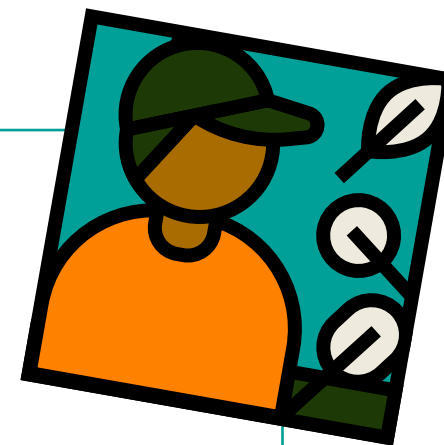


OUR GREEN SPACE STORIES



“...I look out across the landscape and I take in the view.
I can see the whole world from up here, from the
comfort of my home-town...”

SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN AGES 7-11

Part of poem from Teresa Burns for Green Space Dark Skies

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Printable Explorer Activity Sheets



Dunstable Downs, The Chilterns, Dorset AONB, Photo: Phil Young

INTRODUCTION

This resource is for teachers, parents, carers and group leaders. Activities are aimed at children aged 7-11, though they can be enjoyed by all ages.

The resource has 5 sections. The first 4 sections are designed for children to connect more fully with green spaces in their local area and beyond. The last section invites the group to create stories inspired by their explorations and activities outdoors. You can choose to complete all the sections in order or choose the activities that most appeal to your group.

Each section contains a prompt to consider as a group followed by activity suggestions.

Most activities take around 10 minutes to complete so could, for example, take place at the start or end of a lesson, or be completed consecutively to form a whole lesson. Each activity is intended to use the body and mind together, to experience green spaces through exploration, collaboration and play, and go on to create stories inspired by direct experience of being outdoors.

Where possible, leaders can let children become the guides and support their learning journey. For example, enabling children to plan journeys safely and make sure that they have everything they need (including an adult to assist them!)

This resource is part of Green Space Dark Skies, produced by Walk the Plank and commissioned by the UNBOXED festival. Thousands of people between April and September 2022 travelled into 20 beautiful green spaces at dusk to create collective artworks made with low impact lights. Find out more about the project and watch the films made at the events <https://greenspacedarkskies.uk>

When you have completed your stories, we would love to see them. Please take photos of artwork or stories you create. Share your stories with us on social media using [#GreenSpaceDarkSkies](#).



Maiden Castle, Dorset AONB, Activate,
Photo: Jayne Jackson

1. BEING IN GREEN SPACES

**Question: How do you feel
when you are in green spaces?**

These mindful activities create space to stop,
breathe and connect to your surroundings.

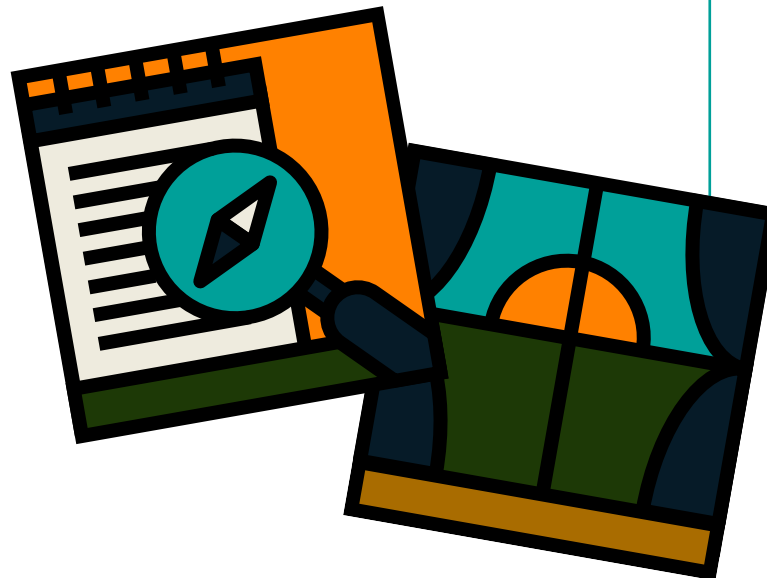
“We all want quiet. We all want beauty... We all need space.
Unless we have it, we cannot reach that sense of quiet in
which whispers of better things come to us gently.”

