

50 Art Journaling Prompts

If you've never created in an art journal before, it's a wonderful way to experiment with new techniques and supplies, make notes and plans for your art practice, and work through your thoughts and emotions. Whether you're new to art journaling or a seasoned expert, sometimes you need a little help to get started, so here are 50 free prompts from the pages of *Art Journaling* magazine to get the ball rolling.

1. Go outside and find five objects that interest you. Use your imagination to represent each object in your journal. You can use the item itself or the color, shape, or texture to influence your piece. (Shared by Stephanie Aune)
2. What is one of your favorite childhood memories, and how can you illustrate it in your art journal? (Shared by Leslie Wood)
3. Use a gel print or a "cleanup page" as a starting point for a background. (Shared by Jo Hanson)
4. Choose an old book page, notice what words jump out at you from the page, and use those words to create a new story in your journal. (Shared by Leslie Wood)
5. Base a journal page on your favorite lyric from one of your favorite songs. (Shared by Carrie Todd)
6. Write about a day you would like to forget, and then paint over the page, creating a new background and effectively erasing that day.
7. When writing in your journal, start with who, what, when, where, and the why. The why is most important because there is always a deeper meaning to everything we create. (Shared by Caterina Giglio)
8. What do you see when you close your eyes? Create it on the page. (Shared by Peggy Gatto)
9. What was your favorite song in high school? Bring it to life on an art journal page using only three of your favorite art supplies ... and no words! (Shared by Nicole Austin)
10. What is one quality you love about yourself that you would like to develop more? (Shared by Cheryl Sosnowski)

11. Close your eyes and use the very first color that pops into your mind as a starting point. Flip through a magazine, find pages with that color, tear them into pieces, and create a color collage. (Shared by Michelle Schratz)
12. Where are you right now? Draw a picture of your surroundings or write a sentence or paragraph about your life right now. Date the entry. (Shared by Lydia Velarde)
13. Re-create a recent dream on a journal page.
14. Go on a nature walk and collect items to incorporate in your journal. (Shared by Lynne Moncrieff)
15. Create a page that's inspired by your favorite place. Think about the colors, textures, patterns, and shapes you experience there, and incorporate these into your page. (Shared by Diane Adams)
16. Think of a childhood memory, whether it is fuzzy or vivid, and try capturing the colors and feelings of it. (Shared by Narah Kimberly Minardi)
17. **Imagine a favorite and enjoyable sound. How can you create this sound with color, patterns, and images? (Shared by Marnita Patton)**
18. Use your favorite drawing tool to mindfully focus on creating lines on your journal page from left to right, filling the whole page, or draw differently sized circles all over the page, etc. These will serve as a wonderful background. (Shared by Marnita Patton)
19. What did you love to make or draw when you were a kid? Draw that thing over and over on your journal page, and write a story about it. (Shared by Nicole Austin)
20. Use a patterned paper napkin on a page. Decide to use only parts or all of one. Adhere them with matte gel medium and build from there. They are also beautiful when muted with a wash of diluted gesso. (Shared by Jennifer Tittle)
21. Put pen to paper and, without lifting the pen, draw looping, intersecting lines. Fill in each separate area created by the lines with different colors, patterns, or writing.
22. Create a page that includes a face without using a paintbrush. (Shared by Karen Campbell)
23. **Notice the color of the sky and how it changes during the day. Use watercolors, acrylic paint, or pastels to capture what you see, creating one journal page per observation. (Shared by Carol A. More)**
24. Compose a prayer for someone in need. If there could be a miracle involved, describe the wonder of it artistically. (Shared by Elizabeth Tichvon)
25. Write down a list of "mundane" questions you would have liked to ask a relative who has passed away, like a grandparent — like what was their favorite toy as a child, or to describe their first home as newlyweds. These are the things your family will want to read about in the decades to come. Don't only journal about obvious life events; do pages, or even an entire journal, about the little routine things in life. (Shared by Kerry Molina)

26. Grab three colors you seldom ever use and create a page with them. Start off the page with your eyes closed and paintbrush in hand. (Shared by Tiffany Goff Smith)
27. Look around for a small abandoned art project and use it, or part of it, to jump-start a page. (Shared by Debi Barton Haverly)
28. Explore using stencils in your art journal. Use one stencil in many different ways. (Shared by Kim Collister)
29. Collect magazine images that intrigue you with color, texture, subject matter, etc., and use them as inspiration for a journal theme or page. For example, replicate the colors of an exotic desert, capture the energy of a Bolivian marketplace, or use the colors from a fashion ad. (Shared by Carol A. More)
30. Incorporate photos of unknown people in your art journal. Let your mind conjure up a fascinating and adventurous history for the people in the photo, which will help feed an imaginative layout. (Shared by Sharon Hoerth)
31. Journal about your favorite music album or a collection of songs. I once created an entire journal about Pink Floyd's "The Wall" (you can read more about it in the April 2018 Issue of Art Journaling). (Shared by Tina Walker)
32. Create a self-portrait using anything except an actual photo of yourself.
33. Pick one subject, and illustrate that thing each day in an entirely different way for 30 days. (Shared by Laure Bowen)
34. I love to use my art journal as a tool for self-awareness, so some of my favorite page ideas have come from online assessments. Check out the VIA Character Strength and the Enneagram. (Shared by Nicole Sinay Torres)
35. Create a scavenger hunt to find the elements of a collage. For example, find these following five items in your paper stash and use them to create a collage: something that represents weather; a piece of coloring book page; a favorite word; something maroon; and circles. (Shared by Margarete Miller)
36. Designate three different journal pages to three new art techniques you want to try, and get started!
37. Look to children's art for inspiration. They paint with such abandonment or fear, and their art often contains color combinations you have never thought of. (Shared by Dianne Fago)
38. If you've never used encaustic wax medium before, apply it over a completed page(s). It creates a very unique and exciting texture and appearance. (Shared by Brigid Gallagher Davies)
39. Keep track of your daydreams or dreams for a few weeks. Create art journal spreads based on those dreams ... try to capture their essence. (Shared by Amber Walker)

40. When you have free time, or your muse is MIA, grab a stack of magazines and start tearing out whatever strikes your fancy. Make piles: faces, eyes, patterns, miscellaneous, etc. Then go back and cut them out. In doing this, you will see images come together to make a great collaged character. (Shared by Nancy Baumiller)
41. Ask yourself, "What am I feeling right now?" Then create a page. (Shared by Mary Sterk)
42. Bring a favorite poem to life through imagery.
43. Challenge yourself to use only secondary colors or only tertiary colors. (Shared by Renee Stien)
44. Choose a basic shape as a theme — square, triangle, circle, diamond, etc. — and use it as a repeating element on a page.
45. Choose your favorite fairy-tale character and re-imagine him or her in a different way. For example, if she lived in our era what might she look like or do as opposed to in her environment? (Shared by Leslie Wood)
46. Imagine your dream vacation. Where would you go? What would you see? Record it in your art journal.
47. Pick one shape and repeat it in different sizes on your page to create a background. Add color to portions of both the positive and negative spaces. Use the inside areas of the shapes for journaling. (Shared by Carrie Todd)
48. Read the first paragraph of your favorite book, and bring it to life in your journal.
49. Quickly write about something that has happened to you, good or bad, just get it out and onto paper. The words do not have to be legible; in fact, you may like it better if you can only read a few words, just enough to provide clues but not any details. (Shared by Kristin Peterson)
50. When choosing collage images, it's fun to use something unexpected where a more common element would be; for example, when adding wings to a figure, choose a watch face and cut it into wings. (Shared by Dianne Fago)