



**Description:** Students take a creative journal to the field. It has ideas and questions about things found in the bosque, and lots of space for the students' own ideas, questions, and drawings.

**Objective:** Enhance the students' observations, feelings, and connections with the bosque through writing, drawing, and thinking about the bosque.

**Materials:**

1. a booklet for each student (masters included in this activity; copies consist of two double-sided pages for each student)
2. stapler for stitching booklet together
3. scissors or paper cutter
4. construction paper for cover (optional)
5. journal tools such as colored pencils, charcoal or crayons for bark rubbings, glue sticks, tape, pens, etc.

**Procedure:**

1. Prepare booklets ahead of time or as an in-class project.
  - a. Copy the master sheets as two-sided copies making sure to keep the pages and orientations as they are in this guide.
  - b. Fold the two pages in half and in half again as in the diagram below. (Optional: add a 5.75" by 8.75" piece of construction paper to the outside of the booklet as a cover.)
  - c. Staple the center of the book along the fold.
  - d. With scissors, cut the tops of the pages to create a 16-page booklet.

### 3. Field Explorations Booklet

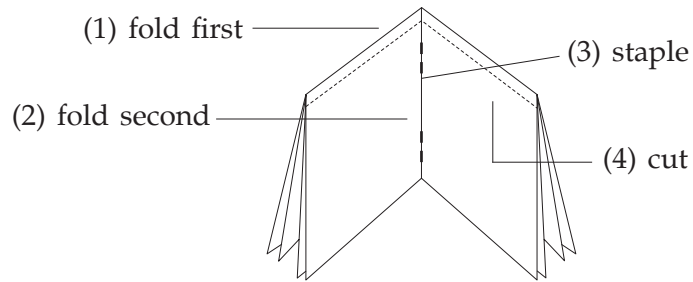


**Grades:** 3–8

**Time:** Material preparation: about one hour to make 20 journals  
 Class activity: flexible. This is a field activity. As a break between other activities, the journaling time could be allocated in 10-minute blocks, or the journal can be the focus of a several-hour hike or exploration.

**Subjects:** science, English, art

**Terms:** *journal, tamarisk, pillbugs, jetty jacks, soil stabilization, mosquito fish*



2. On your trip to the bosque, give students the journals and materials to write, draw, or tape things in their booklet. Start the activity with:

This booklet is a special journal. See if you can find everything mentioned in this booklet.

Each page of this journal has a theme. Figure out the theme on each page, and decide if that thing found in the bosque is here naturally (native) or because of human influences (exotic).

Here are some ideas for using the booklet page by page. Don't let these ideas stifle your own or your students' imaginations! Because of copying complexities, page numbers may not match, but it doesn't really matter as long as the cover page is first!

Page 2: Theme: wildflowers. Find an insect on a flower, and write a short tale about what that bug is doing there.

Page 3: Theme: large cottonwood tree (native). With a light-colored chalk or crayon, make a bark rubbing of a cottonwood tree.

Page 4: Theme: songbirds (native). Sit quietly in the forest with your eyes closed. Can you hear some birds? What sounds are they making? Try to write down the sounds that you hear.

Page 5: Theme: lizards (native). Be a lizard detective. How many lizards can you find? Are lizards easy to see? Why or why not?

Page 6: Theme: mosquito fish (exotic and native). When looking at water, look for small fish swimming around. Ask students to construct a food web, linking mosquito fish to the sun and to large animals like eagles, bears or us!

Page 7: Theme: mosquito (native). Think about making peace with the mosquitoes. Mosquitoes pollinate the flowers.

Page 8: Theme: saltcedar or tamarisk (exotic). Tape a saltcedar leaf on this page, write about a saltcedar or write down how many colors of saltcedar leaves you can find.



Page 9: Theme: isopods (exotic). Let the pillbugs and sowbugs crawl on your arms. What does it feel like? See The Pill Bug Project in reference list for activity ideas.

Page 10: Theme: decaying cottonwood leaves. Use your nose. What do you think of when you smell old leaves? Tape old leaves in your book. Do they still smell the same?

