



**ACADEMY
SCIENCE CAMP**
from home

How to Start Your Own Collection

Just about every science enthusiast has a collection of specimens that they found in their explorations of the world. The key to responsible collecting is to only collect where you are allowed to collect, never take more than you need, never take anything that might be of scientific value unless you are collecting for a museum or for research and never collect anything that might be threatened or endangered. The rules for most state and national parks are that you are not allowed to cut, pick, dig, damage or remove a living or dead plant or plant part, most animals or animal parts, rocks or other mineral products. Each state varies slightly in their rules so do your research first. What specimens will you use to start your collection?

Know before you begin

- This activity can be done inside or outside
- All supplies are easy to find, substitute or leave out entirely
- Adult supervision is recommended
- Please choose a safe space to play

Materials

- Containers to hold your specimens while collecting
- Notebook
- Pencil



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Instructions

1. Gather your collecting supplies.
2. Before you go out collecting check your state and local rules about what and where you can collect.
3. When you go out collecting, remember to write down in your notebook where, when and who found your object.

Examples of easy items to collect:

- Shells
- Sea glass
- Rocks and minerals
- Leaves

Examples of places you can collect:

- Your own backyard
- Walking in your neighborhood
- Local parks
- The beach

Dos and Don'ts for collecting:

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect in your own yard• Collect only what you need• Leave a habitat better than you found it• Bring any specimens you need help identifying to the museum• Take lots of pictures of any animals and plants you discover	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't collect from other people's yards• Don't take all that you can find• Don't leave litter behind• Don't remove animals from their natural habitat• Don't collect from state or national parks

Check out our "How to Write a Scientific Label" activity for more information on what is important to note for your collection.