

# Sketch Journal

## Description

A sketch journal is like a journal kept by explorers on an expedition, an anthropologist at a dig in the field, or a sculptor in the studio. It involves the daily practice of making observations and then sketching those observations and writing short entries of personal comments, reflections, notes, and explanations. For example, a sketch journal about a real or virtual trip to Alaska might include an outline map of the area visited, short news clippings about events reported in the local paper, notes on salmon spawning, sketches of local wildlife, visual impressions of Glacier Bay, diagrams of boats and seaplanes traveled on, and sketches of tourist attractions, shops, or restaurants visited. In short, a sketch journal is a record of impressions and visuals on a given topic.

## Planning

1. A good way to get started with a sketch journal is to begin each day by drawing a simple figure or sketch or by writing a “daily note,” which involves nothing more than reflecting on what you, as a student, have learned or experienced in school the previous day. This will give you practice before you make a sketch journal based on your research.
2. Select a topic to explore through the development of a sketch journal. This is a good format to use for reporting on people, places, things, or events. Sketch journals are good sources of information on everything from famous battles in the Revolutionary War to a space landing on the moon.
3. After selecting your topic, make a list of possible entries for the sketch journal that can include such visuals as diagrams, maps, charts, graphs, blueprints, drawings, simplified notes, symbols, rebus stories, cartoons, stick figures, or even questions.
4. Research the topic and make daily entries in your sketch journal about the information you have learned. Use as many visuals and graphics as possible, and make notations to tie the journal entries together.

## Assessing

1. Review the number of visuals recorded in your sketch journal. Determine what important data or information each represents. Then, decide whether each visual is as effective or efficient as a narrative description might have been in its place.
2. Judge which visual (or visuals) best conveys a major idea of your topic.
3. Write a paragraph pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of a sketch journal for reporting research information over a journal with narrative entries.