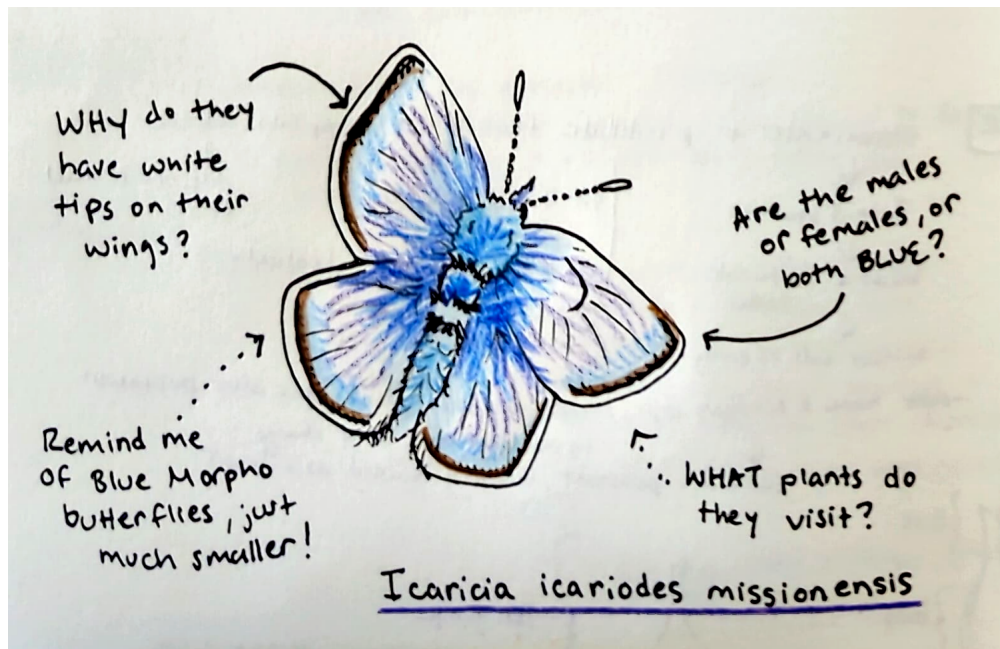


# NATURE JOURNALING BASICS



Example of what the beginning of what a nature journal entry could look like.  
Endless possibilities! -Chloe Van Loon

## Introduction

Nature journaling is a great way to foster a meaningful connection with nature, at the landscape level or macroscopic. Journaling could be a one time event, or a series of entries on one topic, in one location, or as seasons change. The beauty of nature journaling is there are endless possibilities, and it is adaptable to all age groups and curriculum.

Nature journaling is best done outside. If going outside is not an option, alternatives include: school grounds, backyards, or you can even look out a window, or at an image.

## Materials

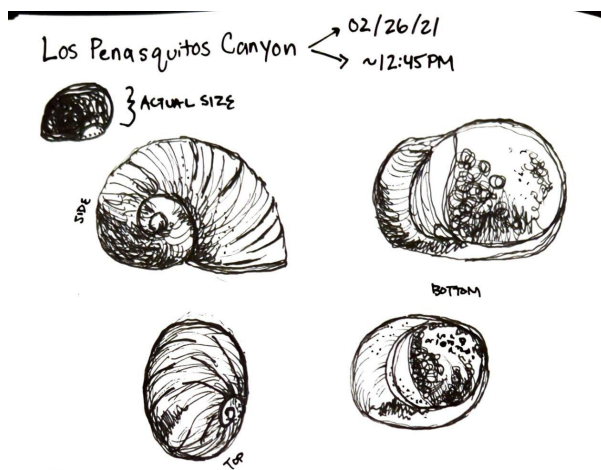
- Notebook, or loose paper
- Writing utensils: pencil, pen

- Optional: colored pencils, watercolors, charcoal
- Optional: additional art supplies: glue, tracing paper
- Tools for engaging closer with nature (optional)
  - Magnifying glass
  - Binoculars
  - Container to catch bugs
  - Identification Books

## Getting Started

When observing a plant, flora/fauna, natural phenomena, students should be encouraged to be curious, and write down their thoughts in response to these three points:

- **I Notice:** Focus on drawing or writing about what you can observe with your senses. What sounds do you hear? What colors, shapes, and behaviors can you see? Try to describe what you observe (blue, smooth, spotted, etc.) instead of just identifying it.
- **I Wonder:** As you write or draw, note questions you have about what you are observing. Did you observe an interesting pattern or behavior that you wonder about?
- **It Reminds Me Of:** Does what you are observing remind you of something else you have observed? Does it remind you of an event in your life when you observed something similar or felt the same way? A nature journal is a great place to record memories, feelings, and connections.
- For example:



### I NOTICE:

Colors: Mostly brown  
 Light cream/grey inside  
 Dirt inside opening

Texture: Quite smooth, some scratches  
 no recent signs of snail presence  
 Found next to snail trail, very open area

Much cleaner and "fresher" than other snail shells I've found

### I WONDER:

- Did the snail abandon this shell?
- Did a predator leave this shell behind?
- Is this area good habitat for this species of snail?
- Is it an invasive Garden snail? I don't see a band
- Like shoulder band snails have, which are native here.

### IT REMINDS ME OF

This is larger than some snails, but smaller than others I've seen.

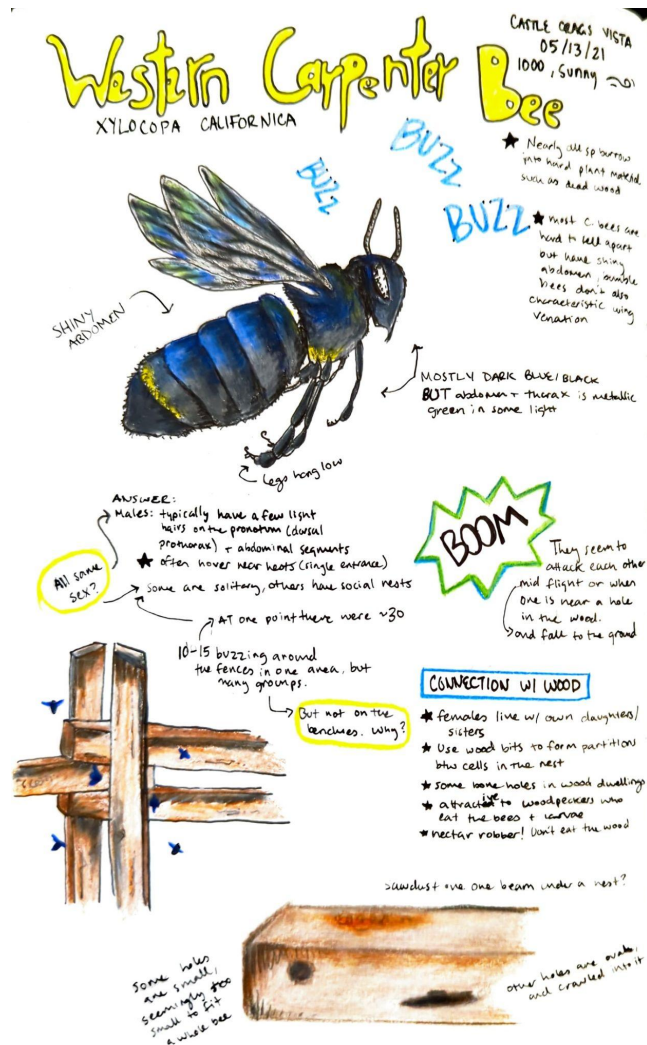
Reminds me how you can find interesting nature finds anywhere, and when you least expect it!

## Prompts:

- Imagine if plants, insects, and animals were able to talk. What would you ask them?
- You wake up one day as a butterfly – where would you go and what would you see?
- Use your senses – what do you see, what can you smell, what can you touch or hear?
- Pick an individual animal or plant to study, draw it.
- Describe the lifecycle, or what a day in the life of a Mission Blue Butterfly would look like.

