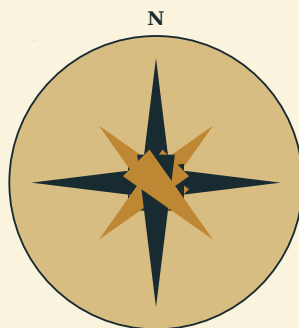


GREAT ADVENTURES

21 Missions for Curious Minds and Families

BOUNDLESSGLEAM • WISDOM • TRUTH • BEAUTY • UNDERSTANDING





GREAT ADVENTURES

Twenty-one missions into God's remarkable creation

Created by BoundlessGleam Published by Sharp
Ventures LLC

FIRST SALE EDITION • 2026

Publication record

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EDITORIAL NOTE

Explanatory prose, narrative framing, questions, and activities are original to this BoundlessGleam edition. Historical and scientific claims are framed through the institutional source trails listed in the back matter.

ILLUSTRATION DISCLOSURE

The cover artwork was created with generative-AI assistance and curated, cropped, typeset, and prepared by BoundlessGleam. Interior maps, diagrams, ornaments, and activity graphics were drawn programmatically for this edition. Illustrations are interpretive, not documentary evidence.

SAFETY

For readers roughly ages 8-14 with an informed adult. This book is educational, not navigation, rescue, diving, caving, medical, or expedition certification. Follow current laws, forecasts, closures, professional guidance, and local conditions. Adults must select appropriate activities, supervise tools and travel, and stop whenever conditions are uncertain.

FAITH AND INQUIRY

BoundlessGleam welcomes wonder, careful evidence, moral imagination, and reverence. Faith is not used as a substitute for factual accuracy, nor factual accuracy as a reason to diminish wonder.

A note to fellow explorers

Open this book anywhere. Read one field note aloud, then try its expedition card. You do not need to travel far: a window, table, neighborhood, garden, museum, or trusted guide can become the edge of discovery. The second page is not a test. It is an invitation to notice more carefully, change one thing at a time, share what you learn, and care for whatever you meet.

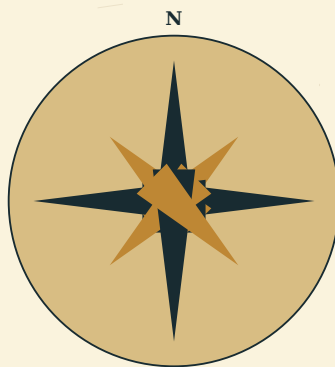
The Explorer's Compass

NOTICE what is actually there.

SHARE so others can follow.

ADAPT one choice at a time.

CARE for people and place.



Expedition ledger

01	Follow the North Star	SKY
02	Read a River	WATER
03	Build a Tiny Shelter	SHELTER
04	Carry a Message Like an Inca Chasqui	MESSAGE
05	Navigate Like a Polynesian Wayfinder	WAYFINDING
06	Decode an Animal Trail	TRACKING
07	Map a Neighborhood Treasure Route	MAP
08	Cross a Desert with Ibn Battuta	JOURNEY
09	Send a Rover to Mars	SPACE
10	Dive into a Kelp Forest	OCEAN
11	Listen for a Hidden City	SOUND

Expedition ledger, continued

12	Open a Time Capsule from 3026	TIME
13	Race the Sun with Solar Power	LIGHT
14	Rescue a Pollinator Garden	POLLINATION
15	Climb a Paper Mountain	ELEVATION
16	Sail with Zheng He's Fleet	FLEET
17	Find Life in One Square Meter	LIFE
18	Make a Weather Station	WEATHER
19	Carry Light Through a Cave	CAVE
20	Launch a Balloon Around the World	AIR
21	Design the Kindest Expedition	SERVICE

Follow the North Star

Night navigation



THE SCENE

You are crossing a safe open field with an adult guide after sunset. The familiar landscape has become a map of silhouettes. Your first task is not to hurry; it is to let your eyes adjust.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Find the Big Dipper's outer bowl stars, extend their line toward Polaris, then verify with a compass. Polaris gives approximate north in the Northern Hemisphere, but clouds, latitude, and local terrain matter.

Your mission

On paper, draw the horizon and mark north, east, south, and west. Add three landmarks you could recognize in daylight and at dusk.

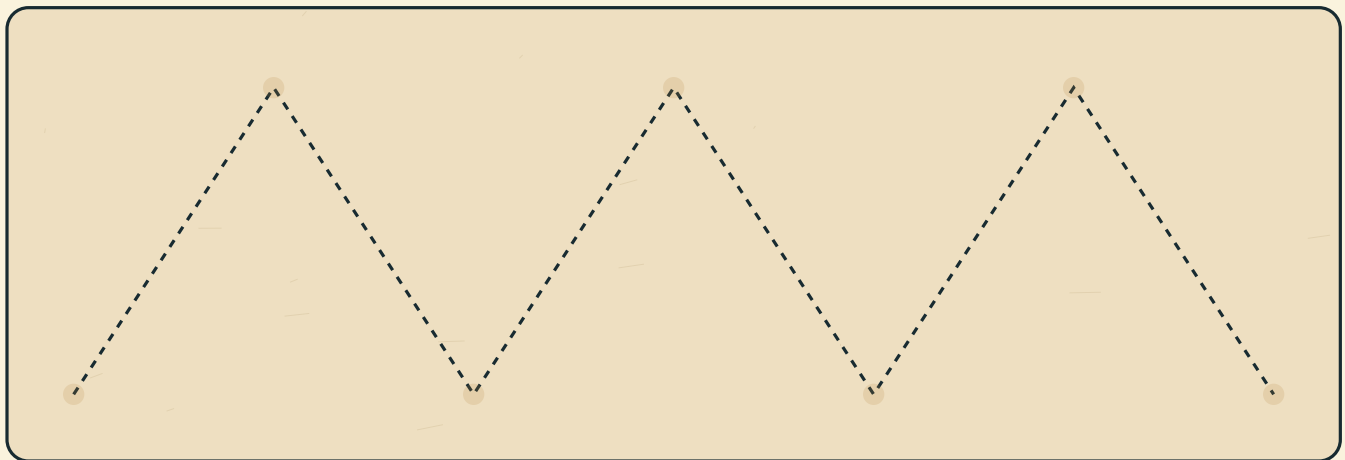
THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

NOTICE What happened before you explain why?

ADAPT Change one choice; try again.

SHARE Can someone else follow your account?

CARE Leave people and place better.



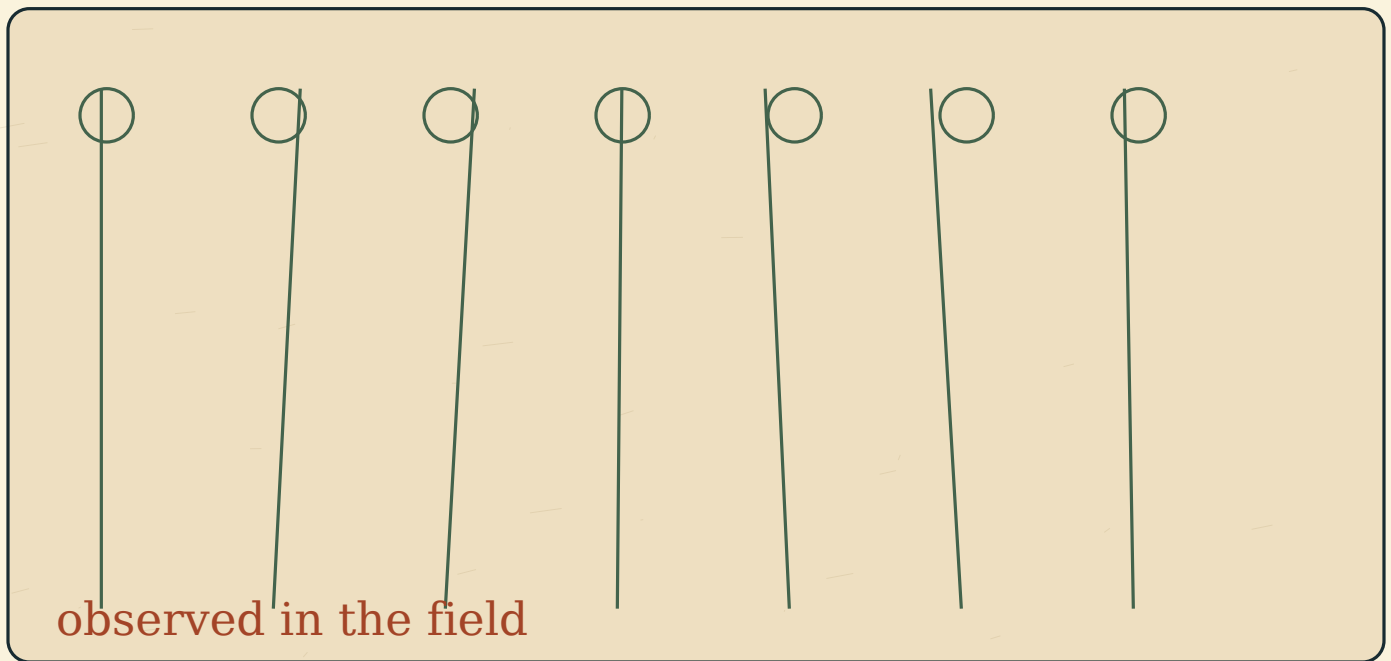
SOURCE TRAIL

National Park Service night-sky resources; NOAA navigation education.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Read a River