**Quote from Octavia Hill in 1883, Co-Founder of the
National Trust[AS1]**

BEING IN GREEN SPACES

This activity is about creating a gathering which you can return to in the rest of the steps.

- Gather outside together in a circle, spread out so you are in your own space.
 - Feel the ground beneath your shoes, face forward and look around at the other people in the circle. Imagine a group of trees with roots connecting underground.
 - Put your hands on your stomachs and breathe in through your nose and slowly breathe out, repeat x 4. Then repeat from the beginning.
 - Everyone breaks out of the circle, walks around independently and comes back together and re-plants themselves. Remember to keep the distance between each person and breathe slowly and deeply x 4.
 - Next, stretch your body, look up and see the sky and then look down to the ground. Make sure your feet are planted all the time.
- Once you have established a routine of gathering and breaking away, check to see how good the group is at responding to a simple cue, e.g. “Trees gather”.
 - This time 4 people are chosen by the group leader to move away from the circle, everyone else remains planted. The 4 go for a short journey outside of the circle and then come back to their place.



Share

Each person chooses a word or an action to share how they feel at that moment.

Explorer Sheet Connections

1. From here I can see... From here I can hear... From here I feel...
2. Describe or draw a new discovery from a regular journey that you have not noticed before.

2. OUTDOOR SENSATIONS

**Question: Can you spot the way
nature moves and dances?**

These exercises are about getting closer to the world through our senses and creatively exploring those experiences through our bodies and minds.

“The tree remains motionless until a breath of wind greets her and sings her leaves to flutter their stillness. I too sit and breathe until... a deeper breath sings me to dance...my fingers flutter and my limbs sway.”

Quote from Nina Wyte for The Earthbody Institute, 2017

OUTDOOR SENSATIONS

Go on a quest with your group

Start your journey from the big group circle, decide what your quest is, whether there is one group quest or several quests.

- Search for different patterns and textures made by natural objects. Collect leaves, sticks or stones and make a pattern together. Only use fallen objects and think about insects and animals that may be using natural objects as habitats.
- Go on a sound journey. You can use the sounds you hear on the way to help create a soundscape.
- Go on a smell journey. You can use descriptions of the smells you encounter to help tell other people what they might encounter.
- Go on a search for the wind. Explore the way that the wind moves things around you. Have a

go at moving your whole body like a leaf in the wind.

- Go on a rainy journey, get wet and muddy. Follow the water to find out where it goes when it falls.



Share

Put breaks into your journey to allow everyone to pause, find a green space on your own. Remember to plant yourselves like a tree, breathe and take in your surroundings through your senses. Share your experiences from your journey with your group.

Explorer Sheet Connections

1. Collect textures from natural objects by laying paper over them and using crayons to create a rubbing.
2. Create a pattern of your journey. What pattern does the wind make? What pattern do you make?
3. Use words you know, or invent new words to describe the sensations you have experienced on your Outdoor Sensations Quest.

3. BEING OUTSIDE TOGETHER

Question: Do you have a special outdoor place you like to visit? How do you feel when you spend time there?

These activities encourage shared endeavours as a way to connect with others outside.

“Go light the night and sing the same song! Follow the moon to where it began. Find the path that keeps you together”

Quote from Zakiya Mackenzie

BEING OUTSIDE TOGETHER

Follow the leader on a nature hunt

Get into groups of up to 7. Designate a leader who everyone follows without speaking. The leader takes the group on a short journey, everyone keeping at arm's length behind the leader.

The leader uses simple movements, e.g., walking, stopping, turning. Everyone follows them carefully. Next the leader chooses a destination, e.g., a tree, a spider's web, a rock, a bee, a squirrel.

The leader stops and points at what they have seen and then everyone in the group must transform themselves into that object.

Everyone takes a turn at being the leader.

Even when there are no other people you are never alone when you are outdoors.

In pairs or small groups, find as many faces in nature as you can. Can you find any faces in insects, birds or animals? What about in the trees, leaves or clouds?



Share

Create a short silent performance of the things the group has seen on their journeys. The rest of the group is the audience and have to guess what the group discovered.

