

The O.M.G!

The Outdoor Meeting Guide



Your guide to
taking your
meetings outside

girl scouts
of maine



Take it outside!

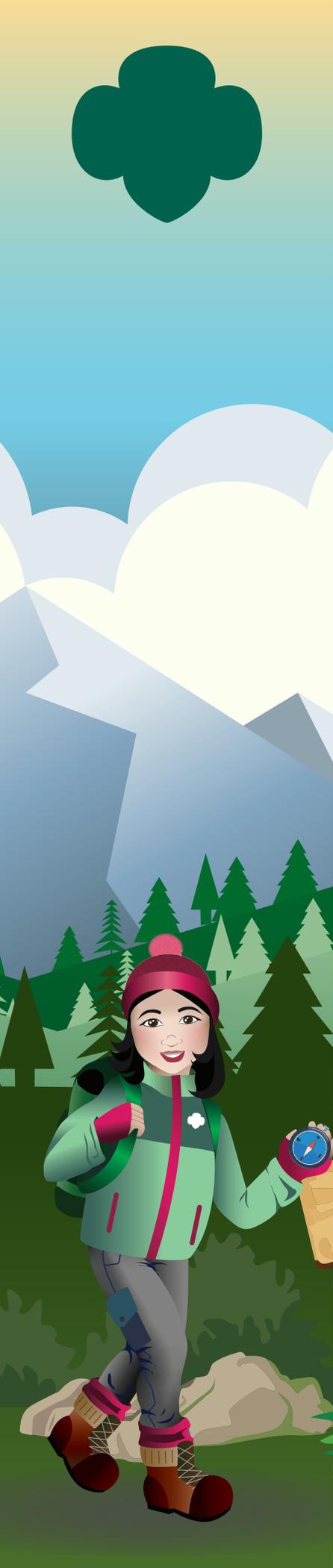
Looking to take your meetings safely outside but not ready to start an outdoor badge? Or maybe you have already done some of them? This guide will help you get outside with minimal planning and supplies.

Find an example of your typical Girl Scout meeting here. Adjust the time if or where needed. Pick from the attached activities.

Parts of a meeting	Estimated time	Details of time block
Start Up Activity	5-10 minutes	See examples outlined in this guide. Some prep work for outdoor meeting ideas can be used as part of the start-up activity as well.
Opening	5 Minutes	Flag ceremony, Promise & Law
Business	5 Minutes	Announcements, dues, kapers
Activity	20-45 Minutes	Pick one of the attached activities. The activities range from an estimate of 20-45 minutes, times can be adjusted based on your troop size, girls' experience levels, and the time allowed for other meeting activities (i.e. opening, business). For example, if you know your girls like to put a lot of detail in their designing, you may want to calculate that into what best fits your group for these activities.
Clean Up	5 Minutes	Everyone checks for litter and makes the space look better than we found it. Put things back where they were found.
Closing	5 Minutes	Socially distanced friendship circle

Things to keep in mind while meeting outside

Depending what time of year it is, many factors may affect your outdoor meetings. Like any Girl Scout - be prepared, follow Leave No Trace Principles, and keep caregivers informed too.





Check the weather and dress appropriately.

- If rain is expected, let girls know ahead of time to bring a rain jacket or poncho. Set up some tarps in the area to prevent the rain from hitting you, or try to find a local spot that has an outdoor pavilion or covering at a park.
- If it is cold, be sure to bundle up by dressing in layers.
- If it may be dark when your meeting takes place, encourage girls to bring headlamps or flashlights. Try to have some lanterns or extra batteries around too.
- If it is bright and/or buggy, encourage girls to bring sunscreen and bug spray if needed; bring extra if possible.