Watershed exploration



THE SCENE

At the edge of a stream, the water seems to move as one thing. Look longer and it separates into tongues, eddies, standing waves, quiet pools, and seams.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Flow responds to slope, depth, rocks, banks, and friction. Never enter swift or unfamiliar water; river reading begins from a safe shore with an informed adult.

Your mission

Choose one floating leaf and watch from a safe shore. Sketch its path and label fast, slow, turning, and stopped water.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

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- ADAPT** Change one choice; try again.
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- CARE** Leave people and place better.



NOTICE • ADAPT • SHARE • CARE

SOURCE TRAIL

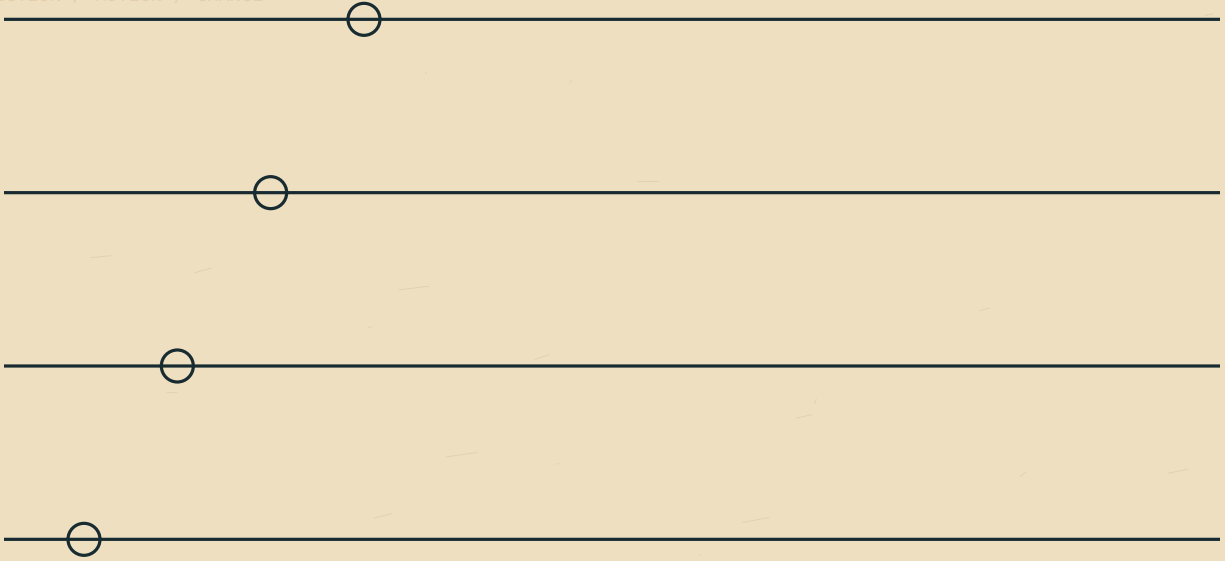
U.S. Geological Survey Water Science School; National Park Service river safety.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Build a Tiny Shelter

Design against wind and rain

SECTION / MOTION / CHANGE



THE SCENE

A storm is imagined, but the engineering is real. Your travelers are three small toy figures, and their shelter must fit beneath a tray or in the yard.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

A good shelter manages wind, water, heat, structure, and site. Miniature testing lets you learn without cutting live branches or disturbing habitat.

Your mission

Build with paper, fallen sticks, string, or blocks. With an adult, test it gently with a fan and spray bottle. Change one feature at a time.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

- NOTICE** What happened before you explain why?
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- SHARE** Can someone else follow your account?
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SOURCE TRAIL

FEMA youth preparedness; Leave No Trace principles.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Carry a Message Like an Inca Chasqui

Relay and memory

What changed?

look twice

THE SCENE

High in the Andes, trained chasquis once carried messages and goods along a vast road network. No single runner crossed the entire empire; speed came from relays.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

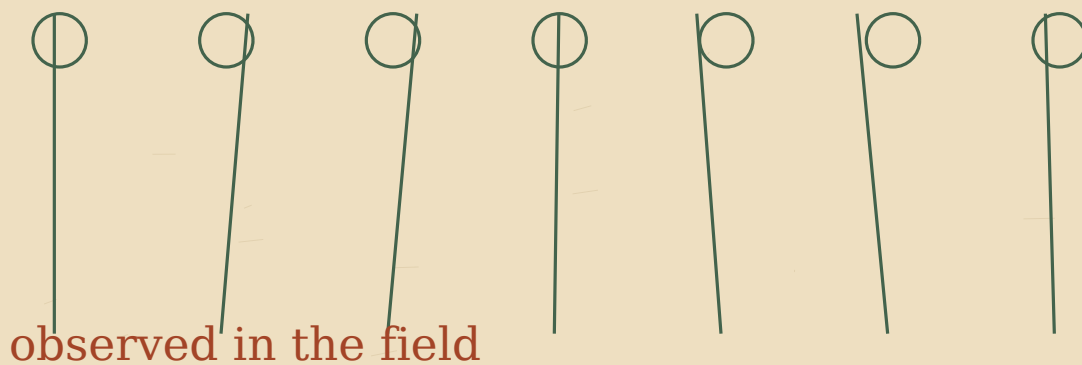
A relay is a system of trust. Quipu recorded information with cords and knots, while spoken messages demanded disciplined memory. Historians continue to study exactly how the system encoded meaning.

Your mission

Make a five-station walking relay in a clear, obstacle-free space. Pass a short fact once by speech and once with a symbol card. Compare accuracy and speed.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

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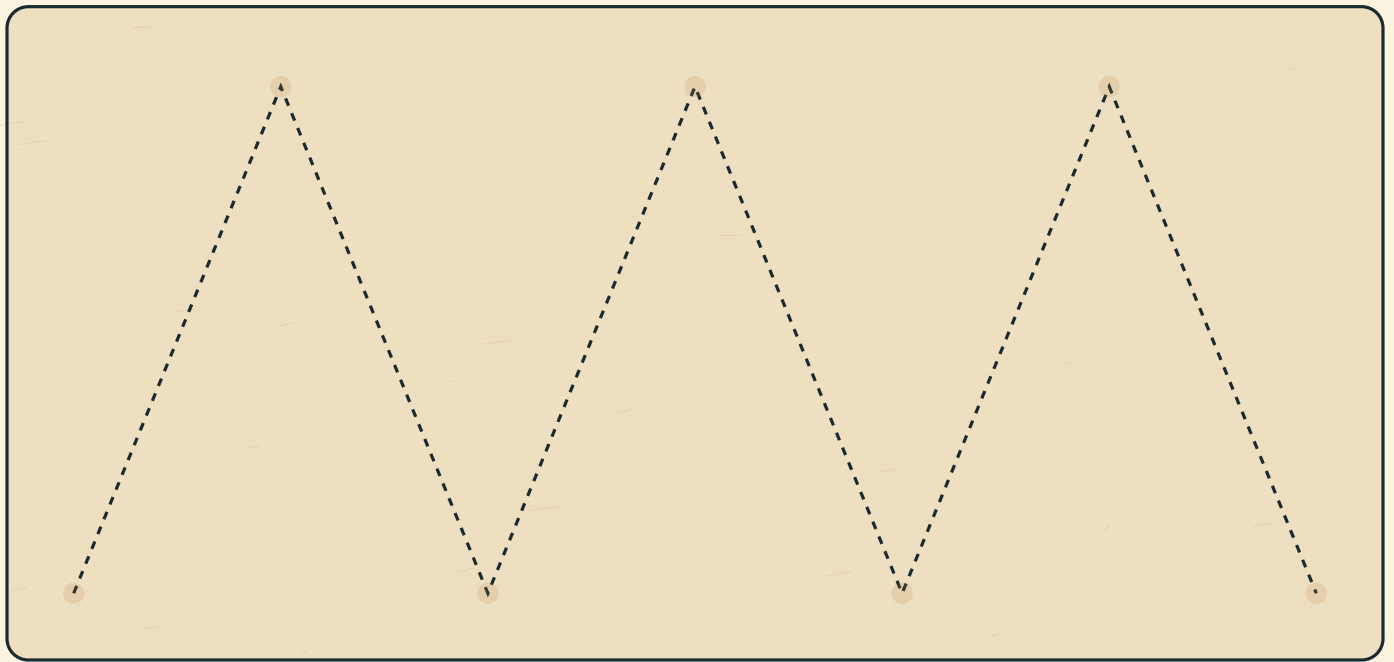
SOURCE TRAIL

