

THE ENRICHMENT PROJECT

Badge Program

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ART JOURNALS

Steps

1. What is an art journal?

An art journal is an illustrated diary or journal. It moves into the realm of art when you add illustrations, paintings, embellishments and more to create a visual journal. Art journals are excellent for people who might not always have the words to share their lives as they would in a traditional journal / diary.

Go online and look at art journal samples. Discover what others have done. If you think this is something you might want to try, continue with the steps below.

2. Make a plan.

Would you like to create a theme for your art journal? Perhaps highlighting your experiences with your troop for an entire year? Document your family traditions, family holiday or special trip? Create a normal journal / diary with embellishments? Make a keepsake journal for someone you've been separated from? Celebrate a life-changing event like a birth or a wedding? Make a visual representation of a feeling, mood or idea? You may want to journal your dreams or flights of fancy. You can also use an art journal to try art and craft techniques and document your results.

Decide what you will do in your art journal.

3. The journal.

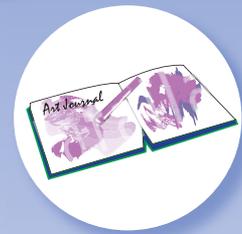
You need to start with a journal. Here are a few ideas. Choose one or find one of your own.

- Composition book
- Handmade book
- Drawing / sketch books
- Diary / journal
- Hardcover book (altered art)
- Single-subject notebooks
- Dollar store blank notebooks

Before you decide, think about how you will be using your book? Will it stay open as you work on it? Is that less important than a spiral binding that gets in the way? Would you do better with individual sheets and assembling the pages later? Is your paper thick enough for the materials you plan to incorporate?

4. Idea and color files.

Using manila folders, zip-top bags or any other system you feel comfortable with, start collecting ideas and images for your art journal. Note colors or thoughts you have initially for these items. You may find it easier to collect color chips (paint stores) or magazine clippings to show colors instead of trying to describe a color. Dates and times for items may help trigger memories or details. This will help you later as you start to assemble items in your art journal.



Art Journals

Many people keep journals or diaries of their lives. An art journal takes this activity to the next level. This craft not only allows you to record your life but also to explore your art. You do not have to be an "artist" to create an art journal, you only need the desire to create. These journals are considered "mixed media" because you can pull many art and craft techniques into a single project.



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5. **Writing prompts.**

Writing prompts can also help provide you with ideas. Review the list of items you may want to include. Keep notes with enough information to prompt you into activity.

- Memories
- Quotes
- Questions
- Poems / song lyrics
- Short stories
- Clichés
- Your ideas
- Theme prompts

Create your own unique list of writing prompts.

6. **Basic tools.**

Here's a list of basic tools to start with. Some tools you may have around your house, so check before purchasing more.

- Paint brushes
- Glue / adhesives
- Rubber stamps
- Scissors
- Craft knife and cutting mat
- Stencils
- Sand paper / emery board
- Ruler

7. **Basic materials.**

These are materials you may (not) need depending on the techniques you intend to include. Review the list and find out about any items you are unfamiliar with.

- Paint / watercolors
- Gesso
- Markers
- Pens / ink
- Embellishments, scrapbooking
- Magazine clippings
- Pencils (colored and others) / erasers
- Scrapbooking paper / stickers
- Gel medium
- Crayons
- Double-sided tape
- Ink pads
- Stickers
- Photographs

NOTE: If you are intending on creating an archival-safe journal, don't forget to check every material before you include it.

8. **Time investment.**

Take time to work on your journal. You may want to work on it every day, on the weekend, etc. Set up a schedule and stick to it. Not only are you more likely to work on it, others will pick up on your "special time" and leave you alone.

Also, schedule a certain amount of time to create a page. This will stop you from working on one page until it is "right." Nothing is perfect and if you fixate on that perfection, you will not complete the page. Come back to it later and review it, making adjustments if needed.



9. **Tutorials.**

There are numerous tutorials on the Web covering not only the creative process, but techniques and materials. Some of these are listed in Steps 10-17. Try tutorials on one or more techniques. You may also find some that are not listed to make your art journal unique to you.