Simple Start-up Activity Options

- Have a Flash Scavenger Hunt (go find something that is green, something that is hard, something textured, something that fits in their hand, etc.). Be sure to put the items back where they were found.
- Have girls name/identify at least 3 things that can be found outside that are their favorite color.
- Have girls color what they see outdoors
- Have girls draw items they think a scientist would use outside. What does this scientist usually do?
- Have girls draw or share details about a favorite outdoor place.
- Have girls find a rock that fits in the palm of their hands. When the girls come back, have them share and notice the differences of the rocks and that none are exactly the same-just like us humans. Be sure to put the rocks back.
- Before the girls arrive: have the following words written on a big piece of paper: Compass rose, Scale, Key-or legend, Symbols. Allow them to work together and have someone write what they think the words mean or draw them. Reference the Map It Out activity in this guide for definitions.
 - Have girls draw a line down the middle of their paper. On one side, have them draw things they see at night, and, on the other side, things they may see during the day. This could be done with all 4 seasons too!
 - Have girls look up at the sky. Do they see any shapes in the clouds? If it is dark and not very cloudy, do they see shapes in the stars-like constellations?
 - Have the girls try to name something that may be outside that starts with the same letter as their first name. For example, Tina may say something like a tree. Sarah may say something like sand or a snail. If girls are having trouble, encourage them to help one another and get creative!
 - If you plan on doing the Pine Cone Pioneer activity given in this guide, save time by having girls collect Pine Cones as their start up activity.
 - Planning on giving Name Scrabble a try? Have the girls create their letter pages and decorate them as the start-up activity for that meeting.





Activity Options

Walk This Way

Best for: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

Estimated time: 30 min

Materials:

- Outdoors
- Imagination

Optional:

- iNaturalist app
- Observation sheets
- Pen/pencil



Activity:

Have the girls think of different animals, maybe their favorite animal. Have them act like different animals. You might pound on your chest like a gorilla, waddle like a penguin, flutter like a butterfly, or hop like a frog. Have your walking buddies guess the animal, then everyone tries moving like that animal. Take turns!

Then, have them think of animals that they may see in their backyard or on an adventure in our state. What do those animals do? What do they sound like? Have them act it out.

What season is it? Is it winter? What do we know about the animals in our state and in the winter? What do we think they look like in the winter or what do they do? Are they hibernating? Hunting for food? Act it out!

Look around the area you are at. See any animals? Hear any animals? Act it out.

If you have time, try exploring the area to see what can be found. Maybe you don't see any animals but talk about plants and other items in nature that may be food or a home to an animal. Look for signs an animal may have been there (tracks, etc).

This is another opportunity to talk about LNT, and ways that we can help support wildlife or what places in our communities help support wildlife.

Tools

Try using these animal observation sheets:

<https://www.kcedventures.com/images/pdf/animaljournal.pdf>

Another useful tool while outside: iNaturalist app. One of the world's most popular nature apps, iNaturalist helps you identify the plants and animals around you

Check out this presentation on wildlife in winter from Maine IF&W
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVY9etBa2wQ&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR0REj7nM4pIeARe_5c4S0kT75lZgnrMjUWZz4uWUPWHGErF5Tr-IqCfa7A





Pine Cone Pioneers

Best for: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

Estimated time: 20-45 min

Materials:

- Outdoors
- Warm Water
- Timer
- 3 Jars/cups
- Cold Water
- Paper
- 3 pine cones (all the same size)
- Ruler
- Pen/pencil

Activity:

Take a walk or hold a meeting at a location where pine cones can be found. Ask girls if they know where pine cones come from? If they say pine trees they are right. Start a search for pine cones, each girl should collect 3 pine cones. Encourage conversation and observations on the different pine cones.

Take pine cones back to location where an experiment can be done. Measure and draw the pine cones and make any other observations.

Take 3 cups/jars and put a pine cone in each.



Then fill one cup with warm water, another cup with cold water and one cup with just air and the pine cone. Label them.

The pine cones will start to change quickly! Set up a timer for every 5 min and record the observations on a piece of paper. Allow 20 min total to see the different changes.

Fun facts to share:

- The main function of a pine cone is to keep a pine tree's seeds safe.
- Pine cones can stay on a tree for more than 10 years before dropping to the ground.
- Pine cones close their scales to protect the seeds from cold temperatures, wind and even animals that might try to eat them.
- Pine cones open up and release their seeds when it is warm and it is easier for the seed to germinate.

Girls can either continue the experiment longer or use the pine cones for a craft!





Nature Bingo/Scavenger Hunt

Best for: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

Estimated time: 30-45 min

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing Utensil like a pen or pencil
- Items like a rock or favorite snack to mark off items found

If you don't want to make your own cards - use the ones linked below or you can also find some free downloads online

Looking to reuse the cards? Laminate them so they will last longer and you can use washable markers on them over and over again

Activity:

Looking for a low cost and fun game to play outside that can fit everyone's learning style? Try Nature Bingo or a Scavenger Hunt!

