

# 100 Creative Nature Walks: Science Learning Record

Flexible and Enriching Outdoor Exploration

Grade Range: 1st–8th

Subject Focus: Science (Life Science, Earth Science), with Writing, Math, and Art Integration

## Content Description

This curriculum provides 100 stand-alone nature walk ideas designed to support hands-on scientific observation and real-world exploration. Organized by season, the walks are simple yet educational, allowing students to examine a wide variety of natural phenomena through engaging prompts and journaling suggestions. Activities encourage learners to observe weather, plant life, animal behavior, and seasonal changes while developing skills in sketching, measuring, comparing, and categorizing.

Unlike science lab-style guides, this collection supports nature journaling, creative thinking, and inquiry-based exploration. The flexible format enables learners to choose nature walks by season, habitat, or topic of interest. Each walk invites students to interact with nature and apply scientific skills in meaningful ways.

## Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Record scientific observations of natural phenomena across all seasons.
- Identify plant and animal characteristics and behaviors in their natural habitats.
- Sketch detailed nature findings using artistic and scientific representation.
- Compare changes in plants, weather, and ecosystems over time.
- Explore patterns and relationships in nature.
- Reflect on scientific experiences through writing and drawing.
- Categorize organisms and natural features by observable traits.
- Observe and document evidence of ecological processes (e.g., life cycles, migration, decomposition).
- Measure or estimate distances, quantities, time, and patterns found in natural settings.

- Use journals to build long-term observation records.
- Investigate adaptations in animals and plants for survival in specific environments.
- Document weather conditions and analyze their impact on natural surroundings.
- Identify signs of erosion, weathering, or other changes in the landscape.
- Use descriptive language and visual representation to communicate scientific ideas.
- Practice safe and respectful interactions with the environment.

## **Standards Alignment**

### **NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards)**

- K-ESS2-1: Use and share observations of local weather conditions.
- K-ESS3-1: Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals and the places they live.
- 1-LS1-1: Use observations to describe how plants and animals use external parts.
- 1-ESS1-2: Make observations at different times of year to relate amount of daylight to the time of year.
- 2-LS4-1: Make observations of plants and animals to compare patterns of diversity.
- 2-ESS2-1: Compare multiple solutions designed to slow or prevent wind or water from changing the shape of the land.
- 3-LS3-1: Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence of inherited traits.
- 3-LS4-3: Construct arguments about how organisms survive in specific habitats.
- 4-ESS2-1: Make observations to provide evidence of weathering or erosion.
- 4-ESS3-2: Generate and compare multiple solutions to reduce the impacts of natural Earth processes on humans.
- 5-LS2-1: Develop a model to describe movement of matter among plants, animals, and environment.
- 5-PS2-1: Support an argument that the gravitational force exerted by Earth on objects is directed down.

- MS-LS1-5: Use argument based on evidence to explain environmental influences on growth.
- MS-ESS2-4: Develop a model to describe the cycling of Earth's materials and flow of energy.
- MS-LS2-1: Analyze and interpret data to describe the effects of resource availability on organisms and populations.

### **Math Integration (Common Core Math Standards)**

- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.MD.A.1: Measure the length of objects.
- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.MD.B.3: Represent data with scaled picture/bar graphs.
- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.4.MD.A.2: Solve problems involving measurement and conversion.
- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.5.MD.B.2: Make line plots to display measurements and solve problems.

### **ELA Integration (Common Core ELA Standards)**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.4: Report on a topic with relevant details and visuals.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5: Include multimedia and visual displays to enhance presentations.

### **Arts Integration (NCAS – Visual Arts)**

- VA:Cr2.1.4a: Explore materials to express ideas visually.
- VA:Re7.2.3a: Determine messages in visual imagery.
- VA:Cr1.2.5a: Identify and demonstrate diverse methods of artistic expression.

## Scope and Sequence

100 Creative Nature Walks is a flexible curriculum designed to integrate nature observation with science skills across all four seasons. It supports life science and earth science concepts through experiential learning and emphasizes observation, journaling, and reflective recording. Walks enhance the understanding of systems, cycles, and patterns found in nature.

Rather than providing formal instruction, this guide supplements existing science curricula with informal, inquiry-based experiences that build foundational scientific practices. It works well in tandem with structured science units and as enrichment for writing, art, or seasonal studies.

The walks can be used in any order, allowing learners to explore natural topics that align with other academic units, seasonal themes, or student interest. Each activity encourages students to apply skills in scientific observation, critical thinking, and personal reflection in authentic outdoor contexts.

## Educational Benefits

- **Seasonal Organization:** Enables learning through year-round nature exploration.
- **Open-Ended Learning:** Encourages creative expression and flexible use across subjects.
- **Journaling Emphasis:** Reinforces science learning through writing, drawing, and reflection.
- **Observation Practice:** Develops scientific habits of noticing and documenting change.
- **Adaptable Format:** Easily supports varied age levels, locations, and learning preferences.
- **Curriculum Enhancement:** Ideal for supplementing structured science or project-based learning.
- **Portfolio-Ready:** Student journals can serve as documentation of science skill development.
- **NGSS Integration:** Aligns with multiple grade-level standards in life, earth, and physical sciences.

For more information or to view additional resources:

<https://ourjourneywestward.com>