Page 11: Theme: fire. Think about fires in the bosque. Can you find any signs (like charred wood, dead, blackened trees, etc.) of recent fires? Are fires good or bad for the bosque? Can fires be prevented? How?

page 12: Theme: cottonwood seedlings (native, but lack of them reflects altered conditions). Hint: look near wet spots, like along ditches, drains, banks and sand bars on the river. Also look for young sprouts from dead and dying trunks and stumps. If you find a few cottonwood seedlings, does that mean that there will be as many cottonwood trees in the future as there are now?

page 13: Theme: your page. immortalize your favorite event of the day. Tape in something. Write a poem. Draw a picture.

Page 14: Theme: aquatic insect exploration (native). Bring pans or plates for this activity. Nets and waders are also fun. Hand lenses and microscopes really make this activity more exciting. Have students try to see how many different critters they can identify. Explain that generally more kinds of aquatic insects indicate healthier water environments.

Page 15: Theme: jetty jacks. Carefully explore around a jetty jack. What can you find? Write about or draw what you see.

### *Related*

#### **Activities:**

Although this activity is similar to the “Bosque Discovery Booklet,” this activity’s focus is on helping the student think about the bosque, while the Discovery Booklet focuses on observation skills.

#### **Assessment:**

Have students share a part of their journal with the class. Have students hand in booklets and review them. Send booklets home with the students to show their parents.

#### **Extensions:**

Add a blank sheet of paper between the two master sheets to provide a 24-page booklet with eight blank pages.

For younger students, use only one or two pages, enlarged on the copier, as the focus for a trip.

How many pillbugs can crawl on my arm at the same time?

*tiny intruder, eater of leaves  
protected in a ball of armor  
there are so many of you*

*graceful, feathery leaves  
brilliant pink blossoms  
wispy branches bend and sway*

This field booklet belongs to:

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**My  
Bosque  
Field  
Booklet**

Ouch! Who keeps biting me . . .  
Would I rather you weren't around?  
Then who would pollinate the flowers?  
Then who would feed the bats and fish?  
Oh bother, next time I'll wear more clothes.

*I love the smell  
of decaying cottonwood  
leaves  
on the forest floor*

*rich  
earthy  
friendly*

*Wildflower  
Thing of beauty  
who depends on you  
for your sweet nectar  
for your plump pollen  
for your succulent tissues  
for your energy-packed seeds  
You are so much more than  
a thing of beauty  
Wildflower*

*Jetty jacks. Soil stabilization.*


*I found a wasp's nest in one of these one time.*

**What can you find?**

*Every time I see some water, be it a ditch  
or drain, river or marsh, pond or puddle, I  
like to stop and look for mosquito fish. Tiny  
swimmers chomping up mosquito larvae.  
Go get 'em, guys, I urge them, but they don't  
even seem to know that I am there.*

Most fires in the bosque are started by people.  
What do you think about that?

Can you find any sign of fire in these woods?



There is a giant near  
the river  
reaching  
for the  
sun.  
Shadow maker.  
Energy keeper.  
Animal places:  
holes, nests,  
bark, twigs,  
leaves . . .  
Water drinker.  
Soil keeper.  
And some  
of the neatest  
stuff happens  
underground . . .

in the roots,  
roots, roots,  
roots, roots.

*How old are these roots?*

Pssst! Don't tell anyone, but there are really nifty bugs  
that live in the water. Get a white shallow plate, and put  
some river (ditch, marsh, pond) water and rocks and old  
leaves from the river in it. Wait a minute, and watch your  
aquarium come to life! Can you believe the way some of  
those critters can move? Don't forget to put them home  
again when you are done.

*fast you are  
but I spied you  
darting for shade  
and protection*

How many lizards live in the bosque?

years from now, when I am older and I am looking back at this book.

I went to the bosque today. I saw something special.

Someone told me there would be no more cottonwoods for my grandchildren to see. Hmm, I thought, can that be true? And so I went to the bosque to see if I could find the baby cottonwood trees that could someday shade my children's children's children. And this is what I saw:

*teach me your song, I asked the bird,  
and the song went like this . . .*

Maybe this clue will remind me of today's special event

I've put a clue right here on this page. Maybe you can guess what I saw.