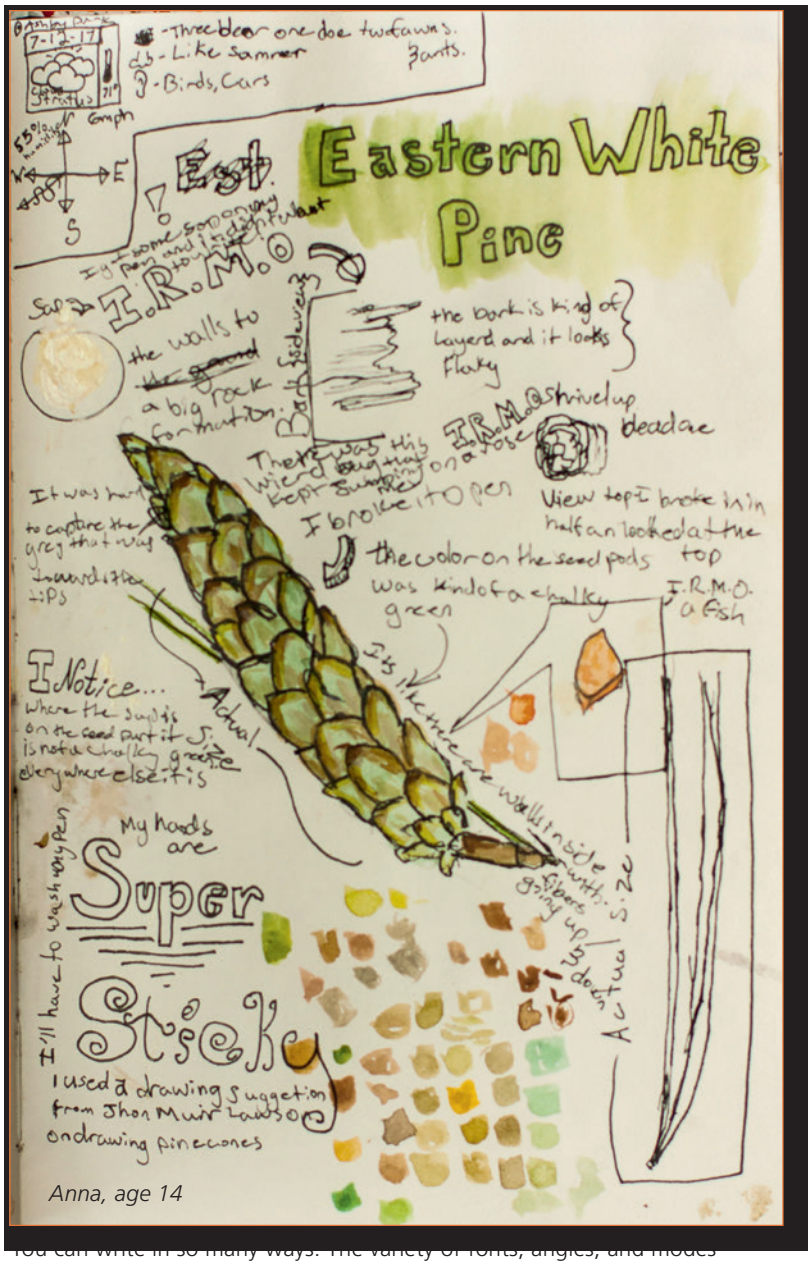

(labels, sentences, bullet points, titles, etc.) make the page easier to scan and full of information.

f. "Remember to use writing as a tool for observing and thinking, not just as a way of communicating."

20. Explain how students can also use writing to reflect on their learning process or to record their reactions and feelings.

a. "Another way we can use writing is to reflect on our learning or to record our reactions and feelings about our experiences."

b. "This is a way of getting better at learning and journaling."

21. Give students a few minutes to write about the following questions in their journals.

a. "What was it like to use writing to capture your observations and thoughts? What felt successful, and what felt challenging? What might you do differently next time?"

b. "How did it feel to use your journal to learn as a scientist might?"

DISCUSSION

Lead a discussion with the general discussion questions. Intersperse pair talk with group discussion.

General Discussion

a. Ask students to discuss and reflect: How did writing help you to observe or to clarify your thinking?

b. How might you use writing as a tool to help you observe, think, and remember what you journal about in the future?

c. Writing is a useful tool for helping us think about anything, not just science or nature. If you could use your journal as a tool to write and learn about any topic or idea of your choice, what would you choose?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

Aiming for Specificity

Challenge students to look through their writing and add more specific language to their observations. For example, instead of saying "green," they might say "intense yellow-green"; instead of "orange," they might say "the color orange of the mac-and-cheese box." Instead of "There are dots on the leaves," they might say, "There are tiny black dots the size of the dot of an 'i,' and there isn't really any pattern I can notice of where they are." Give students a couple of minutes to work with their writing, then ask if anyone came up with any interesting substitutions.

© John Muir Laws and Emilie Lygren 2020
Excerpted from the book How to Teach Nature Journaling,
published by Heyday books.