Bingo is a fun, easy game which almost everyone has played. It doesn't require many materials either. Take the classic game outside, and you have a new adventure! The attached Nature Bingo cards can be played as Bingo or used in a scavenger hunt.

Introduce the girls to Bingo - go over the rules of finding items on their individual cards and the first to have a full row diagonal, up/down or across wins!

While girls are finding certain items (such as a bird, bee, etc.), take the opportunity to share any fun facts you may have or open it up for stories about particular items. Things you could ask to get them to share stories: What is the biggest spider they have seen? Do they have a favorite flower?

If you or the girls have a field guide book, or the iNaturalist app, binoculars and/or magnifying glass, feel free to bring those items to add on to the adventure!

This activity can be done in any season and adjusted to fit your area or season.

Bingo cards can be found at the end of this toolkit or downloaded here for free: <https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/families-with-children/nature-play-days/nature-bingo>





Name Scrabble

Best for: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

Estimated time: 30 min

Materials:

- Space outdoors
- Piece of paper with each individual letter for every girls name (i.e Sarah would have 5 pieces of paper with S,A,R,A,H on each one)
- Or sidewalk chalk
- Savement to write

Activity:

Someone with a long name goes up to the space and prints or places the letters of her name in the space. Depending on what you use, this could be with chalk or the letters of her name on the individual pieces of paper. Another person goes up and uses one of the letters to insert her name (like Scrabble). This goes on until everyone in the group has their name on the board like a big scrabble game. If a name cannot fit, the group must work together to move names until they all fit.

Ensure to keep 6 ft distance with each turn.

If you have time at the end, talk to the girls about the experience. Did they find this hard? If yes, what was the hardest part? Did it get easier when they started working together? What techniques worked well? Do they think they could use those techniques outside of this game to work together?

Like this activity but want to switch it up? Challenge the girls to spell out words with the letters of their name or use the extra time to get creative with chalk if you are using chalk.

Backyard Ecosystem

Best for: Spring, Summer, Fall

Estimated time: 20-45 min

Materials:

- White/light colored sheet (or large piece of paper, old towel or shirt)

Activity:

Take a white or a light-colored sheet outside and lay it on the ground, under a tree. You can use towels or an old t-shirt, too. Shake the branches, lightly, to see what comes out. Are there seeds? Are there leaves? Is there pollen? Are there bugs? Why do you think there are more bugs in one place versus another? If you did this in the fall, what would fall onto the sheet? (This is a great chance to talk about seasons.)

Once you have a little pile of objects on the sheet, try to build a little fairy or gnome house out of them. Pick a tree to lean your house against, and use sticks, rocks, leaves, and moss to create a house. Don't forget to name your fairy or gnome!





Backyard Art

Best for: Spring, Summer, Fall

Estimated time: 30-45 min

Materials:

- Cardboard or recycled cereal boxes or newspaper
- Nature

Activity:

Make cardboard picture frames, then ask girls to collect items they'd like to put inside, creating pieces of art. Don't have cardboard? Cut up a cereal box or tape a few pieces of newspaper together to make a frame. Make sure to set guidelines that they should only pick up things that are on the ground, and shouldn't pick anything that's growing.

For another challenge, tell girls to only collect green items, then yellow, then red. Why are some colors easier to find? This is a great time to talk about seasons. If you were to do this in the winter, what colors would you be able to find? What about fall?

Have girls assemble their nature finds within the frames, as a nature scene, a collage, or a mosaic. Encourage them to let their imaginations guide their hands as they create!

Hear No Evil, See No Evil

Best for: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

Estimated time: 30-45 min

Materials:

- Outdoor space
- Optional item to retrieve

Activity:

There are three types of people in the game

Actors-cannot talk. Will be facing both the speaker (#2) and the retriever (#3)

Speaker-is allowed to see and speak. Will face group the actors (#1) but are not allowed to turn around and look at the retriever who will be in the field behind them.