EXPLORING TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS

10. **Backgrounds.**

You'll need to start with the background. The background can incorporate colors from the elements you intend to include on the page, the colors that communicate a mood, etc. You can also work on multiple page backgrounds and finish embellishments when you're feeling "inspired." Any paper technique can be used to create backgrounds, embellishments or focal elements. This might include paint washes, tea stains, stamping, colored pencils, watercolors, and more. Create backgrounds for a few pages.

NOTE: When working with wet media, the colors may bleed through the paper. Paper will curl if it is too wet. Pages may stick together. Place wax paper under your pages to help isolate these pages as you work on them.

11. **Painting.**

Acrylic paint is cheap and comes in a variety of colors. You can use it as it is or adjust it with other items for a variety of looks. Also, the brush you use can make a big difference in the coverage and texture you have on a page. Don't want to use a brush? Try sponges, stamps or a variety of other items to put paint on a page. Experiment with various colors and have fun!

12. **Drawing and sketching.**

You can draw directly on the page. You can also draw on another page and attach it. Do not worry about being perfect. This is your unique art journal. You don't have to draw images. Create Zentangle™ patterns or doodle randomly. Try adding to your pages with your drawings.

13. **Collage.**

Collage is not clutter for its own sake. It's a collection of items that together explain a feeling, mood or idea. You can use any found bits that lay flat for the pages. If your bits aren't flat, sketch or photocopy them. Glues have different properties that may make them easier or harder to work with from drying time to thickness. Experiment with a variety of adhesives to find those you prefer to work with to attach your flat elements.

14. **Photos.**

Do not use your original photos unless you have either the negatives or digital files for a backup. If you mess up, your original will be lost. Photocopies are thinner and easier to manipulate. If you don't like the final result, you can throw it out and do it again. Find other tips for working with photos.

15. **Ephemera.**

Ephemera is any vintage item in the public domain you can include in your artwork. This may be images from the Library of Congress or old matchbooks you pick up at a garage sale. Like photos, you may want to work with photocopies. Search through some of the images at the Library of Congress or search Flickr (www.flickr.com) for ephemera. Find ephemera to include in your art journal.

16. **Recycled.**

Recycled materials such as junk mail can be used in art journals. Magazines can be used for images, as background paper for lettering or full words. Brainstorm other recyclable materials you can include in your art journal.



17. **Journaling.**

You have your prompts. Are you writing in your journal? Gluing words you created from your computer? Assembling letters from a magazine like a ransom note? Calligraphy? Letter art? Sometimes one word is enough to convey your thoughts. Practice journaling at least two different ways.

18. **What else speaks to you?**

What other art / craft techniques speak to you? What other materials fit your journal? Don't feel limited to the materials / techniques listed here. This is your journal. Use what you want.

19. **Sharing your journal.**

Share your journal when it is complete. Photograph, copy or find another way to share your journal. Feel free to share it with other AEP members, your family or to the general public.

Sites to Explore

ezinearticles.com/?7-Tips-For-Starting-Your-Painting-Art-Journal&id=458596

artjunk.typepad.com/art_junk/2007/03/art_journal_tut.html

billiescraftroom.wordpress.com/2011/02/18/tutorial-choosing-papercard-for-your-art-journal

trishbee.wordpress.com/2007/08/03/the-book-of-me-sketchbook-challenge

thriftycollageartist.blogspot.com/2008/02/background-tutorial-1.html

www.scrapspace.com/2009/06/art-journal-ideas.html

www.liveyourart.net/2010/03/junk-mail-art-journal-tutorial.html

balzerdesigns.typepad.com/balzer_designs/2011/03/art-journal-every-day-tutorial-for-a-leather-journal.html#axzz1Vge4Ni9i

www.artistsjournals.com

pamcarriker.com/2010/02/21/fun-graffiti-journal-page-tutorial

www.milliande.com/Art-Journaling-with-Teesha-Moore-Collage.html

www.artellalands.com/BookLarksSample.pdf

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www.loc.gov/library/libarch-digital.html

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www.squidoo.com/Visual-Journals

www.wikihow.com/Use-an-Art-Journal

suite101.com/art-journals

Check out Larajla's Enrichment Project to start your own adventure.