

WEEKDAY WONDERS



Content developed by the
Tennessee Aquarium
Education Department



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Wild World of Art: Day 1

Art is just as important as science to help us understand our world. This week in Weekday Wonders, your young scientist will explore the wild world of art through nature! Your scientist will experiment with using different materials from nature including rocks, dirt, water, sticks, and leaves to create amazing artworks.

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 kind of art can you make with rocks?



Daily Nature Journal

Spending some time outside completing their daily nature journal is a great way for young scientists to become aware of the beauty of nature. Need help to help them? Use the [Guide to Nature Journaling](#) to support them in nature journaling each day.



Nature Journal

Encourage your young scientist to spend some time looking for rocks in your yard or neighborhood. Have your scientist draw or describe each of the rocks. Tell him or her that the name is not as important as the description of size, color, and location of the rocks. To encourage creativity, your scientist can even make up names for the rocks.

Ask your scientist if s/he thinks that the different rocks were purchased and brought to the site or if they were there naturally. What evidence does s/he have for these ideas?

Have your scientist think about ways that s/he might use rocks in art. If there are rocks that your scientist likes, s/he may collect some of them to use in art. Help your scientist know which rocks are okay to collect and which might upset a property owner if you took them.

Here's a bonus brain teaser. There is a very deliberate reason we're starting this week with rocks. Can your young scientist guess what it is? Does s/he have more than one guess? Ask him/her to record those ideas in the nature journal. Remind him/her that asking questions and making guesses is an important part of science.



Rockin' Art

Have your scientist collect some favorite rocks or use rocks that s/he collected in the previous activity. Help your scientist know which ones can be collected without upsetting property owners. Also, ask your scientist to leave all rocks in rivers and streams alone as they are important habitats for animals and can be hard to collect safely.

Have your young scientist use the rocks to build a mosaic in an area outdoors. If you prefer for your young scientist to work indoors, have him/her create on a tray or cookie sheet so that the art work can be moved around without having to disassemble it.

To start, suggest that patterns or simple images can be made in a mosaic by paying careful attention to the color and texture of the rocks. To help with that, your scientist might sort the rocks by color, size, and/or texture, depending upon the effect your young scientist hopes to achieve.

Once your scientist has sorted the rocks, have your scientist use them to make a pattern or simple picture. Challenge your scientist to fill in the whole background of the mosaic around the picture.



Decorating Rocks

Smooth rocks are fun and easy to decorate. Some communities have a tradition of creating these colorful rocks with simple pictures and inspiring words on them and then leaving them tucked away around the neighborhood for others to find and enjoy.

Have your scientist find some smooth rocks or purchase some at a craft or hardware store. Your scientist can use acrylic paints, tempera paints, paint markers, chalk, or other similar items to decorate the rocks. Encourage him or her to be creative with patterns, faces, small pictures, or other ideas. If you wish, you can also offer your scientist glue, string, craft feathers, googly eyes, or other materials.

If your scientist would like to place the rocks outside, either as decoration or as a surprise for others, be sure to use a finish spray to seal the rocks. The paints and chalk are all water soluble, so they will wash off in the rain without a sealant.



Rock Toss

Suggest that your young scientist build a circle of rocks somewhere outside. If there are not many rocks in your area, you could suggest placing a hula hoop, circle of yarn, or other item on the ground to make a target.

Have your scientist stand at a distance and try to toss 5 rocks into the circle. Once your scientist has done this, have him or her take two steps back and try again. Challenge your scientist to see how far back s/he can move and still get the rocks into the circle. You can also have your scientist stand at a distance and see how many rocks s/he can get into the circle out of 10 tries. This could be the basis of learning about percentages.

Caution: Rocks should never be tossed in the direction of other people, pets, wild animals or windows.