Or, gather together and share some food or drink outside and describe what you saw, what you heard, or how you felt on your journey to someone else in the group.

Explorer Sheet Connections

1. One day I went outside and...
2. Draw the faces you have seen in trees, or animals you have spotted in the cloud shapes.

4. DAYTIME, NIGHT-TIME AND THE TIME IN BETWEEN

**Questions: How does the world
change when the lights go out?
Can you see constellations, the
moon or man made satellites?**

This activity is about exploring at different times of the day and creating a safe space to explore feelings that sometimes children feel very alone with. Like being afraid of the dark.

“Tonight, wherever you are, go outside and look at the sky. Can you see the wonders? Overhead are countless distant fires, stars upon stars in clusters and constellations, a natural darkness where the faintest colours and lights shine... Art and science and religion all flowed from our experience of natural darkness and a starry night sky. This is where we came from, this is who we are.”

Quote from Paul Bogard from End of Night

DAYTIME, NIGHT-TIME AND THE TIME IN BETWEEN

Activity 1: Explore darkness in the daytime

Take a journey through light and dark places. For example, travel through a tunnel, walk through the trees. What shapes do the shadows make?

Activity 2: Make a shadow puppet

Use found natural objects or recycling items to make puppets. Put up a sheet, get your friends or family to use a torch to light the sheet whilst you make the shadows. Tell a story with your puppet to entertain your friends.

Activity 3: Twilight

Take a journey between sunset and night-time. Start out in the daytime and return home in the dark. Take a torch. What can you hear and see? Explore words to describe the feelings of being together in the light and in the dark.

Activity 4: The Moon

An activity for a clear night. Observe the moon, what shape is it? Is it a full moon? What images can you see of the moon? Where does the moon's light come from? Why does the moon disappear and where does it go? Why does the moon affect the tides?



Share

Make a circle with torches and gather together. Make a show with the shadow puppets.

Explore words to describe the feelings of being together in the light and in the dark.

Find out what your group knows about the moon.

Explorer Sheet Connections

1. Draw the moon
2. Draw a shadowy picture
3. How do you feel at night?

CREATE A GREEN SPACE STORY

Ask the children to use the inspiration they have collected on the activity sheets to create a Green Space Story.

Here are some ideas to try:

Make a Green Space Dance

Use different experiences to inspire simple collective gatherings, use torches or lanterns, film your dance and watch it together.

Make a Green Space Piece of Music or a Soundscape

Use instruments or found objects to create a musical score focusing on a journey. Think about each stage of the journey, the environment, the weather, the people, insects and animals.

Write a Green Space Diary

Tell us about what happened when you visited a greenspace, what it felt like and who was with you, what habitats and animals you saw. You can record this on a phone or write it down in a special book.

Make A Green Space Photo Story

Use all your group's activities to make an exhibition.

Make a Green Space Picture

Draw or paint something small directly from nature. Look at the detail and try to capture that in your drawing or painting.

Draw a whole landscape or draw your group or family out on a journey.

Share

Your stories together as a group or with parents

We would love to see your green space stories. Share them using [#GreenspaceDarkSkies](https://greenspacedarkskies.uk/green-space-stories/).

Explore the films created for the Green Space Dark Skies project here: <https://greenspacedarkskies.uk/films/>

Explore more about Green Space Stories

Join our citizen research and record your own Green Space Story: <https://greenspacedarkskies.uk/green-space-stories/>

