

Window to another world

Look out for natural doors and windows in the woods and imagine where they lead.

Are there secret entrances to elf and fairy homes in the trees? What do you think is really hiding down the rabbit hole? Do they lead to another world that looks like ours, but is secretly different?



Perhaps you will find a time gate between two trees. When you pass through it you will travel to the same woodland in a different time, maybe hundreds of years ago or a thousand years into the future!

More FREE activity booklets and outdoor ideas at:
naturedetectives.org.uk



This booklet was made by staff at the Woodland Trust and Westonbirt Arboretum

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Imagine



Woodland adventure booklet



Mud pie café

Don't let a muddy day go to waste, open a mud pie café!

Look for a muddy mole hill or a squelchy, sticky, muddy puddle.

Shape the mud into a lump with your hands. Yes you will get dirty – this is the best bit! You can wash your hands afterwards :D)

Mix different natural items into or on top of your **mud pie** to make different “flavours” – pine cone pies, feather pies, autumn leaf pies, twig pies...

You can also make **mud sandwiches**. Spread mud between two leaves and add different flavoured “fillings”.

Mud pizzas are fun too. Arrange different toppings onto a mud base on a big leaf “plate”.

To make a café, choose an area to display your pies and another area where “customers” can sit to be served.

Tell them what's on the menu today and then play waiter to present them with their order of pie. Big fallen leaves make good plates, and sticks make good cutlery.

Remember these pies are made of mud so don't let anyone actually eat them, no matter how delicious they look!



Interview a tree

Did you know some stories tell of trees that can think, talk and even walk about? Imagine everything a big, old tree has seen in its long life!

Interview a tree to find out what stories it has to tell. Get a friend to stand behind the tree whilst you stand in front to ask the questions.

The person hiding has to use their imagination to come up with the tree's answers. Here are some questions to get you started:

- How old are you?
- Who are your friends?
- What big events have you seen in history?
- Do you have children? Where are they?
- What's your favourite season?
- When are you most colourful?



Set up a play camp

Imagine you are going camping in the woods.

Set up a campsite and pretend you're going to be staying for a while. What will you need for your stay?

- Build a den so you can shelter from wind or rain.
- Make a comfy bed with dead grass, fallen leaves or moss.
- Set up a pretend cooking area. Find logs to sit on and for a table.
- Make something that will hold rainwater so you can have a wash.
- Make an entrance for your camp using tall sticks stuck into the ground. Can you make a sign using mud to write on a piece of bark?
- Decorate your camp and make it welcoming.



Cone shop

Have you ever played shop in the woods? There are lots of natural items you could use to stock a woodland store – leaves, feathers, sticks, cones...

Search the woods for cones. **Top tip** – look out for trees with needle shaped leaves, you'll find cones on the ground underneath them.

Choose a location to open your shop. A fallen log makes a good shop counter and tree stumps make good shelves to show off your goods. Before you open your shop, you need to sort your stock.

Follow our cone sorter guide to discover which varieties you have and sort the cones according to different types.

Arrange them in piles and decide how much you are going to charge. Your customers can use leaves as money. Now you're ready for your first sale!



Tree horses

Find a tree with a strong, sturdy branch or a log on the ground big enough to sit on as a horse.

Choose one end to be the head and the other the tail.

Use dead grasses or long fallen leaves to create a mane and tail, stick them onto your horse with mud. Find seeds or leaves for eyes and ears and stick these on with mud too.



Find a huge leaf to use as a saddle you can sit on. Now see if you can find any natural items that make a "clip clop" noise like horse hooves when you bash them together.



Yeehaw!

Fancy being a cowboy in the Wild West?

Set up a target practice by balancing some cones in a line on a low branch or log. Now practice shooting them with a water pistol!

Tree house for toys

Have you ever taken your toys to the woods to play with?

It's brilliant fun!

Build a tree house for your toys to play in whilst you're in the woods.



- Choose a sturdy tree with branches low enough for you to reach
- If your teddies and dolls were living in the tree house, where would they sleep? Piles of dead leaves and moss in the forks of branches make comfy tree house beds.
- What can you find to decorate their home?
- How will they climb in and out of the tree house? Do they need a ladder or a rope to help them?
- Do they want a garden? Create one for them with fallen flowers and poke small sticks into the ground to make a fence.



Remember to take all of your toys with you when you go home!

Woodland story walk

The woods are full of inspiration for storytellers. Take a notebook and pencil on your next walk and collect ideas for a story set in the woods. Collect fallen flowers, leaves and other items to remind you what you've seen, or snap some photos to jog your memory later.

- **Create a character**
A human, an animal or a fantastical creature? What's their name? What do they look like? Doodle them.
- **Why is your character in the woods?**
Are they looking for someone? Hiding? Playing? Working? Living?
- **Move through the forest as if you are that character**
See the world through their eyes – what do they see? What do they feel? Who do they meet along the way?
- **While you are walking, something exciting happens!**
What is it?

If you get stuck for ideas, start a sentence for someone else to finish:

- My character was walking through the woods and they suddenly saw... or heard... or felt...
- My character tripped over a...
- Inside the tree trunk / under a log / up in the branches there was a...
- At a fork in the path, my character decided to go...

When you get home, use your notes, doodles, photos and natural items to write a fantastic story full of unexpected twists and turns.

Email it to naturedetectives@woodlandtrust.org.uk to get your story published on the website for other children to read!

Nature reporters

Pretend you're a nature reporter on TV. Investigate an area of woodland and find some interesting things to talk about "on air".

Make a square frame using twigs and hang it from a tree branch. Stand behind it, this will be your TV screen.

Use a thick stick as a microphone and start reporting. You could discuss something you've seen yourself, or describe the action of minibeasts, birds and trees live as it happens.

Interview a friend to find out what they know to tell the viewers back home. Do they know any weird and wacky wildlife facts?

Tell people about all the fun things they can do, play and spot in the woods.

Do you know any nature-based weather sayings? Use them to try and predict the weather, then do a weather report.



Tiny tea parties

Make a tea party for elves and fairies living in the woods. Look around for fallen natural materials that you could use to make:

- A miniature table and small seating
- Tiny plates and teeny cutlery
- A little tablecloth
- Petite drinking goblets
- Delicious food that fairies and elves might like to eat
- Dew for them to drink
- Long platters so they can share their meals
- Decorations for the party – ivy makes brilliant bunting!

Woodland elves and fairies are very secretive so they probably won't show up until you go home. Next time you come back to the woods look to see if they've enjoyed the party (and tidied up after themselves!).



Perform a play in the woods

Can you think of any stories that are set in the woods?

'The Gruffalo', 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' are just a few, but there are many, many more.

Act out a story with friends or write your own woodland play.

- Prepare your "stage" – what natural features can you find to be the scenery you want?
- Choose where your audience will sit to watch you perform. Is there a fallen log, or a patch of soft grass where they will be comfortable?
- Look around for natural props you can use. What about sound effects and music? Can you create sounds using woodland items?
- Make masks for each character, using different leaves
- Take a bow at the end and enjoy your applause.
- If they liked the show, your audience can throw fallen flower petals onto the stage to show how much they enjoyed it.