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian; UNESCO Qhapaq Nan.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Navigate Like a Polynesian Wayfinder

Ocean, stars, swell, and birds



THE SCENE

Imagine ocean in every direction and no electronic screen. A skilled navigator reads a living field: stars rising and setting, wave patterns, clouds, birds, color, and memory.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Polynesian voyaging traditions were sustained through generations of expert knowledge. Modern revivals such as Hokule'a demonstrate that precise non-instrument navigation is living knowledge, not a lost mystery.

Your mission

Create a tabletop star compass with a bowl at the center. Mark where four stars rise or set and practice naming directions from the center.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

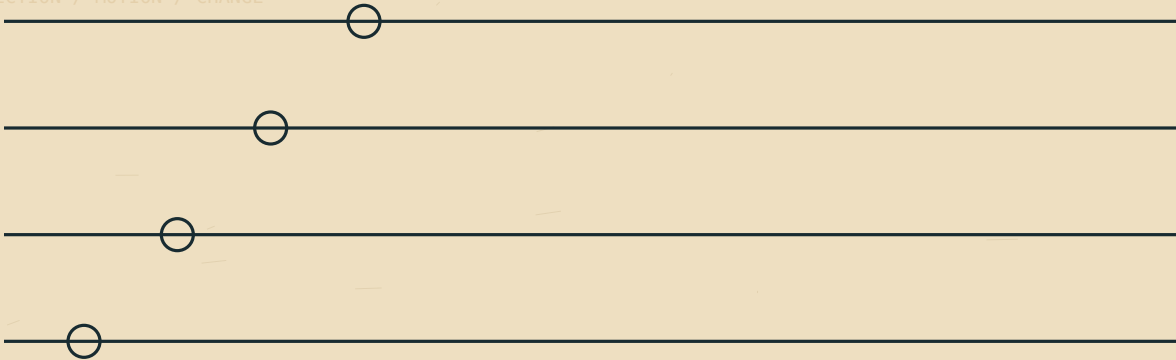
NOTICE What happened before you explain why?

ADAPT Change one choice; try again.

SHARE Can someone else follow your account?

CARE Leave people and place better.

SECTION / MOTION / CHANGE



SOURCE TRAIL

Polynesian Voyaging Society; Bishop Museum; NOAA Ocean Service.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Decode an Animal Trail

Track without disturbing



NOTICE • ADAPT • SHARE • CARE

THE SCENE

A print in mud is not only a shape. It records direction, speed, weight, weather, and time - but every conclusion must remain a hypothesis.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Ethical tracking keeps distance, protects nests and dens, and never pressures wildlife. Compare several signs before deciding what happened.

Your mission

From a respectful distance, photograph or sketch one track. Note size, ground, and weather, then list three possible explanations. Do not touch scat or remains.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

- NOTICE** What happened before you explain why?
- ADAPT** Change one choice; try again.
- SHARE** Can someone else follow your account?
- CARE** Leave people and place better.

What changed?

look twice

SOURCE TRAIL

National Park Service wildlife viewing ethics; state wildlife agency tracking guides.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Map a Neighborhood Treasure Route

Cartography and story



THE SCENE

An ordinary block becomes an expedition when you map what others pass: a mural, old tree, storm drain, bakery smell, steep hill, or place where birds gather.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

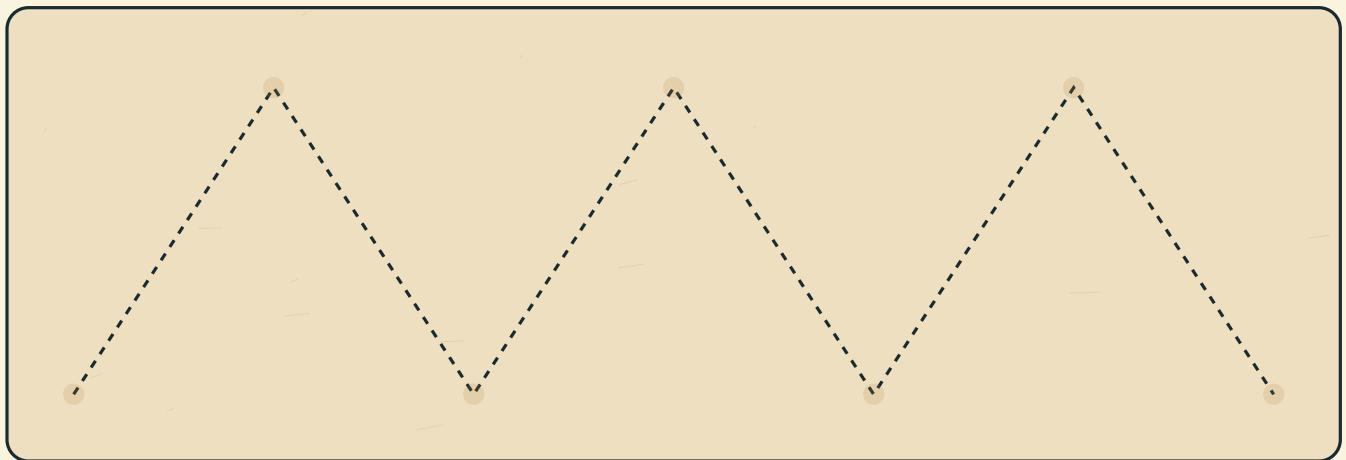
Maps select information. Scale, symbols, orientation, and legend help another person reconstruct your choices.

Your mission

Walk with an adult, mark five landmarks, create a legend, and give the map to someone who did not join the walk. Where do they hesitate?

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

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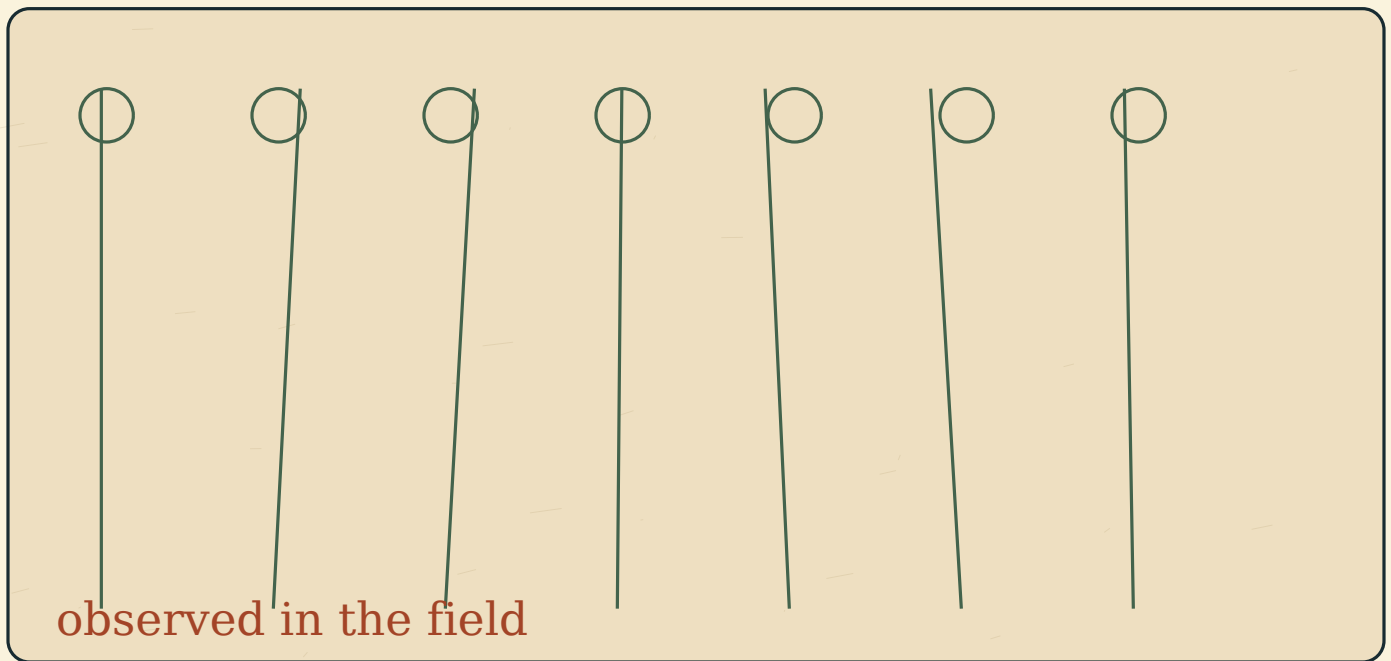
SOURCE TRAIL