EXPLORER SHEETS

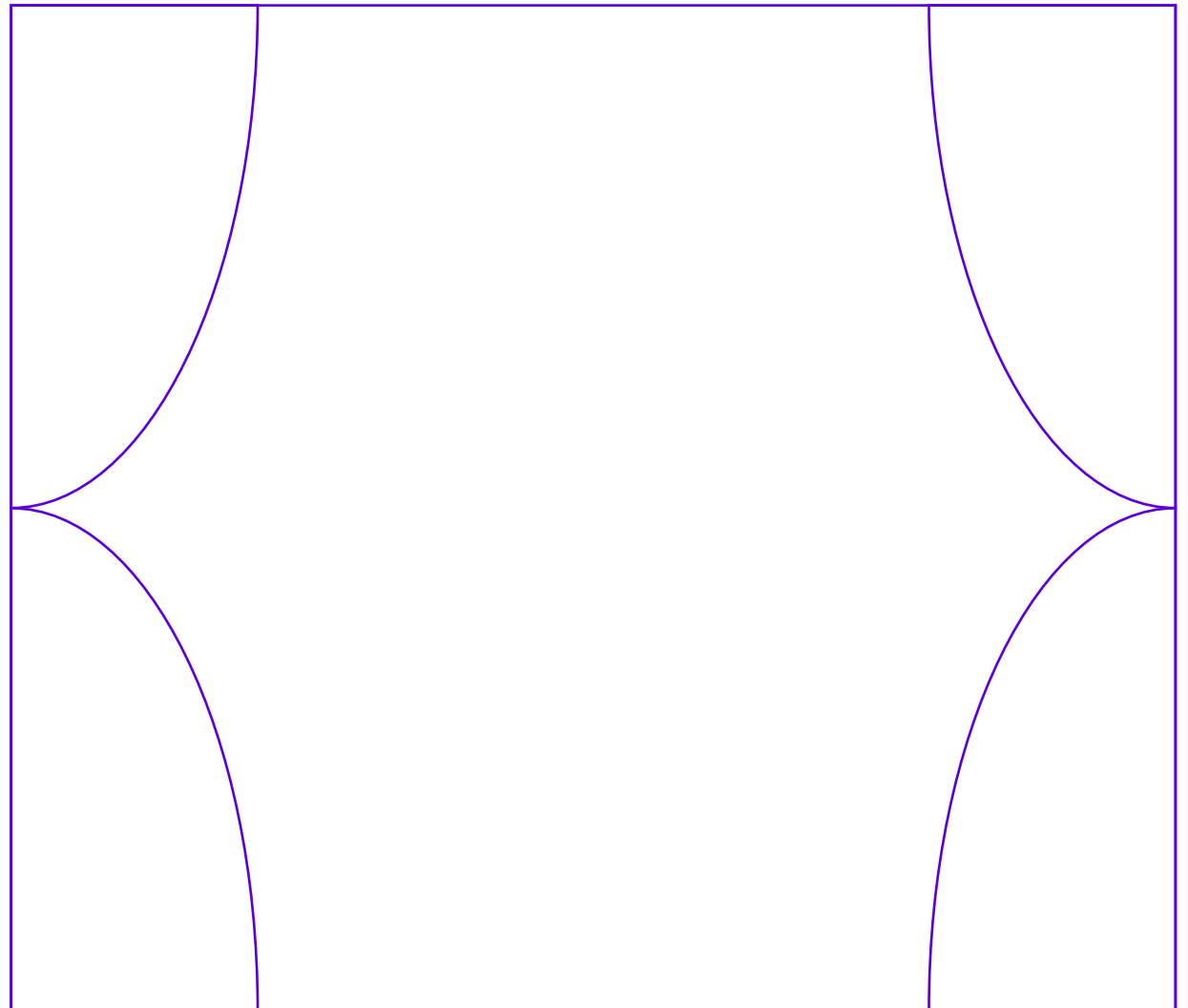
Explore green spaces and use these sheets to draw or write your ideas, thoughts and feelings.

1. BEING IN GREEN SPACES

1. From here I can see....

From here I can hear...

From here I feel....



