



Wonder Walk

Best for
ages 4+

Supplies:

- ★ Anything you like to use to take notes

Activity:

- ★ Go outside + pay attention to the things around you.
- ★ Make a list of questions ('wonders') you think of that relate to the things you notice. It helps to start with the phrase "I wonder..."
- ★ Use as many senses as you (safely) can- look, listen, smell, + feel.
- ★ Note- it may help to make a list of observations (things you notice) first, then write any questions that come to mind, based on those observations.
- ★ Consider including 'wonders' you can measure, using words/phrases like "when", "how much", "how many", "how often", "more than", or "difference between".

Variations:

- ★ Choose a single spot to explore or object (like a specific tree) to focus on + see how many 'wonders' you can find for that one area or object.
- ★ Try to find the same number of 'wonders' as half your age.
- ★ Try to find as many 'wonders' as you can within a specific time limit.
- ★ Choose a theme and try to relate your 'wonders' to that topic.
(For example, if you're curious about birds or water and notice the wind, you could write "I wonder how birds stay warm when it's windy" or "I wonder how fast the wind would have to blow to make waves in this puddle.")

Extensions:

- ★ Look through your list of 'wonders' for questions you can answer, by looking up information in books or reliable internet sites, talking to experts, or through your own observations and experiments.
- ★ Create (draw, paint, write, build) something inspired by your 'wonders'.
- ★ Return to the same spot and compare your 'wonders' over time.



Tracks + Trails

Best for
ages 5+

Supplies:

- ★ Strong observational skills
- ★ Optional: ruler, animal tracks guide, camera

Activity:

- ★ Go outside and look for tracks and other signs (feathers, fur, nests, homes, partially eaten food, scat, etc.) left behind by animals.
- ★ If available, try to follow the trail left behind by this animal- are there any similar tracks or other signs nearby?
- ★ Try to figure out what the animal(s) may have been doing when they left the tracks or other signs you noticed.
For example:
 - ☆ Can you tell which direction the animal was going or how it was moving?
 - ☆ Do tracks start/stop by a tree or hole the animal may have climbed onto/into?
 - ☆ Are there any nearby holes where an animal could hide or cache food?
 - ☆ Are there signs from other animals that this animal may have interacted with?

Extensions:

- ★ Using a tracks identification guide +/or citizen science app like iNaturalist, try to figure out who made the animal tracks + signs you noticed.
Note- taking a picture of the track/sign with a ruler beside it + from multiple viewpoints can be really helpful for identification.
- ★ Create something (writing, painting, sculpture, etc.) that helps tell the story of how all the signs you saw could have been made.
- ★ Think about the adaptations animals had on their bodies to help them leave the signs you saw. Imagine what it would be like if you had some of these same adaptations + how your life might be different.
- ★ If it's a place where you have permission to do so, spread out some bird seed, cracked corn, +/or peanut butter and check back again later to look for new animal signs in the area.



Animal Observation

Best for
ages 6+

Supplies:

- ★ Anything you like to use to take notes
- ★ Any animal you can watch for 1+ minutes

Activity:

- ★ Watch an animal for at least 1 minute (ideally 5+ minutes).
- ★ Record anything you notice the animal doing (behaviors).
- ★ Try to be just an observer- don't do anything that might change the animal's behavior.

Variations:

- ★ If you don't think you can find an animal to observe for more than 1 minute, try watching videos of animals + recording what you see.
- ★ Remember- humans are animals, too! In a safe + respectful manner, you could try observing a person (ideally one you know).

Extensions:

- ★ Compare how the animal does things differently or the same as you. Why do you think the animal does each behavior differently/the same?
- ★ Set out some enrichment (something new + safe) for the animal- this could include something that looks, smells, sounds, feels, +/or tastes different than what the animal usually has in his/her environment. Compare their behavior before and after the enrichment is given.
- ★ Make multiple observations and compare different individuals, species, weather, times of day or year, etc. Based on what you noticed, how do you think these differences affected the behaviors you observed?
- ★ (Advanced) Make an ethogram (list of behavior types). Sort the behaviors you observe into those groups and keep track of how often (time +/or frequency) the animal does each behavior type. Why do you think the animal does some behaviors more often than others?
(Example groups: resting, active, moving, feeding, social, other.)



Color Challenge

Best for
ages 3+

Supplies:

- ★ Anything with multiple easy-to-see colors. Suggestions: paint samples, crayons, markers, construction paper, yarn, or fabric scraps.

Activity:

- ★ Choose one color from your supplies and try to find something in nature (not human-made) that matches that color.
- ★ Once you find a match, try another color- see if you can find things in nature that match each of the colors in your supplies!
- ★ Recommendation- younger kids should find general colors (like anything 'red') + older kids/adults should find exact colors (like 'robin's egg blue').

Variations:

- ★ Bring a favorite stuffed animal, toy, picture, piece of clothing, +/or your pet. See if you can find all the colors of that object/animal in nature.
- ★ Choose a specific area or natural object (like a tree) and see how many colors you can find when you really look closely.
- ★ Find as many natural things as you can with just one specific color.
- ★ Find things in nature with the same colors as you! Try to match your skin tones, hair color, eye color, etc. with the things around you.

Extensions:

- ★ Compare natural objects in different areas, like forests, fields, city parks, etc. Which places have the most + least color? Why do you think some places are more or less colorful?
- ★ Compare different times of year- see if you can find the same colors during all four seasons.
- ★ Keep track of the colors you see most often. Why do you think there are so many things with those colors in nature?
- ★ Do some research to figure out how nature makes your favorite colors.