Wildlife researchers need to record visual information and photography is not always an option. Field sketches allow researchers to capture behavior and highlight features.

**Instructions**

You don’t have to be an artist to draw accurately.

Get an 8 1/2”x11” sheet of paper and a pencil. Turn the paper sideways and either **mark or fold it into four sections**.

Print the image you will be copying (page 2 of this activity).

Use the lines that quarter the printed image as a guide for the exact places where your sketch lines should go on your copy.

As you draw, imagine a **loop of string** that you can move and change until the *shape* inside looks exactly like what you are copying.

When you think you have copied the shape accurately, **darken** the places where the shape ends. You can see exactly where in the scribble the line should be.

When you are satisfied with your rough sketch, **add more detail** by referring to the image.

If you scribble out the exact *shapes* you see and not the image you think you should see, your field sketches will be accurate representations.

**Intentionally** blurring the image by lightly squinting can help you see the main shapes and keep you from being distracted by details that should be sketched in later. With practice, you won’t need to draw in guide lines; you will automatically note dividing points.

**You Can’t Draw?**

The *secret* of sketching is to scribble *shapes* instead of *things*. Don’t try to trace outlines; one small error anywhere will throw off the rest of the outline. Scribble lightly, starting from the center and **pushing out** the shape. Don’t try to get it *exactly* right. You can always scribble the shape out further where needed and bring it back in where needed.

**Related Activities**

- Animal Observation
- How to Identify a Chimpanzee
- Chimpanzee Facial Expressions
How To Do a Field Sketch

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