

WEEKDAY WONDERS



Content developed by the
Tennessee Aquarium
Education Department



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Nature on the Page: Day 2

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

How do you develop a setting for a story?



Daily Nature Journal

Have your young scientists spend some time outside today completing their daily nature journal. For more information, refer to the [Guide to Nature Journaling](#) for information on how to support your scientist in nature journaling each day.



Nature Journal

Have your scientist go outside to find a spot that he or she likes to sit. Have him or her draw the area, paying attention to plants, animals, houses, sidewalks, pipes, and other items.

Next, have him or her circle the items that might be found in many different settings. Then, have him or her draw a square around the items that are very unique to the setting. These items can help a reader understand more about the setting.

Ask your scientist to pick one item that he or she drew a square around and have him or her write at least three sentences to describe it. Tell him or her that this practice of describing the items in a setting can help create a picture in a reader's mind. For an extra challenge, ask your scientist to write from the point of view of his or her character. For example, if the character is a giraffe, the area might look different to an animal that is 15 feet tall as opposed to 4 feet tall.



When and Where

This activity will help your young scientist learn more about the setting of a story. To start, find a pair of dice or make two sets of numbers from 1 through 6 on small pieces of paper.

Have your scientist roll the two dice or draw two numbers and read the corresponding “when” and “where” from the table below. For example, if your scientist rolls a 3 and a 4, s/he will consider your back yard 10 years in the future. This is an example of a setting—the when and where of a story.

Number	Where	When
1	A castle	Summer
2	Outer space	This morning
3	Your back yard	The 1800s
4	School	10 years in the future
5	A museum	During a snowstorm
6	A forest	When dinosaurs roamed the Earth

Once your scientist has a setting, tell him or her to imagine the character s/he created in yesterday’s Weekday Wonders in the setting. Have your scientist write about or sketch the character in the setting. Have your scientist repeat this process at least two more times.

Remind your scientist that by the end of the week, s/he will be putting all the parts of a story together to make a book. Have your scientist begin to think about the setting that might be the basis for a storybook. If your scientist got excited about one of the settings in this activity, it might be a good option. If not, ask him or her to think about a “when” and a “where” for the story. Have your scientist make a few notes about setting to look back on later in the week.

Your scientist should also start to consider if the whole story takes place in one setting or if the character must travel to several places in the story. For example, if part of the story will take place in outer space, will the character start out at home, travel to space, then return home? Have your scientist make a list of any settings that the story might include.



Setting Charades

Ask your scientist to think of at least ten of his or her favorite books. If you have a scientist who is reading chapter books, encourage him or her to think of storybooks, such as *Where the Wild Things Are* or *Corduroy*. Ask him or her to decide what the setting is—the where and when—of each book. Write each of the ten settings on separate slips of paper.

Once your scientist has at least ten settings, mix them up in a container. Have your scientist draw out one and act out what would happen if he or she was suddenly transported to that setting.

Not only will this give your young scientist more ideas about settings, but it will also help him or her think about how characters might act in them, which sets the stage for tomorrow’s Weekday Wonders.