The Kid Editor's Field Guide to Exploring Where You Live
A NOTE TO PARENTS

If you’re reading this note, you have likely felt an intense amount of pressure over the last few weeks. You are hunkered down at home, cooped-up and feeling the topsy-turvy impact of COVID-19, in your kids’ lives and your own.

Hear this: Every single word of this field guide for kids is meant to bring joy and wonder into the chaos of the moment. It offers your child a new chance to be curious and creative, to get outside and off Tik Tok. And it offers you the chance to catch your breath. To watch your child’s curiosity ignite. And to connect with them in a real way.

It is not meant to be one more “Mom, can you help!” school project. It does not need to be perfect or Instagram-able. It’s designed to be fun for everyone. To bring new adventures into your kiddo’s day and to invite them to see with new eyes the world that’s within walking distance—your yard, your city block, your neighborhood.

You’re doing great. We hope this helps.

Be well,

Taylor Bruce
Founder and Editor in Chief, WILDSAM

FAQS

WHAT’S MY ROLE AS A PARENT?
This is meant to be 100% led by “kid editors.” If anything, consider yourself a project assistant, i.e. you can hold stuff or (at most) take a few notes.

IS THERE AN AGE RANGE?
The best ages are 4th through 8th grade. Younger kids would likely need your full participation.

HOW MUCH TIME IS INVOLVED?
Each field assignment could be as short as 20 minutes, as long as an hour.

IS IT SAFE TO DO THIS DURING COVID-19?
Yes. We do our best to design the field assignments with all coronavirus precautions in mind. But we recommend adapting each to your specific situation.

WHAT MATERIALS ARE NEEDED?
Pen or pencil with eraser. A memo notebook (we suggest one from our friends at FIELD NOTES®). You’ll want to print the pages of this PDF, if possible.

Cover Illustrations by LAUREN TAMAKI
WHAT’S INSIDE

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These are the things I love most about where I live.

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I research what life was like the year my town began.

CREATE YOUR COVER ............................................................12
Compile all your findings and put the final touch on it.
Imagine this: you wake up tomorrow, roll out of bed, you look out your window – and everything outside is different. You’re in the middle of the Amazon. Or in the center of a bunch of skyscrapers. It’s a new world, fresh and surprising and full of things to explore. Wouldn’t that be incredible?

This Field Guide is like waking up in a totally new place. It’s about becoming an explorer. It’s about asking questions you’ve never asked before. It’s about poking around with a purpose to find out what’s special about where you live.

No matter where you live – we promise – there’s always a new world to discover out there.

Taylor Bruce, editor in chief

TOP 3 THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. Safety is extra important. Talk to your parents about how to be safe before exploring. And wash those hands!
2. New ideas are good ideas. If you want to change an assignment, go for it. This field guide is yours!
3. Have fun. Wear a funny explorer’s hat. Pick a theme song. When you’re feelin’ good, the world opens up even more.
This assignment is about how to use the power of seeing the world with x-ray vision. Go outside and find 1 thing from the natural world *(leaves, a rock, a handful of dirt, anything like that)*. Now, still outside, find 1 thing from the found object world *(a penny, soda can, old baseball)*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your natural world thing?</th>
<th>What is your found object thing?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

**#1 CREATE A VIEWING AREA**

Place each thing on a blank sheet of paper. Write down 2 details you notice about each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural world thing</th>
<th>Found object thing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**#2 OBSERVE FOR LONGER**

Take 30 seconds and stare quietly at each thing. If you really want to go for it, try 2 minutes.

**#3 WRITE DOWN NEW FINDINGS**

Now, jot down any new, specific and surprising details you may have seen this time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural world thing</th>
<th>Found object thing</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

**GO FURTHER**

For each thing, think about where it came from. How long has it been where you found it? What would have happened to it if you’d never picked it up?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural world thing</th>
<th>Found object thing</th>
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<td></td>
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**EDITOR’S TIP**

The longer you look at something, the more you will see. Try using the same long-looking technique outside. Watch a single tree in your yard or the intersection of two streets on your block.
This assignment is about drawing a map to your neighborhood or town. You’ll draw two different maps of the same area. **Map #1** is the real map. Start with where you live, then draw 5 things nearby. For **Map #2**, add 5 things from your imagination. Want a rollercoaster next-door? Anything goes! A practice sheet is on the next page.

**MAP-MAKING TIPS**

1) **It won’t be perfect.**
   It’s ok if distances and details aren’t exactly right.

2) **Draw roads first.**
   The street(s) will help you plan where other things could go.

