



# Climactic Chronicles

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**Objective:** Students will do several weather-related journaling activities.

**Grade Level:**

Elementary

**Subject Areas:**

Science and Language

**Setting:**

Classroom

**Skills:**

Observation

**Prior Preparation:**

Cut sheets of paper to make journals. Have students bring a stick to use as their journal top fastener (needs to be a fairly substantial-weight stick).

**Materials:**

About 10 sheets of paper per student (5 ½" x 8 ½") - can be more if student wants to make a larger journal

Cardstock weight paper for the covers

Medium-sized rubber bands

Sticks

Rubber stamps and stamp pads, paints, markers, art supplies

Hole punch

Garden-opoly game

**Background:**

Journals are used to record data, draw observations, write reflections, explore experiences, enter memories, and compose thoughts and feelings. Journals can be used for recording family history, your life history, pictures and mementos, saving works of art, and recounting “the perfect place.” There are many kinds of commercial journals available for purchase; however, in many cases, a “homemade” journal can hold a special place in your heart.

**Procedure:**

- To construct the journal:
  - Place about 10 sheets of paper on top of a piece of the same size cardstock. Punch 2 holes at the top of the paper and cardstock about 1 inch from each side. From the backside, thread a medium rubber band through one hole. Loop it around one end of a stick on the front side. Thread the other end of the rubber band through the second hole and fasten it around the other end of the stick. Decorate the cover. Note: more pages can be added if student wants to at a later time.

These activities can be completed in any order. The important part is that students journal each activity and their thoughts/feelings during the activities. Be sure to make art supplies available to them to help illustrate their journals (rubberstamps, ink pads, paints, markers, etc.)

## Windy Myths

- Throughout history, people have created myths to explain the weather. These stories have shown how people thought and felt about nature and helped them make sense of their world. Here is an example of a Greek myth about the wind. *The country of the winds was ruled by King Aeolus, keeper of the winds. He kept the winds tied securely in a leather sack, making sure that no dangerously strong winds could leak out. Unfortunately, the sailor Odysseus and his crew thought the leather bag was filled with gold. When they opened it, all the winds rushed out, killing all the sailors in a terrible storm at sea.*
- **Activity:** Have students write and illustrate a myth about the wind in their journal. They must write about one of the following:
  - Where the wind comes from
  - Why a terrible wind storm happened
  - What it means when there is a light breeze blowing

- Students must answer the following questions when writing their myth:
  - **Who?** Name a god of wind and describe what he or she looks like
  - **What?** Tell which wind he or she rules
  - **When?** Explain when the god first came to rule the winds
  - **Why?** Explain why the god controls the winds
  - **How?** Describe how the god changes the winds

## The Rainbow Poem

- **Activity:** Use a rainbow to write a poem about rain. The poem may have rhyming lines or not. Each line should describe one of your senses. Some examples of the beginning of each line are:
  - See: flash of lightning
  - Hear: crash of thunder
  - Feel: wet clothing
  - Taste: fresh, clear water
  - Smell: wet hair

## Weather Scavenger Hunt

- **Activity:** Take the students on a weather scavenger hunt to see how many weather-related things they can find. Use the [list of clues](#) (with this activity) to make up a clue sheet. Some of the clues don't require any weather background, but others do. You can divide the class into groups or let them work individually. Have them journal all their finds and when they return to the classroom, they can do the art work. If they "collect" anything, they can add it to the journal after returning to the classroom. This can be a timed event if you choose to do so. Before setting out, make sure to set your guidelines, such as not to pick flowers, or pick up items underneath logs, etc.

## Weather Wisdom

- Most people talk about the weather every day. Almost everyone knows someone who has been affected by a tornado, hurricane, lightning strike, blizzard or other weather phenomenon. This activity revolves around talking and polling friends and relatives about their feelings about the weather.
- **Activity:** You can divide the class into small groups or they can work individually. They will be conducting a survey of questions that you will provide and that they will help to write. Have each student or team write a few questions they would like to ask concerning the weather. Questions should be short and easy to answer. When they have completed the questionnaire, they are to go ask friends and relatives the questions, and bring the results back to the class. If your class has completed simple graphing and practiced mathematics using percentages, your students can do a basic exercise in statistics to determine what percentage of the people they've polled has answered which questions. Journaling the results of this math exercise can be completed by students doing a weather maze in which they draw weather phenomenon in their journals and putting each group of respondents by a specific weather symbol.
- Weather Wisdom [sample questions](#) are attached.

## Concocting Clouds

- **Activity:** Display "A Guide To The Sky" poster (located in the Wacky Weather Trunks) in your classroom. Hold a discussion about the different kinds of clouds that are in our skies. Take all the students outside. Have them journal the clouds that are in the sky each day for a week. Have them identify the type of clouds that are evident - by the scientific names. Then have each student imagine what the cloud looks like - maybe it's a giant flower, or a goat, or whatever else they can think of - and have them draw their imaginings. As a companion activity, they can create a story about their drawings.

## Garden-opoly

- Garden-opoly is a "Monopoly"-type board game located in the Wacky Weather Trunks. This game can be played by up to 6 players. It's a fun way for your students to learn about different types of plants that grow in our world.
- **Activity:** On the back of each plant card are the "facts" about the plant on the front. Have your student pick a plant from the stack. Read the back of the card carefully. Do a little research on the internet (if you haven't already discussed this in class) to find out what the USDA Zones line means. After determining whether the plant that the student has chosen can be grown in South Dakota, have the student journal a depiction about what would happen to that plant in a given situation - for example

wisteria (from Wisteria Walkway) can't grow in Zone 1 which is in Alaska. So your student might want to journal what would happen to "Wendy Wisteria" when she decided to take an Alaskan cruise during a blizzard. (Still using the wisteria plant, the student may want to write a diary entry of how her roots felt today on the prairie due to the drought). Or since hosta (from the Hosta Hollow card) can't grow in very wet soil in Zone 10, your student can journal the adventures of Hoot Hosta waking up in the swamps of the Everglades, surrounded by alligators in the middle of a hurricane. If possible, a companion activity to this would be for the student to obtain a cutting from whichever plant they've chosen from the game and adding it to their journal. Note: several plants from the game would not be SAFE for a student to add to their journal - please refer to the card for clarification.

- **Activity:** Obtain seeds of the plants in the game from a local greenhouse. Have students plant the seeds and expose those plantings to several types of climactic growing conditions: ie, drought, flash floods, too much rain, too much sun, etc. Journal each day's growing results and have students predict the following day (or weeks) results.

### **Extensions:**

- Start a journal jar. In the jar, place topics/writing ideas that you would like your students to write about using creative writing concepts that you've taught throughout the year. Some [journal jar topics](#) are attached. Make copies of the ideas, cut apart and place in a jar to draw out whenever you need a topic for students to write about...
- Have each student keep a winter nature journal. This journal could consist of snowflakes he/she has created, writings of animals and habitat that he/she has observed during the winter months, plant etching he/she has made from winter plants, research on plants and/or animal hibernation, activities he/she has participated in that are outside, etc.

*Activities adapted from: Learning Resources Weather and Nature Scope Wild About Weather*