1. BEING IN GREEN SPACES

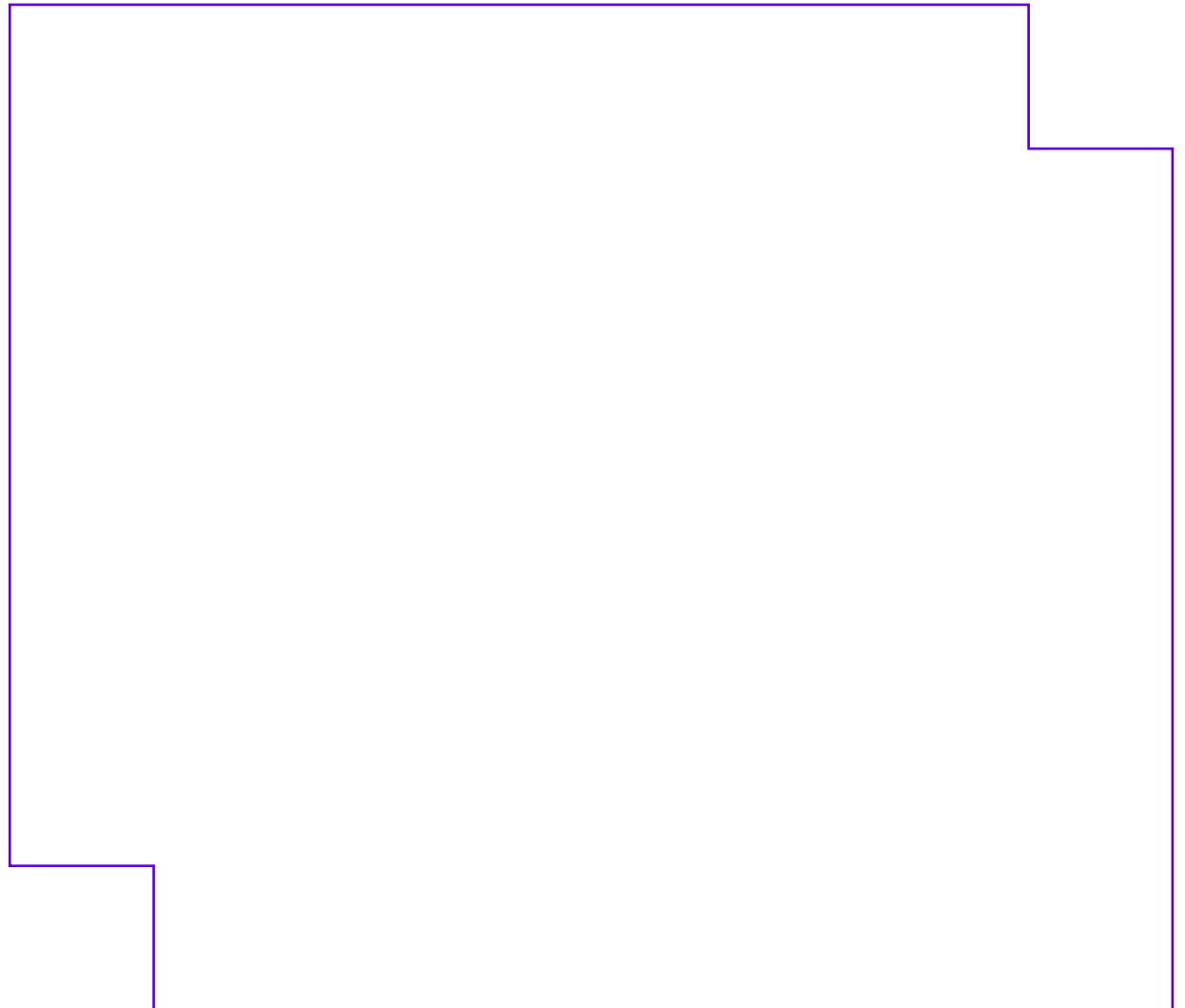
2. Look more closely at the world you think you know.
Record a new discovery from a familiar place.



A large, empty rectangular area with a purple border, designed for recording a new discovery. The shape has a notch in the top-left corner and a small protrusion in the bottom-right corner, mimicking the layout of a notebook page.