U.S. Geological Survey map education; Library of Congress geography resources.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Cross a Desert with Ibn Battuta

Travel, hospitality, and adaptation



THE SCENE

In the fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta traveled across North Africa, the Middle East, East Africa, Central and South Asia, and beyond. His account joins observation, memory, convention, and later dictation.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Long travel depended on caravans, ports, guides, religious and scholarly networks, hospitality, and adaptation - not lone heroic wandering.

Your mission

Pack ten paper tokens for water, food, shelter, trade goods, maps, and gifts. Face three imagined scenario cards and decide what to use or exchange.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

- NOTICE** What happened before you explain why?
- ADAPT** Change one choice; try again.
- SHARE** Can someone else follow your account?
- CARE** Leave people and place better.



NOTICE • ADAPT • SHARE • CARE

SOURCE TRAIL

Library of Congress Ibn Battuta resources; Metropolitan Museum Heilbrunn Timeline.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Send a Rover to Mars

Remote exploration

SECTION / MOTION / CHANGE



THE SCENE

Your rover is millions of kilometers away. A command cannot be corrected instantly, so every move must be planned, simulated, sent, and checked.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Mars rovers combine cameras, wheels, power, communication, autonomous hazard avoidance, and scientific tools. Teams on Earth turn questions into sequences a machine can execute.

Your mission

Build a floor or tabletop grid with two hidden paper hazards known only to mission control. Write commands for a rover operator who cannot see the grid.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

- NOTICE** What happened before you explain why?
- ADAPT** Change one choice; try again.
- SHARE** Can someone else follow your account?
- CARE** Leave people and place better.



SOURCE TRAIL

NASA Mars Exploration Program; Jet Propulsion Laboratory education.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Dive into a Kelp Forest

Marine observation

What changed?

look twice

THE SCENE

Sunlight enters green water in moving columns. Kelp rises from rocky holdfasts toward the surface, creating layered habitat for fish, invertebrates, birds, and mammals.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

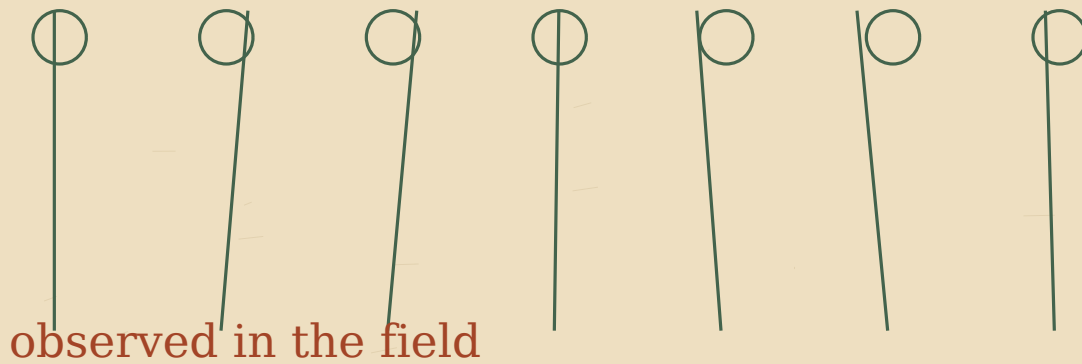
Kelp is algae, not a plant. Conditions, currents, temperature, predators, and grazers help shape the forest. Real diving requires certification, supervision, current local conditions, and proper equipment.

Your mission

Create a food-web mobile with kelp, urchin, sea otter, fish, and decomposers. Remove one card and predict three changes.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

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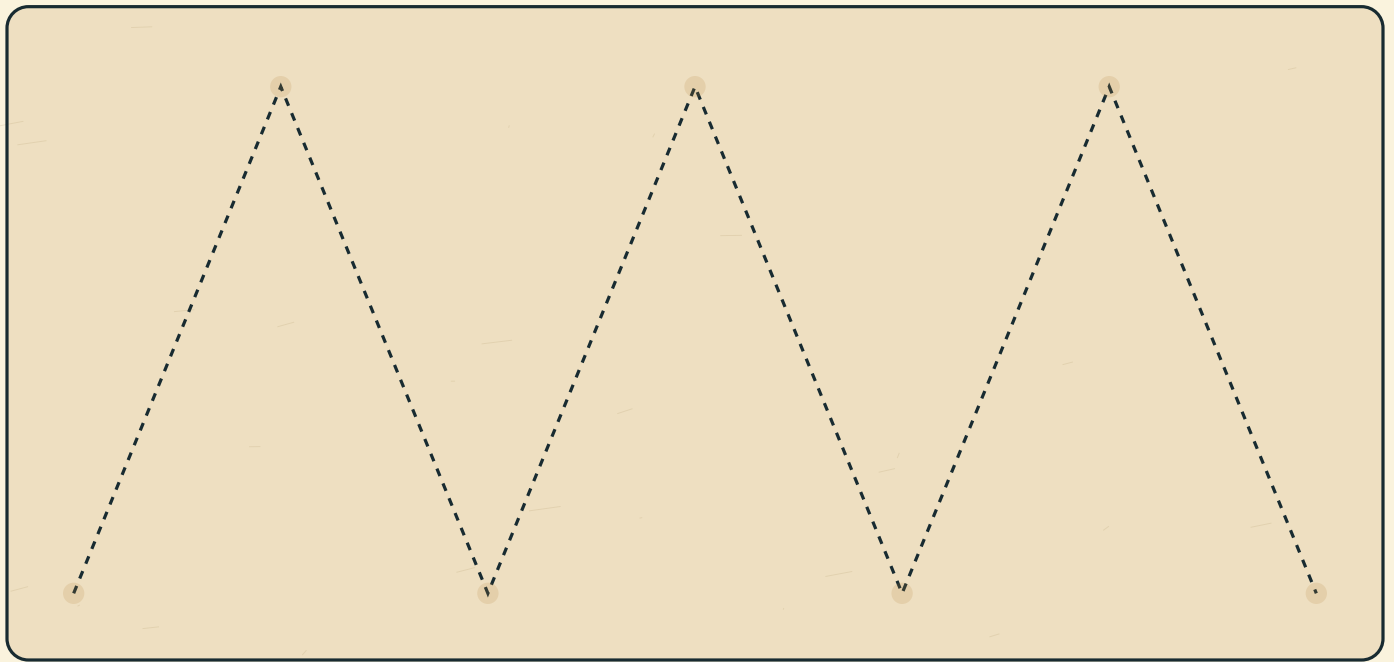
SOURCE TRAIL

NOAA Ocean Service; Monterey Bay Aquarium; National Park Service kelp forests.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Listen for a Hidden City

Sound mapping



THE SCENE

Close your eyes in a safe seated place. The world expands beyond the edge of vision: traffic hum, footsteps, wings, ventilation, conversation, wind.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Sound has direction, distance, pitch, rhythm, and reflection. A sound map records experience rather than exact measured geography.