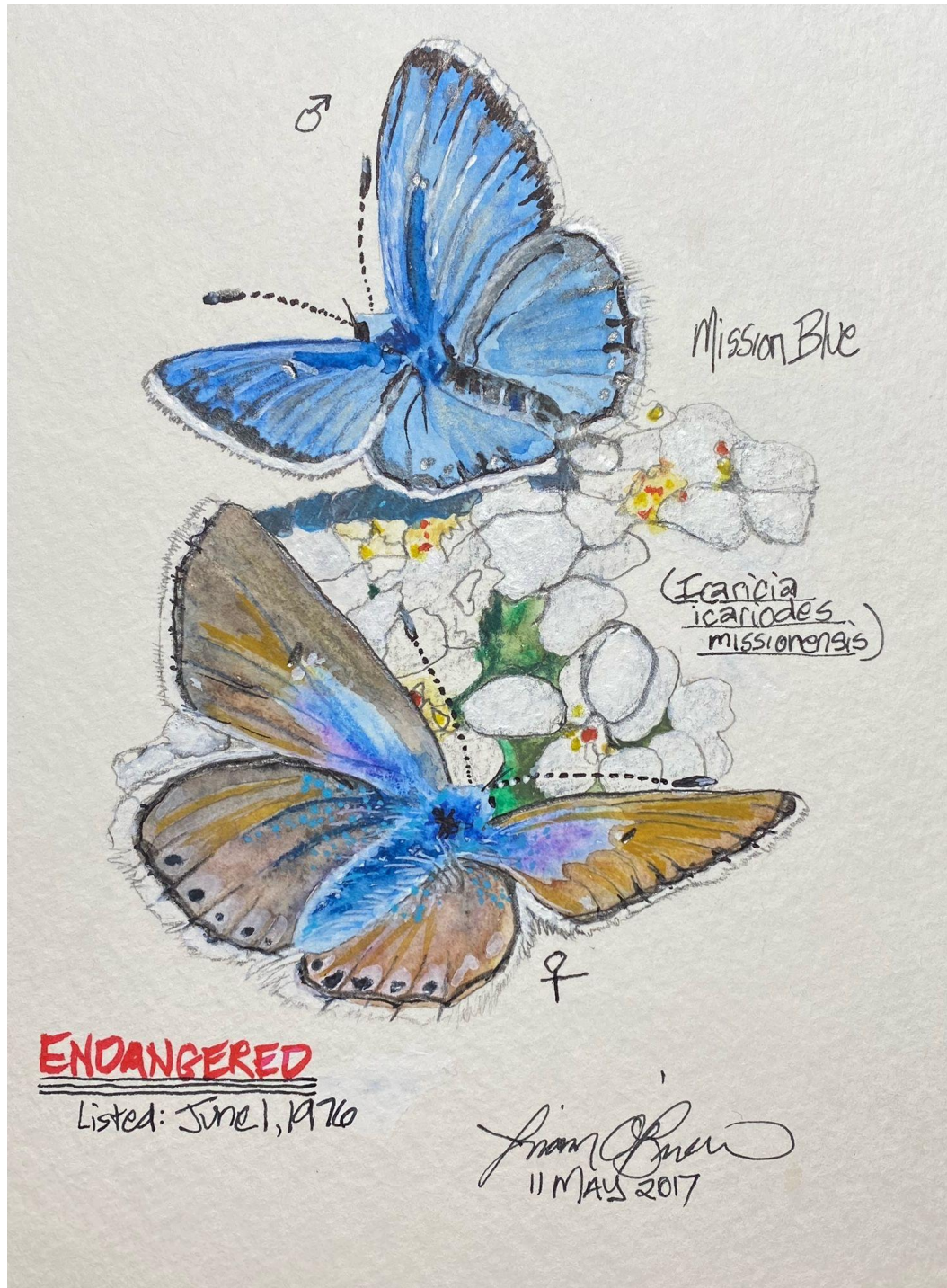
## Examples

Below are two examples of nature journal entries from Naturalist, Chloe Van Loon. Hopefully, these help to inspire your students.





Below is a piece of work by Liam O'Brien, Illustrator, Naturalist, & San Francisco resident passionate about the endangered butterflies of the San Francisco area. Let this inspire your students to get interested in nature journaling, and remember art can be one component of many!



## References

- For all things Nature Journaling: <https://johnmuirlaws.com/>
- Sketching for Observation, [California Academy of Sciences](#)
- Pollinator Journaling: [Kids Gardening.org](#)
- Thimble and Twig: [Nature Journal Prompts for Kids](#)
- Oregon State University Extension Service Outdoor School: [Nature Journaling](#)