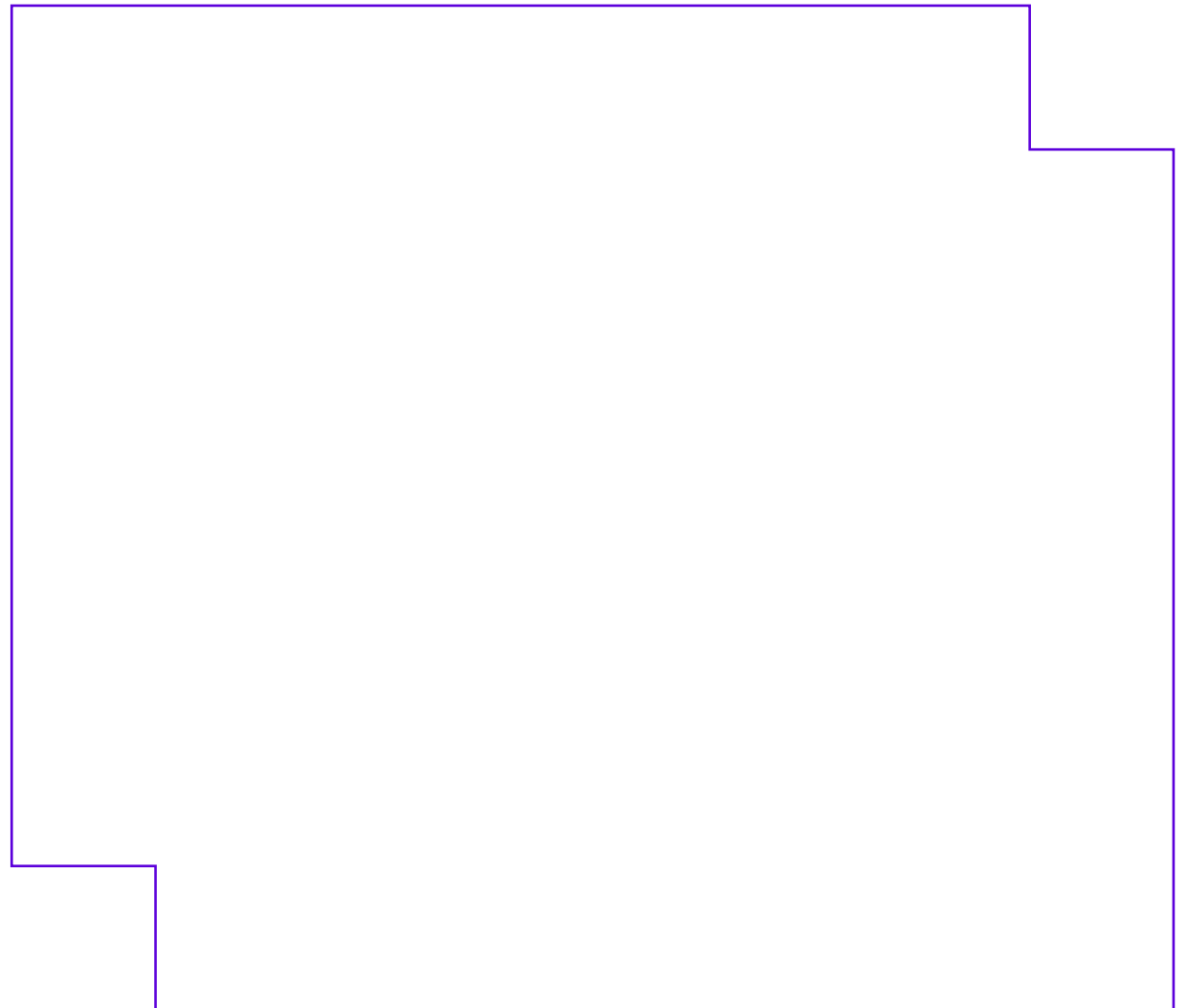
2. OUTDOOR SENSATIONS

1. Collect textures from natural objects by laying paper over them and using crayons to create a rubbing.



2. OUTDOOR SENSATIONS

2. Create a continuous pattern of your journey without taking your pencil from the paper.



2. OUTDOOR SENSATIONS

3. Use words you know, or invent new words to describe the sensations you have experienced on your Outdoor Sensation Quest.



A large, empty rectangular box with a purple border, designed for writing or drawing. The box has a tab-like shape on the top-left corner and a notch on the bottom-right corner.