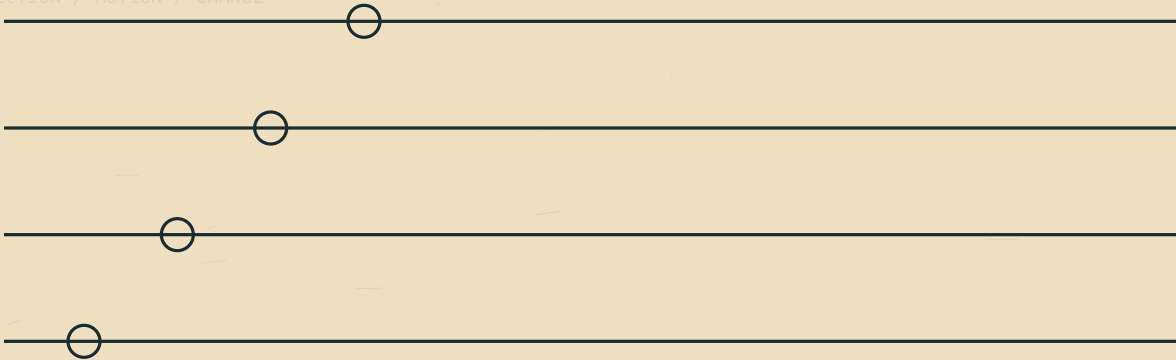
Your mission

Sit with an adult in a safe place away from traffic. Put yourself at the center of a page. For five minutes, mark each sound by direction and apparent distance.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

- NOTICE** What happened before you explain why?
- ADAPT** Change one choice; try again.
- SHARE** Can someone else follow your account?
- CARE** Leave people and place better.

SECTION / MOTION / CHANGE



SOURCE TRAIL

National Park Service Natural Sounds and Night Skies; Exploratorium sound education.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Open a Time Capsule from 3026

Archaeology and inference



THE SCENE

A box arrives from a thousand years in the future, but it contains ordinary objects from your own day. Their labels are gone.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Archaeologists infer use from context, wear, material, comparison, and association. A good interpretation names uncertainty and competing explanations.

Your mission

Choose five clean, safe household objects with an adult. Write a future archaeologist's description of each without using its modern name.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

- NOTICE** What happened before you explain why?
- ADAPT** Change one choice; try again.
- SHARE** Can someone else follow your account?
- CARE** Leave people and place better.

What changed?

look twice

SOURCE TRAIL

Smithsonian archaeology education; National Park Service archeology program.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Race the Sun with Solar Power

Energy experiment



THE SCENE

A tiny solar toy moves quickly in direct sun, slowly beneath thin cloud, and not at all in deep shade. The Sun is constant compared with your changing local conditions.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

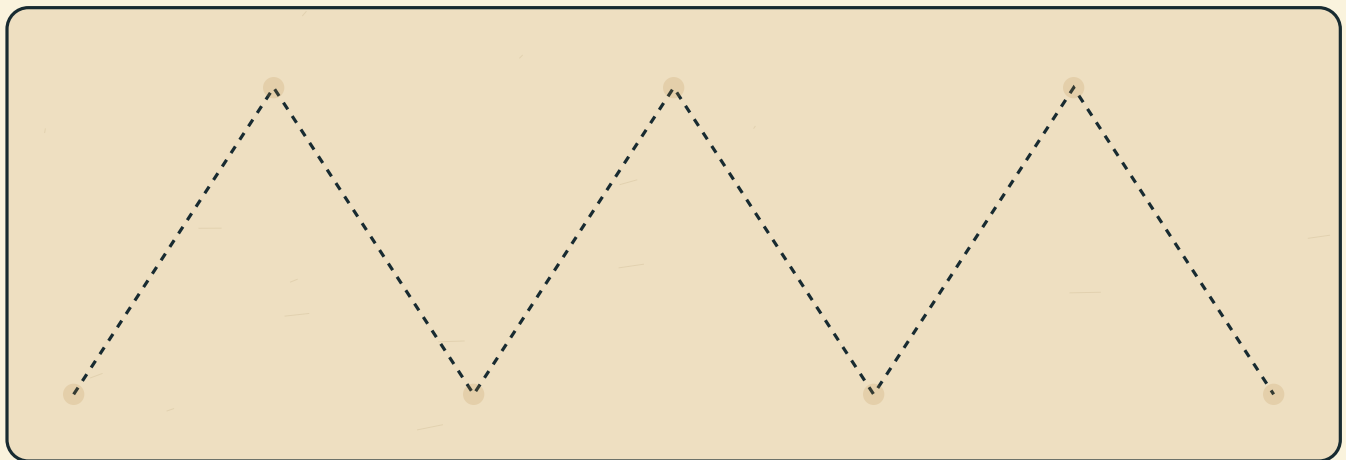
Solar cells convert light energy into electricity. Angle, shade, temperature, area, and storage affect useful output.

Your mission

Use a safe, intact solar toy or calculator. Compare three locations and record time, cloud cover, angle, and result. Never dismantle electrical parts.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

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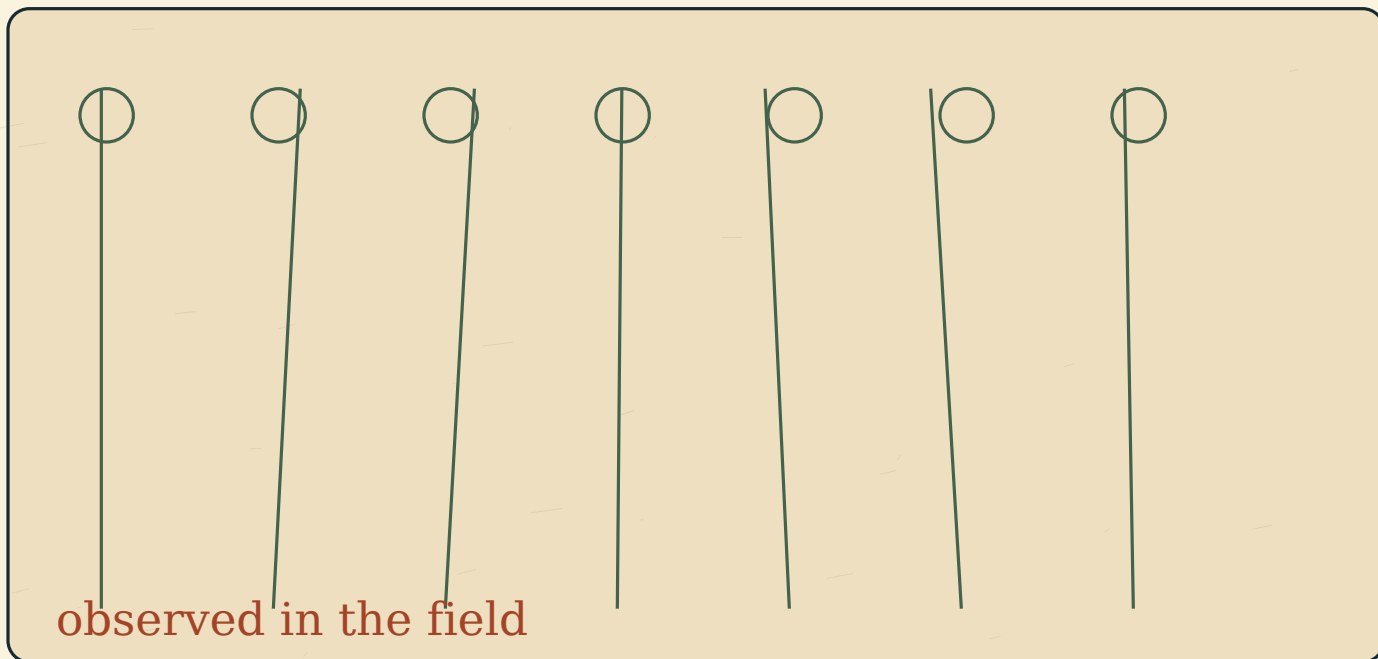
SOURCE TRAIL

U.S. Department of Energy solar basics; National Renewable Energy Laboratory education.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Rescue a Pollinator Garden

Ecology mission



THE SCENE

Your mission is not to add the most flowers. It is to design a season-long food and shelter system suited to local species.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Native plants, bloom timing, nesting habitat, water, and reduced pesticide exposure all matter. What helps one region may not suit another.