Retriever-blindfolded and able to talk. Will be listening to the speaker (#2) who will be giving a set of commands

As the facilitator, give the actors a task (or a series of tasks) for the retriever to accomplish. You can make the tasks easier or harder depending on the group's age, ability, how long they've known each other, etc. Examples of tasks; picking up a ball, hopping on one leg, give a hug, do a cartwheel. The possibilities are endless. Now, here is where it gets complicated. Because the set of actors cannot talk they must motion the task to the speaker who will voice the commands to the retriever, remembering that the speaker cannot turn around and look at the retriever.

Ensure 6 ft distance is maintained.





Obstacle Course

Best for: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

Estimated time: 30 min

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing utensils
- Various items from around the house

Activity:

To get girls outside, help them flex their creative muscles, and have them get an all-over workout, an obstacle course is an inexpensive way you can use everyday items and also have fun!

This activity can be planned ahead of time by the leaders or include the girls! The paper and writing utensils are to help you get started with designing the obstacle course.

The obstacle course itself can be made with using items like hula hoops, pool noodles, rope, stumps, balls, and so much more-get creative and/or be resourceful!

Try these variations to make your obstacle course more challenging:

- Change directions and start from the finish line.
- Time girls (or yourself!) to see how long it takes to complete the course.
- Balance a marble or plastic egg on a spoon and weave your way back through the course.
- Try completing the course while carrying something like a stuffie.

Safety tips

- Make sure the space is free of sharp stones, and clear the course of any loose or broken material.
- Remember that water and snow can make your “playground” slippery and unsafe, so steer girls to other activities in inclement weather.
- Wear proper footwear. It’s best to wear closed-toe shoes with a non-skid sole.

Check out this video to get inspired: https://youtu.be/JQuT17nJ_s



Photo from 2016



Conduct a Bio Blitz

Best for: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

Estimated time: 30 min

Materials:

- Outdoor space
- Something to record data - (a camera, smart device to use iNaturalist-, or Paper)
- Writing utensil
- Field guide

Optional

- Tools like magnifying glasses

Activity:

Take a citizen science adventure to record the biodiversity of a particular area by doing a Bio Blitz! Bio-meaning biology, and blitz meaning a sudden, energetic, focused endeavor.

Girls can record as many species of plants, animals, fungi, or insects as they can find in an established area. Look in places like under rocks, logs, up in trees. If you are using the paper method to record data, try to mark/describe the location where the species was found. Draw pictures and reference the field books or talk to experts to help record the accurate data. Or use the iNaturalist app as the all in one recording tool.

After the data is collected, share what you found out with friends, family, the community and maybe some local conservation groups! Notice any trends amongst the data you collected?

The data gathered during a BioBlitz (<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/do-it-yourself-bioblitz/>) is often determined by the needs of local land agency specialists, wildlife biologists, and botanists.

Do you and your girls like to dance? Try learning the Bio Blitz dance too! Watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/ZNpKrHgW9ow>

Terms to talk about

Data-facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.

Biology-the study of living organisms, divided into many specialized fields that cover their morphology, physiology, anatomy, behavior, origin, and distribution.



Photo
from 2013



Map it out!

Best for: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

Estimated time: 30 min

Materials:

- Paper
- Art supplies
- Pencil
- Outdoor space to map

Activity:

For this activity, have girls either make a map of their favorite outdoor space, their neighborhood, or the current outdoor meeting space.

Explain that a map shows where things are located. Usually a map shows a place from above. Have girls imagine they have wings like a butterfly, and they can fly up to the sky. Ask: What do you see from up there? What shapes do you see? Tell them that their map of the space of choice will show what the area looks like from above. It will show where things are in the area. If helpful, share an example of a map so visual and struggling learners can understand the perspective of a birds'-eye-view map.

Here are some tips for making maps:

- Sketch the roads, trails, buildings and geographical features in pencil.
- Color in the drawing.
- Outline borders in marker or pen.
- Label the known areas.
- Give a title to the story.
- Add a legend (you can use a separate piece of paper that you glue in a corner) giving explanations with symbols. Those can be figures, shapes, colors or shapes.

Terms to talk about:

Compass rose-a drawing showing different directions on a map, is usually found somewhere on the edge of a map. It shows the four cardinal directions, which are north, south, east, and west.

