

A Celebration of Conservation Journal

ACTIVITY: Science Journal

GRADE LEVEL(S): *K-12th



Varies (15-30 minutes average)

OVERVIEW: Journaling is an excellent way for students to become actively involved in their science experience and discovery. It also provides a pre- and post-assessment tool for teachers.

DISCIPLINES: Science, language arts, visual arts

OBJECTIVES: Students record their discoveries, observations, questions, opinions, inferences, and reflections of the marine animals and the researchers and research by writing and illustrating a science journal.

MATERIALS: Construction paper Pencils or pens
Writing paper Crayons, markers, gel pens and/or color pencils

Cover: Construction paper (cut to size of journal for front and back cover)

Binding: 3-ring binder, stapler, folder, yarn or whatever works best for your class

Pages: Lined paper (or writing/art paper with lines and space to draw)

WHAT TO DO:

Journal Preparation:

The journal is: A front and back cover with paper in between.

- Due to grade level or time limitations, teachers may choose to make the journals in advance.
- We suggest using a binding that allows students to add pages as they need.

*Teacher's Note: For younger students, you may choose to make a classroom journal. This allows you to record students' questions and thoughts as a group. Encourage student involvement by adding drawings or photos of them participating in activities.

Cover Decoration:

You may want to wait until the students have learned a little about the animals or habitat before they decorate the journal cover.

Journal Keeping:

1. Tell students, as they discover the world of the gray whales, elephant seals, and vaquita, they'll keep a *Celebration of Conservation Journal* just as a scientist does. Explain that scientists add notes, observations, discoveries, descriptions, measurements, sketches, and more. Journals are often full of "What if...I wonder why...That's odd..."
2. Begin (and end) the journal with a writing prompt. See prompts on next page.
3. Continue journal activity by having students write about their thoughts, questions, ideas from reading the *Celebration of Conservation Seamails*, classroom discussions, from the suggested prompt list or from the interview with the scientist. Encourage students to add thoughts on something odd, unusual, or intriguing they've discovered, questions that arose, new terms they learned, or whatever else they'd like to add. Remind them that scientists often sketch in their journals, some even write poems or stories, so they can be creative and add to the journal in a way that speaks to them.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

Teacher's Note: To avoid journal doldrums, use the writing/drawing prompts below or create your own.

DISCOVERY PROMPTS (ASSESSMENT):

Given a fact/statement...

List reasons "*Why, what if, where, how...*"

(Predict/hypothesize) *What would happen if...*

If you were a(n) (animal or habitat) expert...

How might you interpret the data?

What questions would it answer?

What question(s) does it lead you to ask?

• Design an experiment that....

• *makes studying (animal or habitat) easier?*

• *helps save (animal or habitat)?*

• Now that you know (fact), what questions come to mind?

• Now that you know this (fact), predict what would happen if....

If you studied (animal or habitat), what would you can to learn? (Why?)

How can you help save or protect (animal or habitat)?

CREATIVE PROMPTS:

If I were a (animal or habitat) scientist, I would....

If I become a whale or marine mammal expert, I'll study (and why)

My perfect day watching whales/seals would be....

If I could talk to a gray whale, elephant seal or vaquita, I'd ask it....

If I could study elephant seals I'd do it in (along the coasts of Mexico, California, Oregon, in the middle of the ocean, or Antarctica), because....

I'd be a great (explorer, scientist, inventor...) because....

My favorite Seamail was from (name) because....

Write a poem about (animal or habitat).

POST ASSESSMENT PROMPTS:

- Have students:
- Review their original thoughts or note. Were they correct and/or what have they learned.
- Write what they've discovered.
- Write a letter to the (animal) researchers -- to someone specific or a letter for the entire Science Team

Remember to allow students to draw or illustrate their thoughts, too.