Your mission

With an adult, research three locally native flowering plants that bloom at different times. Draw a plan before buying or planting; check local guidance.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

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NOTICE • ADAPT • SHARE • CARE

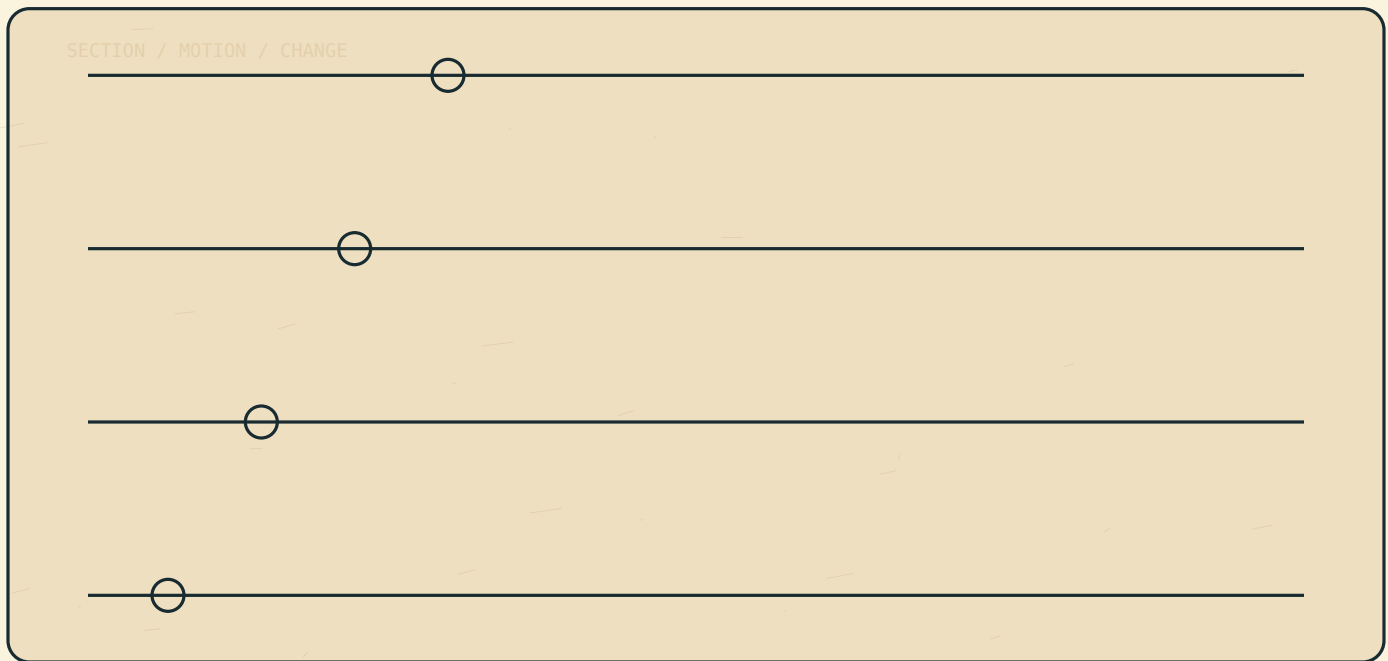
SOURCE TRAIL

USDA Forest Service pollinator resources; Xerces Society regional guides.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Climb a Paper Mountain

Topographic maps



THE SCENE

A topographic map turns a mountain into nested lines. Each contour connects points of equal elevation; close lines usually mean steeper ground.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Contours help travelers anticipate ridges, valleys, passes, and slopes. A map supports judgment but does not replace current conditions, permits, or local expertise.

Your mission

With adult help for cutting, stack cardboard contour layers from a printed hill map. View from above and side. Trace the gentlest route.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

- NOTICE** What happened before you explain why?
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SOURCE TRAIL

U.S. Geological Survey topographic map education.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Sail with Zheng He's Fleet

Logistics across the Indian Ocean

What changed?

look twice

THE SCENE

In the early fifteenth century, Ming voyages led by Zheng He connected ports across Southeast Asia, South Asia, Arabia, and East Africa.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

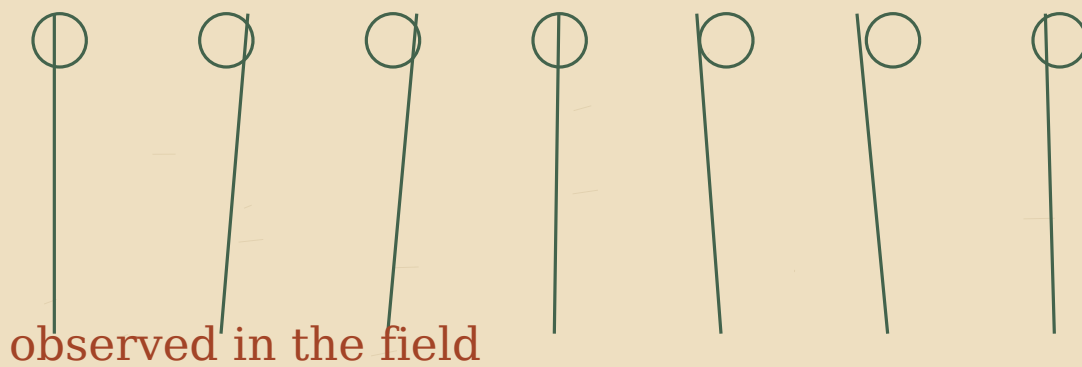
Large fleets required shipbuilding, water, food, repair, navigation, diplomacy, translation, trade, and political purpose. Surviving records invite both admiration and debate about scale and intent.

Your mission

Design a fleet roles board: navigator, carpenter, interpreter, doctor, cook, diplomat, and quartermaster. Give each a crisis to solve.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

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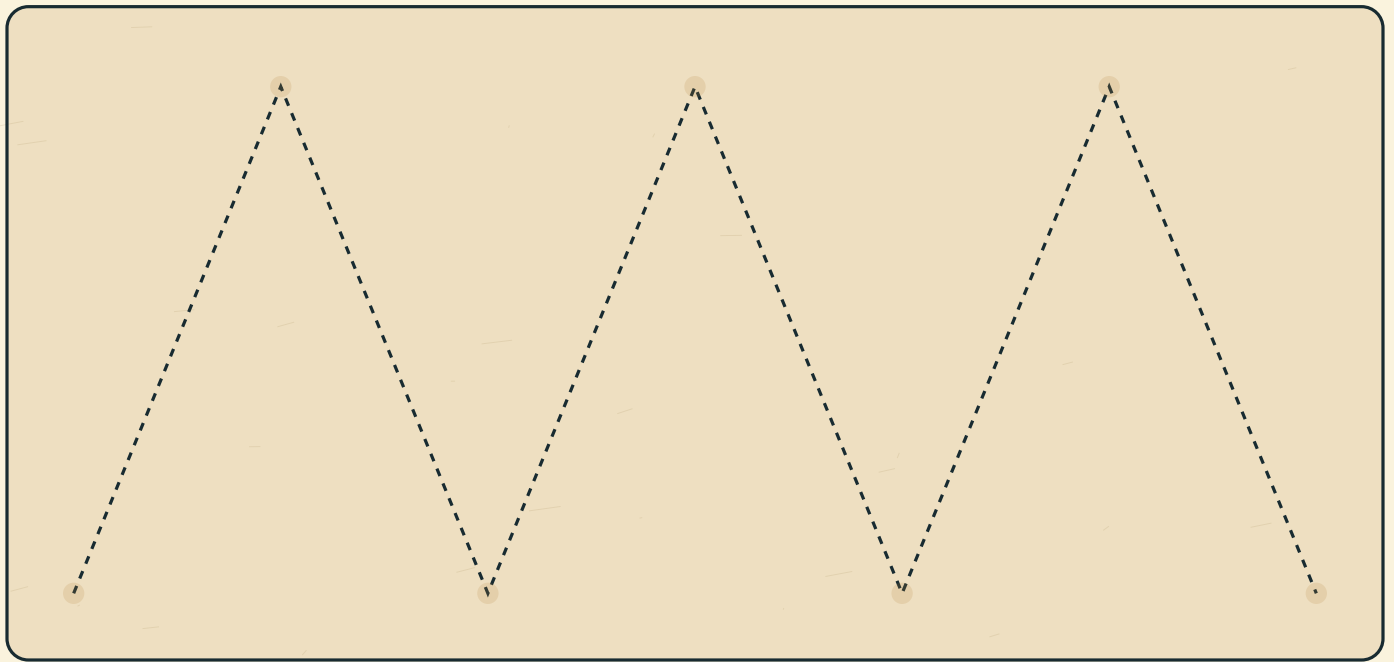
SOURCE TRAIL

National Palace Museum; Metropolitan Museum Heilbrunn Timeline; UNESCO Silk Roads.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Find Life in One Square Meter

Microhabitat survey



THE SCENE

Place a string square on a safe patch of ground. What first looked empty becomes a crowded landscape of stems, seeds, insects, soil grains, shade, and decay.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Small-area surveys help ecologists compare abundance and diversity. Looking closely should leave the habitat as you found it.