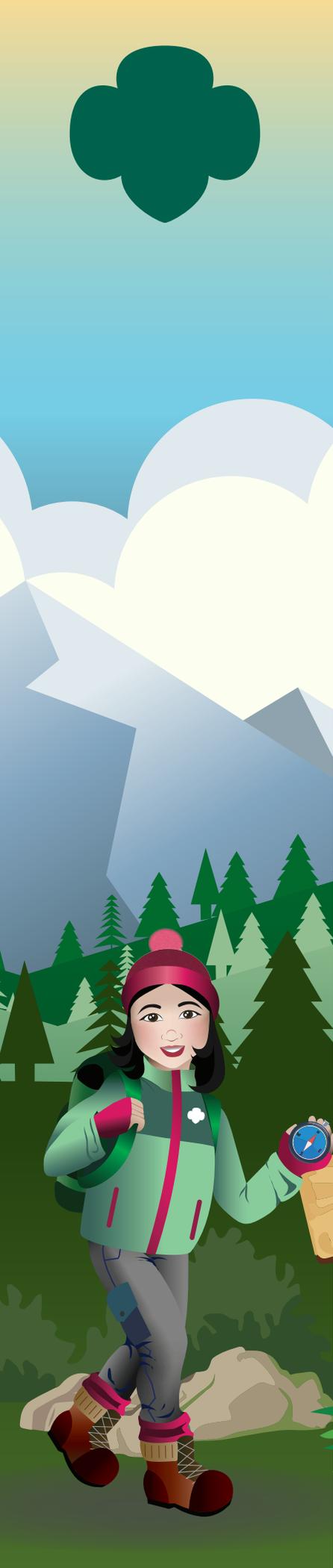
Scale-the relationship between distance on the map and distance in real life. That means that distance on the map always has a constant ratio with distance on the ground.

Key or legend included with a map to unlock it. It gives you the information needed for the map to make sense. Maps often use symbols or colors to represent things, and the map key or legend explains what they mean

Symbols-something that stands for something else

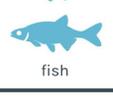
Recommended children's books (library or youtube):

Where Do I Live? By Neal Chesnow, My Mapbook By Sara Fanelli, As the Crow Flies: A First Book of Maps By Gail Hartman, Mapping Penny's World By Loren Leedy, Me on the Map By Joan Sweeney





SUMMER BINGO

 bird feather	 plant growing in water	 flying bird	 ants	 maple leaf
 flock of birds	 signs of a woodpecker	 pink or red flower	 perching bird	 mammal
 frog or toad	 ferns	Free Space	 a nut	 caterpillar
 butterfly	 bird nest	 leaf with holes	 bird song	 spider web
 fish	 flying insect	 multi-colored rock	 trail marker	 turtle

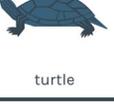


SUMMER BINGO

 frog or toad	 evergreen trees	 flying bird	 beetle	 bird feather
 flock of birds	 signs of a woodpecker	 purple flower	 perching bird	 berries
 bird song	 ferns	Free Space	 pine cone	 butterfly
 y-shaped twig	 bird nest	 leaf with holes	 mushroom	 spider web
 trail marker	 flying insect	 multi-colored rock	 maple leaf	 turtle

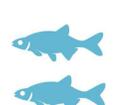


SUMMER BINGO

 multi-colored leaf	 evergreen trees	 sound of wind	 beetle	 bird feather
 butterfly	 signs of a woodpecker	 yellow flower	 perching bird	 berries
 bird song	 ferns	Free Space	 pine cone	 flying bird
 y-shaped twig	 rock shaped like a circle	 flock of birds	 mushroom	 spider web
 trail marker	 flying insect	 bird nest	 maple leaf	 turtle



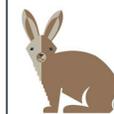
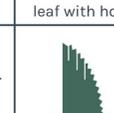
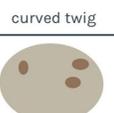
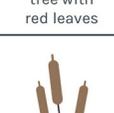
SUMMER BINGO

 signs of a woodpecker	 evergreen trees	 y-shaped twig	 fish	 flying insect
 butterfly	 mushroom	 yellow flower	 perching bird	 spider web
 bird song	 ferns	Free Space	 rock shaped like a circle	 multi-colored leaf
 maple leaf	 a nut	 flock of birds	 berries	 ants
 trail marker	 bird feather	 bird nest	 sound of wind	 mammal



