

Field Sketchbook Assignments – 50 pts total

You should try to add to your field sketchbook on a regular basis. If you need to meet a deadline but have left the sketching until the last minute, you can get really stressed trying to find subjects and hastily draw them. You lose much of the joy and benefit of observing and learning. So watch for and collect good drawing subjects – things you might like to draw for future use. The sketchbook exercises in this section are designed to be done in the order presented, so pay close attention to the different emphases and tasks covered in each exercise. Read pages 22 and 23 again, so that you will tackle your field sketchbook sessions in the right spirit. These assignments assume you are using an 8" x 5" pad.

SUBJECTS TO AVOID: (also known as "NoNos")

- pieces of things – such as sticks, chunks of bark, etc. except as a detail, done in conjunction with the entire item.
- mineral specimens – rocks are much too difficult to illustrate without a great deal of practice.
- man-made articles – except archaeological specimens (this IS scientific illustration, after all).
- scenery – except to show habit or habitat of a close-up subject you are rendering.
- distant views of small subjects – such as a bird-shape in a distant tree or shrub (except to show habit or behavior).
- do not work from photographs, preserved or mounted specimens (mounted or specimen insects okay, if whole).

The object of the field sketchbook is two-fold. One object is for you to learn how to draw, the other is to share what you have learned with others.

Try to combine the two in a show-and-tell format. Sketch and write as though you were sharing a country ramble (via letter) with a friend in a foreign country – find something interesting and convey the excitement. What questions would an interested observer ask about your subject? Answer with close-up drawings and detailed notes.

For ease of reference later, create only right-hand pages with the sketchbook in an upright position. Draw in the sketchbook horizontally only on the rare occasion when you can't make a horizontal illustration fit the vertical page.

Also for ease of reference, and to observe good field notebook etiquette, write your name, date, location, (and weather conditions if appropriate) in the upper right-hand corner of each page.

Each sketch should have a caption to identify it and a scale to indicate its size. The "times" indicator is usually used (2x, 1/2x) or you may note an actual size ("3 inch stem"), or use a bracket/measurement. Sketch close-ups on the page next to their sources.

When using a bracket, don't make it the entire length of the subject; rather, select a small measure like 1cm. or 1in. and make a line **the length it would be if held against the subject.**

Sketches, not notes, should predominate the page. Notes should be close to their subjects and as thorough as possible without being wordy. To avoid confusion, place leaders (lines) from captions to the parts they indicate. Check for ambiguous notes/lines.

Field Sketchbook #1: Objects 12 pts.
2 or more pages, 2-3 drawings per page

Subjects: 2-3 small, handheld natural items like: leaf, feather, acorn, lichen (see NoNos above).

Technique: line drawing only with HB lead. Don't shade unless it is absolutely needed to show form. Work on right-brain techniques.

The reduced image of the page below is an example of a good field sketchbook page. While the jay was not "hand-held" it is small and presented a good opportunity to record behavior. Shading was avoided in order to concentrate on shapes. Spend your time in the field sketching; shade later.