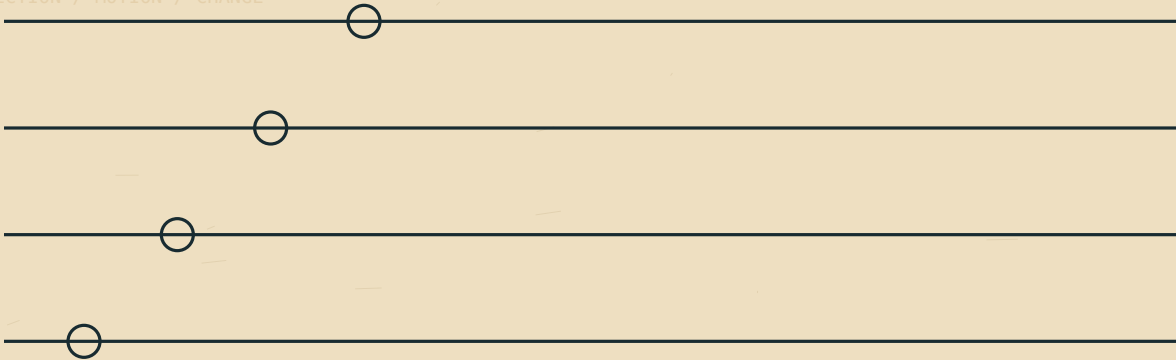
Your mission

With an adult's permission, mark one square meter without trapping anything. Count categories rather than collecting. Repeat elsewhere, then remove the string.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

- NOTICE** What happened before you explain why?
- ADAPT** Change one choice; try again.
- SHARE** Can someone else follow your account?
- CARE** Leave people and place better.

SECTION / MOTION / CHANGE



SOURCE TRAIL

National Geographic BioBlitz education; National Park Service citizen science.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Make a Weather Station

Atmosphere watch



THE SCENE

Weather changes above you and around you. A useful observer records the same kinds of information at consistent times.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Temperature, air pressure, humidity, wind, clouds, and precipitation interact. Homemade tools reveal patterns but never replace official warnings.

Your mission

Keep a seven-day log from a safe location. Add clouds, wind direction, temperature, and one prediction; compare with the National Weather Service forecast.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

- NOTICE What happened before you explain why?
- ADAPT Change one choice; try again.
- SHARE Can someone else follow your account?
- CARE Leave people and place better.

What changed?

look twice

SOURCE TRAIL

NOAA JetStream; National Weather Service safety and education.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Carry Light Through a Cave

Geology and stewardship



THE SCENE

A cave is not an empty tunnel. It is a slow-built environment where water, rock, air, microbes, and animals interact.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

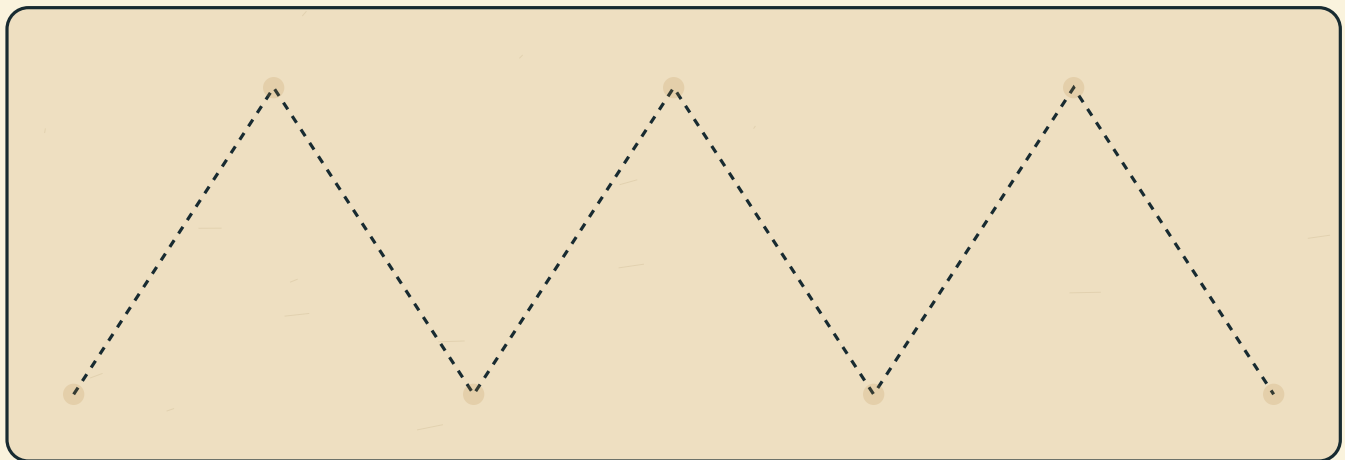
Caves can flood, disorient, chill, and contain fragile formations or pathogens. Explore only on an authorized guided trip with proper equipment; never improvise entry.

Your mission

Build a shoebox cave model showing water entering, dissolving rock, dripping, and depositing mineral forms. Ask an adult to handle cutting tools.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

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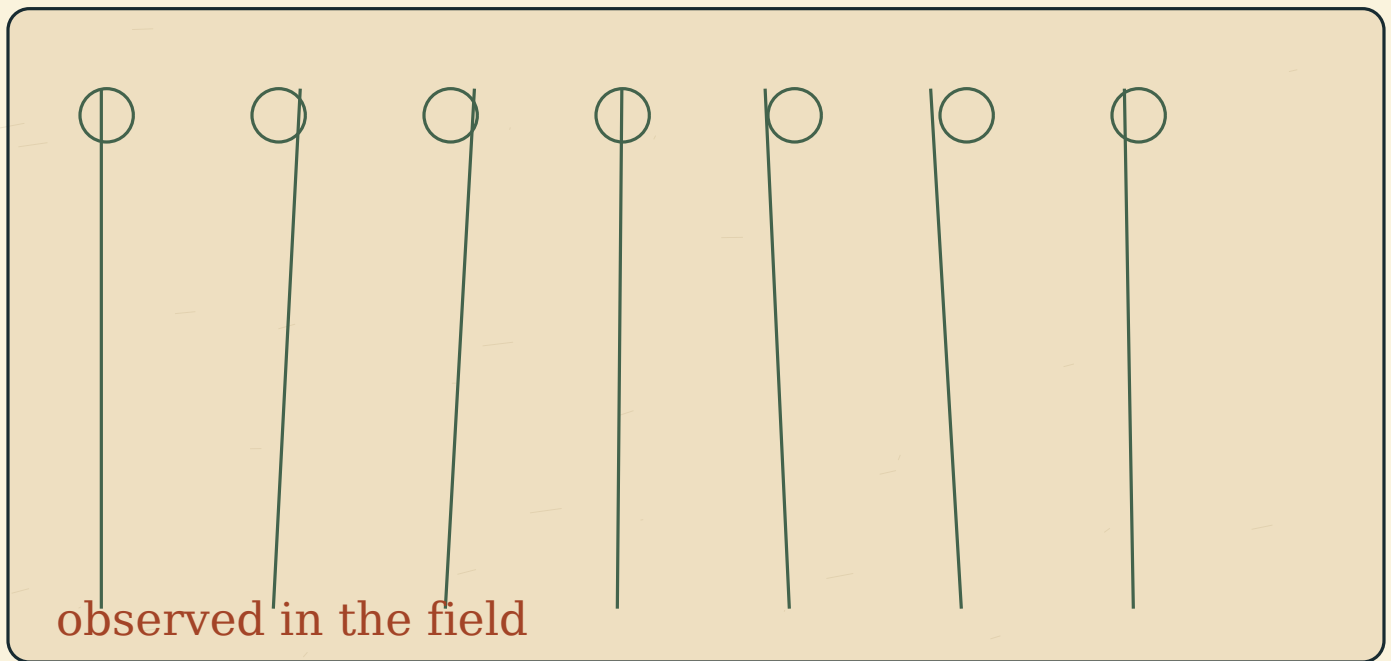
SOURCE TRAIL

National Park Service cave and karst resources; U.S. Geological Survey water science.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Launch a Balloon Around the World

Winds and global circulation



THE SCENE

A weather balloon climbs through changing layers while instruments send back temperature, pressure, humidity, and wind data.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Atmospheric motion occurs at many scales. Real balloon launches depend on regulations, forecasting, equipment, and recovery planning. This activity does not launch a physical balloon.

