

WEEKDAY WONDERS



Content developed by the
Tennessee Aquarium
Education Department



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Nature on the Page: Day 1

This week, your young scientist will get inspired by nature and the world around him or her to write a storybook. Scientists will explore the elements of a good story: defining characters, settings, and events; and developing a plot (and plot twist!) At the end of the week, young scientists will have a chance to put all the parts of the storybook together into a book.

These curated activities are listed in a suggested sequence but may be done in the order that works best for you and your young scientists. Learn more about this series in the [Introduction to Weekday Wonders](#).



Question of the Day

What are the traits and features of a character?



Daily Nature Journal

Have your young scientists spend some time outside today completing their daily nature journal. Use the [Guide to Nature Journaling](#) to support them in nature journaling each day.



Character Creator

Make sure you have shared with your scientist that this week's activities are about writing stories and putting together a book. Tell him or her that writing stories often starts with a character, so today is all about developing the star of the story.

Gather nine blank unlined index cards (or cut sheets of paper into thirds), and separate them into three piles.

- For the first pile, ask your young scientist to draw a different character head on each card.
- For the second pile, ask your young scientist to draw a torso and arms on each card.
- For the final pile, ask your young scientist to draw legs and feet on each card.

When all the cards are finished, have your scientist turn them over and mix up the cards while keeping the piles separate. Have them pick one card from each pile and put them together to create a crazy

character. Continue choosing cards to make three wacky characters. If your scientist is having fun, mix the cards up and try again!

If you have more than one scientist, you can have them mix their cards together, or try a different variation of the activity. In the variation, take a piece of paper for each scientist and fold each in thirds, creating creases. Unfold the papers and give one to each scientist.

Ask each scientist to draw a character head only on the top third of the paper. When they are finished, he or she should fold the top third of the paper back so that the head is not visible. Then each scientist should pass the paper s/he was drawing on to the next scientist.

Without looking at what the previous scientist drew, each scientist should draw the torso and arms for the character. When the scientists have finished, have them fold the paper back again so that only the last blank third is visible. Pass the papers to the next scientist, and have them draw in legs and feet.

When all scientists are done drawing, unfold the papers to reveal the crazy collaboration characters. The scientists may need to add in some connecting lines to make sure that the characters have necks and waists. Have each scientist share the character s/he wound up with.



Nature Journal

Ask your scientist to sit outside to identify an animal that lives in the area near you. Ask him or her to imagine that this animal is a character in a storybook. Have your scientist fill out the Character Traits worksheet on page 4 for this animal character.

In his or her nature journal, ask your scientist to draw the animal character. Using the Character Traits worksheet as a guide, have your scientist write a paragraph as if s/he were the animal introducing itself to someone. Make sure your scientist focuses on what makes the character's personality and what makes him or her different from other animals of that kind.

Once your scientist has some experience creating a character, have him or her start to create one for his or her story. Your scientist may want to use one of the characters from the Character Creator activity to start his or her creativity.

Creating a character is about more than just a physical description. Your scientist also needs to come up with character traits to make their character feel real! Have your scientist fill out the Character Traits worksheet on page 4 again, this time thinking about the character for his or her story.

If he or she struggles with this, ask him or her to focus on something that stands out about the character in the picture or about an animal in real life. For example, what if the character were a person, but inspired by a giraffe. What would the character have to think and do differently as a person with a very long neck? Or, what if the character was an actual giraffe? What would the character do during the day?

In the nature journal, have your scientist write a paragraph as if he or she is the character introducing itself.



Take the Stage

Take one of the characters that your young scientist created in the previous two activities, and ask him or her to write a story or play involving that character. If you have more than one scientist, encourage them to work together to create a story that incorporates a character that each scientist developed.

When s/he is finished, have your scientist act out the story for an audience.

Encourage the use of props from around the house. Consider having your scientists create a mask and costume that helps them look like their character.

Quirky Quest Character Traits

My name is _____.

I am _____ years old.

Something that makes me unique is _____.

My favorite food is _____.

My favorite color is _____.

My favorite place is _____.

My best friend is _____.

I am scared of _____.

I like when _____.

I don't like when _____.

I want to _____.