Mass Audubon

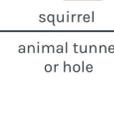
WINTER BINGO

 maple leaf	 food for deer	 old nest	 mammal	 pine cone
 bird call	 ice	 big rock pile	 sound of wind	 signs of a woodpecker
 animal tracks	 evergreen smell	Free Space	 perching bird	 leaf with holes
 curved twig	 tree with red leaves	 seeds	 something green	 flying bird
 rock shaped like an oval	 water plants	 flock of birds	 acorn	 berries



Mass Audubon

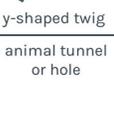
WINTER BINGO

 sound of wind	 acorn	 flying bird	 evergreen trees	 scat
 flock of birds	 signs of a woodpecker	 winter flower	 perching bird	 berries
 bird call	 rock wall	Free Space	 pine cone	 soaring bird
 y-shaped twig	 squirrel	 oak leaf	 tree with yellow leaves	 old nest
 trail marker	 animal tunnel or hole	 animal tracks	 multi-colored rock	 snow



Mass Audubon

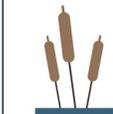
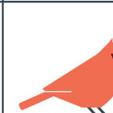
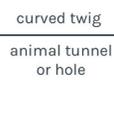
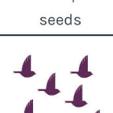
WINTER BINGO

 maple leaf	 berries	 flying bird	 trail marker	 pine cone
 flock of birds	 signs of a woodpecker	 big rock	 bird call	 animal tracks
 squirrel	 rock wall	Free Space	 something green	 perching bird
 y-shaped twig	 old nest	 seeds	 tree with yellow leaves	 acorn
 animal tunnel or hole	 snow	 scat	 triangle-shaped rock	 winter flower

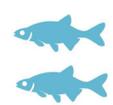


Mass Audubon

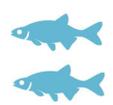
WINTER BINGO

 maple leaf	 perching bird	 old nest	 water plants	 pine cone
 rock shaped like a circle	 ice	 big rock	 bird call	 signs of a woodpecker
 squirrel	 rock wall	Free Space	 something green	 leaf with holes
 curved twig	 evergreen smell	 seeds	 tree with yellow leaves	 snow
 animal tunnel or hole	 trail marker	 flock of birds	 acorn	 winter flower

Mass Audubon FALL BINGO

 plant growing in water	 acorn	 flying bird	 beetle	 leaf with holes
 flock of birds	 mushroom	 fish	 sound of wind	 mammal
 ferns	 rock wall	Free Space	 y-shaped twig	 flying insect
 evergreen trees	 squirrel	 soaring bird	 bird nest	 trail marker
 berries	 big rock	 pine cone	 multi-colored leaf	 bird call

Mass Audubon FALL BINGO

 plant growing in water	 acorn	 flying bird	 evergreen trees	 soaring bird
 flock of birds	 red leaf	 purple flower	 perching bird	 mammal
 bird call	 rock wall	Free Space	 y-shaped twig	 flying insect
 big rock	 squirrel	 leaf with holes	 mushroom	 trail marker
 berries	 fish	 pine cone	 multi-colored leaf	 mud

Mass Audubon FALL BINGO

 plant growing in water	 bench	 flying bird	 beetle	 soaring bird
 rock shaped like a circle	 mushroom	 flock of birds	 squirrel	 acorn
 ferns	 tree with multi-colored leaves	Free Space	 y-shaped twig	 flying insect
 evergreen trees	 bird nest	 leaf with holes	 seeds	 trail marker
 mammal	 red leaf	 pine cone	 rock wall	 bird call

Mass Audubon FALL BINGO

 pink or red flower	 acorn	 flying bird	 evergreen trees	 bird feather
 flock of birds	 signs of a woodpecker	 purple flower	 perching bird	 berries
 bird call	 rock wall	Free Space	 pine cone	 soaring bird
 y-shaped twig	 squirrel	 leaf with holes	 mushroom	 spider web
 trail marker	 flying insect	 multi-colored rock	 multi-colored leaf	 mud