Your mission

Track a virtual air parcel on a world map using an official wind map. Record how direction changes with altitude.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

- NOTICE** What happened before you explain why?
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NOTICE • ADAPT • SHARE • CARE

SOURCE TRAIL

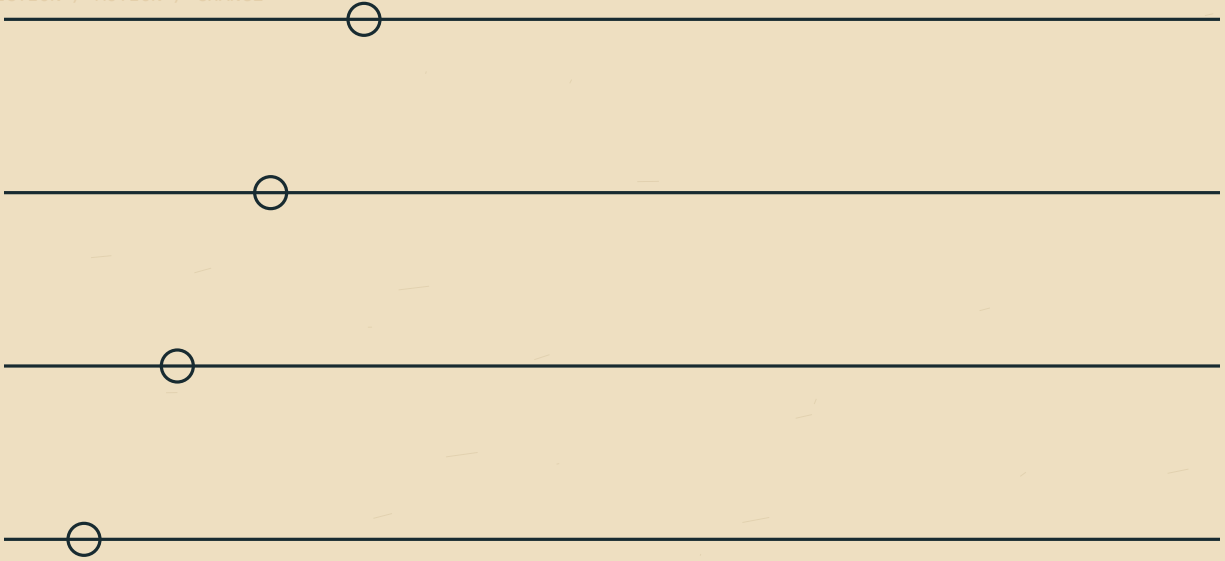
NOAA National Weather Service upper-air observations; NASA Scientific Balloon Program.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

Design the Kindest Expedition

Leadership under uncertainty

SECTION / MOTION / CHANGE



THE SCENE

Your team must reach a viewpoint, protect the place, and return together. The goal is not merely the summit; it is a wise journey.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Good leadership balances purpose, people, weather, time, skill, risk, and the freedom to turn around. The strongest plan includes the least-experienced member.

Your mission

Give each teammate an imagined need card. Plan pace, food, roles, check-ins, and turnaround time so every person is fully included.

THE EXPLORER'S COMPASS

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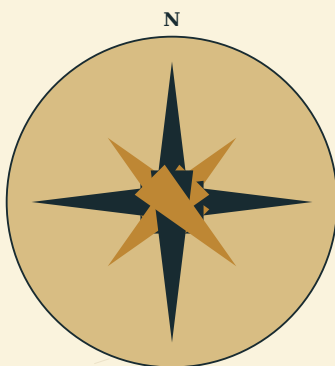
SOURCE TRAIL

Leave No Trace; National Park Service Trip Planning Guide; American Hiking Society safety resources.

Use current local guidance. Outdoor and tool-based work requires an informed adult.

The kindest way home

Every expedition changes its traveler. The best ones also return something: a clearer map, a safer practice, a generous story, a repaired place, a deeper respect.



One detail I learned to notice...

One belief I changed after evidence...

One person whose knowledge helped me...

One place or living thing I can care for...

My next wise adventure...

Explorer's glossary

ARCHAEOLOGY	the study of people through material remains and their contexts
CONTOUR LINE	a map line joining points of equal elevation
EDDY	water circulating behind or beside an obstruction
EVIDENCE	information that helps support, weaken, or revise an explanation
HABITAT	the place and conditions in which an organism lives
HOLDFAST	the anchoring structure that attaches kelp to rock
HYPOTHESIS	a testable possible explanation
INFERENCE	a conclusion drawn from observations and other evidence
LEGEND	the key that explains symbols on a map
MICROHABITAT	a small, distinct living environment
NATIVE PLANT	a plant that developed in a region without recent human introduction
POLARIS	the star currently near the north celestial pole
POLLINATOR	an animal that transfers pollen and helps many plants reproduce
QUIPU	an Andean cord-and-knot information system
SCALE	the relationship between a map distance and real distance
TOPOGRAPHY	the shape and elevation of land
WATERSHED	land that drains water toward a shared outlet
WAYFINDING	navigation through observation, knowledge, memory, and cues

Trail index

adult guidance	all activities
air and weather	18, 20
animals and habitat	6, 10, 14, 17
care and service	3, 6, 14, 17, 19, 21
cultural knowledge	4, 5, 8, 16
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teamwork and leadership	4, 9, 16, 21

Institutional source trails

These paths identify institutions used to frame and recheck the educational material. They do not imply endorsement. Web content and local guidance change; consult the institution's current site and publications.

01 Follow the North Star

National Park Service night-sky resources; NOAA navigation education.

02 Read a River

U.S. Geological Survey Water Science School; National Park Service river safety.

03 Build a Tiny Shelter

FEMA youth preparedness; Leave No Trace principles.

04 Carry a Message Like an Inca Chasqui

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian; UNESCO Qhapaq Nan.

05 Navigate Like a Polynesian Wayfinder

Polynesian Voyaging Society; Bishop Museum; NOAA Ocean Service.

06 Decode an Animal Trail

National Park Service wildlife viewing ethics; state wildlife agency tracking guides.

07 Map a Neighborhood Treasure Route

U.S. Geological Survey map education; Library of Congress geography resources.

Institutional source trails (continued)

- 08 Cross a Desert with Ibn Battuta**
Library of Congress Ibn Battuta resources; Metropolitan Museum Heilbrunn Timeline.
- 09 Send a Rover to Mars**
NASA Mars Exploration Program; Jet Propulsion Laboratory education.
- 10 Dive into a Kelp Forest**
NOAA Ocean Service; Monterey Bay Aquarium; National Park Service kelp forests.
- 11 Listen for a Hidden City**
National Park Service Natural Sounds and Night Skies; Exploratorium sound education.
- 12 Open a Time Capsule from 3026**
Smithsonian archaeology education; National Park Service archeology program.
- 13 Race the Sun with Solar Power**
U.S. Department of Energy solar basics; National Renewable Energy Laboratory education.
- 14 Rescue a Pollinator Garden**
USDA Forest Service pollinator resources; Xerces Society regional guides.

Institutional source trails (continued)

- 15 **Climb a Paper Mountain**
U.S. Geological Survey topographic map education.
- 16 **Sail with Zheng He's Fleet**
National Palace Museum; Metropolitan Museum Heilbrunn Timeline; UNESCO Silk Roads.
- 17 **Find Life in One Square Meter**
National Geographic BioBlitz education; National Park Service citizen science.
- 18 **Make a Weather Station**
NOAA JetStream; National Weather Service safety and education.
- 19 **Carry Light Through a Cave**
National Park Service cave and karst resources; U.S. Geological Survey water science.
- 20 **Launch a Balloon Around the World**
NOAA National Weather Service upper-air observations; NASA Scientific Balloon Program.
- 21 **Design the Kindest Expedition**
Leave No Trace; National Park Service Trip Planning Guide; American Hiking Society safety resources.



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