3. BEING OUTSIDE TOGETHER

1. One day I went outside and...

3. BEING OUTSIDE TOGETHER

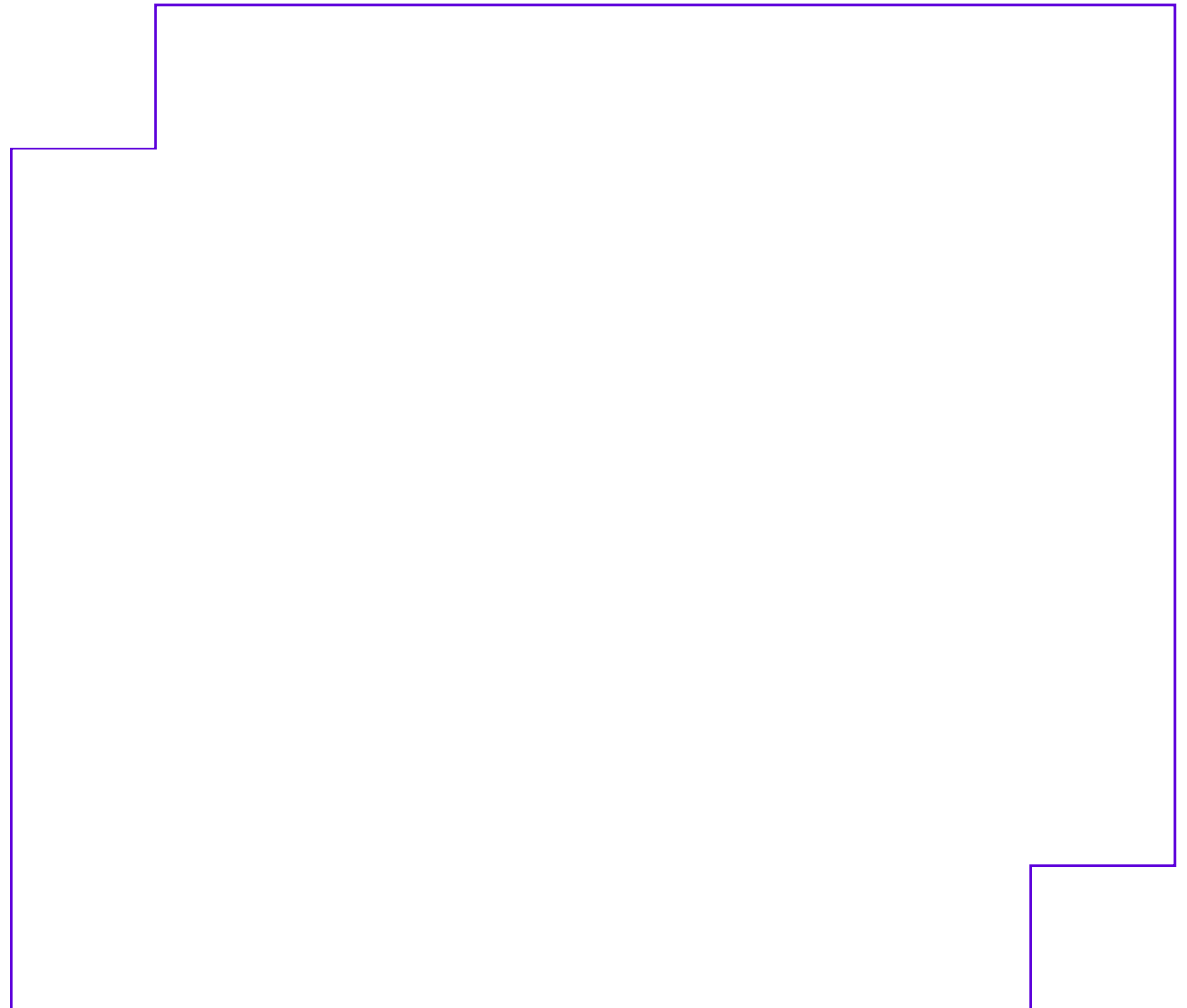
2. Draw the faces you have seen in trees, or animals you have spotted in the cloud shapes.



A large, empty rectangular area with a purple border, intended for drawing.

4. NIGHT TIME, DAY TIME AND TIME IN BETWEEN

1. Draw a shadowy picture.
Draw the moon.



4. NIGHT TIME, DAY TIME AND TIME IN BETWEEN

2. At night-time I feel...

NOW USE SOME OF YOUR IDEAS TO CREATE A GREEN SPACE STORY

Share your Green Space Story using [#GreenspaceDarkSkies](https://www.instagram.com/greenspacedarkskies)

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