ancestors evolved there; others are immigrants with a more recent past history of living in this habitat. The old-timers are called **native species**; the newer arrivals are called exotics or **non-native**, alien species.



## Leaf Observations

*Students practice the art of observing nature and recording details by carefully studying and drawing from a collection of leaves.*

- 1) Before passing out leaves, ask students to first draw in their journal pictures of leaves that they can remember seeing at the homes, school, and park.
- 2) Pass out leaves, magnifiers, and centimeter rules.
- 3) Ask students to now make a scientific drawing of a leaf in fine detail, and include written descriptions of the leaf's characteristics.
- 4) Group students and have them share drawings and details. Have students ask questions of each other about why the leaves are so different from each other.
- 5) Have students make a list of all the descriptive terms each group used. See if they can brainstorm and add more. Share full list with class.
- 6) Have students return all leaves to a central table, mix them up, and then give students a chance to try and "identify" their original leaf.
- 7) Provide leaf charts and Id booklets for class study. See if students can identify their leaf.
- 8) Have students research more information on our local riparian community.

### Challenge

Take your journal out into nature now! Complete a leaf observation journal entry by comparing three leaves from nature. Bring back to share your findings!