3) **Make it silly.**
   The writer Jason Reynolds says, “Silliness is the imagination cloaked in jokes.” Be silly! A dog riding a skateboard looks awesome on a map.

**REAL MAP**

Real Things You Might Draw: houses, secret shortcuts, big trees, pools, playgrounds, pets, cars, schools, stores, restaurants, bus stops, parks, big buildings, creeks, signs, statues...

**IMAGINARY MAP**
This assignment is all about sharing what you love about where you live. You will choose “favorites”: Favorite Foods to Eat, Favorite Places for Fun, & Favorite Stuff to Do.

*Favorites can be businesses, public places, friends’ houses...anything goes!*

### Favorite Foods to Eat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>Kind of food (Ex: Pepperoni Pizza)</th>
<th>Why you love it (Ex: Mario’s sauce is super peppery, and he tells great jokes.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where you eat it (Ex: Mario’s Pizzeria)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#2</th>
<th>Kind of food</th>
<th>Why you love it</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#3</th>
<th>Kind of food</th>
<th>Why you love it</th>
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</table>

### Favorite Places for Fun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>Kind of place (Ex. Swimming pool)</th>
<th>Why you love it (Ex. It has a hot tub and a super springy diving board.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name of place (Ex. Emily’s pool)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#2</th>
<th>Kind of place</th>
<th>Why you love it</th>
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<th>Kind of place</th>
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</table>
**Favori**t Thing to Do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of activity (Ex. Skateboarding)</th>
<th>Why you love it (Ex. The new skatepark has more jumps than anywhere.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>Where you do it</em> (Ex. Ollie’s Skatepark)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>Kind of activity</em></td>
<td><em>Why you love it</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <em>Where you do it</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Go Further**

Pick one of your favorites and draw it in as much detail as you can from memory.
This assignment is about asking questions. If the world is like invisible ink, good questions reveal what's underneath. For this assignment, choose a neighbor to interview, either by email, by phone, or by taping the Answer Form to their door with a note.

1) Choose your neighbor.
Pick someone who lives on your street or in your building. We suggest they be older than your parents.

2) Ask five questions.
You'll see the questions printed below. If any new questions pop in your head, ask those, too.

3) Collect the answers.
If you are emailing or taping the Answer Form, the answers are right there. If interviewing on the phone, use speaker phone and jot down the answers. This might be a good time for an assistant to help!

QUESTION #1
What is your favorite thing about the neighborhood? How long have you lived here?

QUESTION #2
If there was a fire and you could only grab one object from your house, what would you take with you?

QUESTION #3
Where were you born? Where were your grandparents born?

QUESTION #4
Who is your hero and what did they teach you?

QUESTION #5
What is your favorite memory of having fun as a kid?

GO FURTHER
The best parts of an interview are often the surprises. From the answers your neighbor gave you, what new questions would you want to ask them next?

EDITOR’S TIP
Remember, your neighbor doesn’t normally get interviewed. So tell them about the “Field Guide to Where You Live” in your note, email or on the phone. And be sure to tell them Thank You at the end.
QUESTION #1
What is your favorite thing about the neighborhood? How long have you lived here?


QUESTION #2
If there was a fire and you could only grab one object from your house, what would you take with you?


QUESTION #3
Where were you born? Where were your grandparents born?


QUESTION #4
Who is your hero and what did they teach you?


QUESTION #5
What is your favorite memory of having fun as a kid?


This assignment is about the history of where you live. No yawns allowed! You see, history is really time travel in disguise. So that’s what we’re doing in this final assignment. You’re going to go back in time.

1) Search your town on Wikipedia. Then read up on the history part. What year did your town begin? Any interesting fact you learned about those early days?

2) Find a window and look out. Imagine that, out the window, it’s the year your town began. What do you think life is like out there? Answer the questions in the box.

3) Travel to the year 1980. Talk to someone who remembers that year. Mom or dad, a grandparent. Ask them all about how your town was different back then.

THE YEAR YOUR TOWN BEGAN

How did people get around? Where did they get their food? What jobs did they have?
What did they learn in school? What did kids do for fun? What else might be really different?

MY TOWN IN THE YEAR 1980

What did cars look like? What did my town look like? Who lived in my house or apartment?
What did kids do for fun? How was life different from today?

With all your answers, ask yourself: Could that be true for the year my town began? Try to find out the answers.
FEEL AT HOME WHEREVER YOU GO

At Wildsam, everything we do is about seeing wonder in the world around us. Our field guides are full of stories that take you deeper, expertise from trusted locals and writing that’s soulful. Whether at home or afar, Wildsam guides get families to the heart of a place.

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