

WEEKDAY WONDERS



Content developed by the
Tennessee Aquarium
Education Department



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Wild World of Art: Day 4

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 sticks?



Daily Nature Journal

Have your young scientist go outside to complete a daily nature journal. The [Guide to Nature Journaling](#) offers more details about what to include in an entry and how to support your scientist.



Sticks All Around

Today's artworks involve every kid's favorite toy – sticks! Tell your scientist that “sticks” are pieces of wood that are no longer attached to trees or bushes. If a stick is attached to a plant, it is still a living part of that plant. Encourage your scientist to use only sticks that they find on the ground for today's Weekday Wonders activities.

Ask your scientist to look around outside for different kinds of sticks and choose two or three to highlight in his or her journal. Have him or her record the characteristics of the different sticks. These could include color and texture. Ask your scientist to draw the shape of the sticks, paying attention to any curves or little twigs attached.

Have your scientist use a ruler or measuring tape to measure the length and width of different sticks. Hint – if a stick is curvy, lay a string along the stick and mark the beginning and end of the stick, then measure the length of the string instead.



What Do You See?

Take a piece of blank paper and tape or glue one to three sticks in random places on the page. Ask your young scientist to draw a picture around the sticks, incorporating the sticks into the image. Share the following examples with your young scientist as examples to help prompt creativity.

- Does one stick form the trunk of a tree?
- A bridge across a river?
- One wall of a house?
- The spiny backbone of a monster?

The possibilities are limited only by your scientist's imagination!



Nature's Paintbrushes

Ask your scientist to gather three or four large but sturdy, straight sticks. These sticks will be the handles of your paintbrushes. Next, ask your scientist to look around outside for things that they think would make good bristles for the paintbrush. These could be twigs, grasses, leaves, feathers, pine needles, or even flowers. Using duct tape or string, help your scientist attach the bristles to one end of the stick handle.

Prepare a large canvas for your scientist/artist. Some examples of good canvases for paint include the paper that comes in large packages, opened up grocery bags, butcher paper, or cardboard boxes. If you don't have an appropriate canvas (or just want a little less mess!), these paintbrushes are also great for painting with water on concrete. Encourage your scientist to experiment with the markings made by each different kind of paintbrush and see what masterpieces s/he can create!



Stick Sculptures

Ask your scientist to gather a small pile of sticks. These will be the sticks s/he will use to make a sculpture. Before your scientist begins the sculpture, have him or her decorate the sticks. Your scientist may choose to paint the sticks bright colors or patterns or use glue and glitter. An easy way to create interesting patterns on sticks is to cover small sections with tape and paint the exposed sections. When the tape is removed, the sticks will have brightly colored stripes.

When the decorated sticks are dry, ask your scientist to create a sculpture with them. Ask your scientist to think of ways to help the sticks stand up (such as sticking them in the ground or blocks of clay) and how to attach the sticks to one another (string, tape, clay, etc.). Glue can be used to make a more permanent sculpture, but the decorated sticks can easily be reused for multiple sculptures. Encourage your scientist to use other materials to enhance their sculpture, such as leaves or flowers.