PumpkintownSC.com

UPSTATE EXPLORER SERIES



Fall Mission Pack

10 outdoor missions for curious kids, ages 3 to 12

This pack belongs to _____

- 10 missions with two levels each
- Leaf Spot-It sheet
- Explorer log
- Fall bingo card
- Where to try it in the Upstate
- Completion certificate

Before you head out

A quick guide for parents, grandparents, teachers and anyone else tagging along.

How the pack works

Each mission has two versions. **Little Explorers** is for ages 3 to 6 and works great with a grown-up helping. **Trailblazers** is for ages 7 to 12 and asks kids to observe, record and compare.

You do not need to finish them in order or in one day. Most missions work in a backyard, a neighborhood park or a state park.

What to bring

- This pack and a clipboard or hard book
- Crayons with the paper peeled off
- A pencil and a piece of string
- Water, a snack and layers
- A phone timer for Squirrel Spy and Sound Map

Fall safety notes

- **Look, do not pick.** Take photos and drawings home, and leave plants, seeds and rocks where you found them in parks.
- **Never touch mushrooms.** Some Upstate mushrooms are toxic. Wash hands after any nature hunt.
- **Leaves of three.** Poison ivy turns red and orange in fall and is easy to mistake for a pretty leaf.
- **Check for ticks** after walking through leaves or tall grass.
- **Wear a bright color.** Some fall hunting seasons overlap with trail season on public lands.
- **Daylight is short.** Plan to be back at the car well before sunset.

Make it stick

Let kids lead. Ask "What do you notice?" before giving answers. When a mission is done, have them check the box and mark it on the Explorer Log. Finish 7 or more missions to earn the certificate at the back.

1 Leaf Shape Detective

☐ Mission complete

Little Explorers 3 to 6

Find 3 leaves that are different shapes. Lay them side by side.

Trailblazers 7 to 12

Match 5 leaves to the Spot-It sheet. Write each tree name below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Draw what you found

2 Rubbing Gallery

☐ Mission complete

Little Explorers 3 to 6

Put a leaf under this page and rub over it with the side of a crayon.

Trailblazers 7 to 12

Make 3 rubbings. Circle one where the veins branch like a tree.

3 Seed Travelers

☐ Mission complete

Little Explorers 3 to 6

Find one seed that rolls (like an acorn) or one that flies.

Trailblazers 7 to 12

Find a seed for every way seeds travel. Check each one off.

- ☐ Flies on the wind _____
- ☐ Rolls or falls _____
- ☐ Hitchhikes on socks _____
- ☐ Gets carried by animals _____

Draw what you found

4 Color Wheel Walk

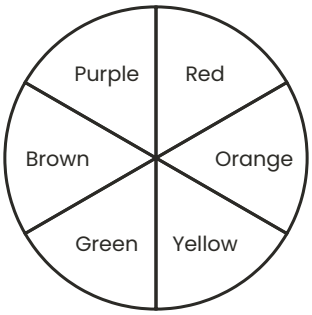
☐ Mission complete

Little Explorers 3 to 6

Color each slice when you find something that color outside.

Trailblazers 7 to 12

Write what you found in each color. Bonus: find 2 for every slice.



Red: _____

Orange: _____

Yellow: _____

Green: _____

Brown: _____

Purple: _____

Draw what you found

5 Squirrel Spy

☐ Mission complete

Little Explorers 3 to 6

Watch quietly. Make a mark each time you see a squirrel.

Trailblazers 7 to 12

Watch for 10 minutes. Tally what squirrels do.

Running	
Digging or burying	
Eating	
Chattering	
Climbing	

Draw what you found

6 Mushroom Spotter

☐ Mission complete

Little Explorers 3 to 6

Find a mushroom and draw its cap. Look only, never touch.

Trailblazers 7 to 12

Find 3 mushrooms. Note where each grew: log, soil, tree or leaves.

Mushrooms can make people and pets very sick. Look and draw, never touch or taste.

7 Sky Watchers

☐ Mission complete

Little Explorers 3 to 6

Count the big birds soaring high in the sky.

Trailblazers 7 to 12

Turkey vultures hold wings in a wobbly V. Hawks hold them flat. Tally each.

Big soaring birds	
Wings in a wobbly V (vulture)	
Wings flat (hawk)	

Draw what you found

8 Sound Map

☐ Mission complete

Little Explorers 3 to 6

Sit still for 2 minutes. Draw one thing you hear.

Trailblazers 7 to 12

You are the X. Draw a mark on the map for each sound, where it came from.



9 History Detective

☐ Mission complete

Little Explorers 3 to 6

Find a wall, bridge or building made of stone. Count the rocks you can touch.

Trailblazers 7 to 12

In the 1930s, young men in the Civilian Conservation Corps built many park buildings by hand. Find one and sketch it.

10 Pumpkin Math

☐ Mission complete

Little Explorers 3 to 6

Find the biggest and the smallest pumpkin. Which is heavier?

Trailblazers 7 to 12

Guess how far around a pumpkin is. Measure with string. How close were you?

My guess (inches around)	
Real measurement	
How far off?	

Draw what you found

Fall Bingo

Cross off each square when you spot it. Get five in a row, then try for a blackout.

Acorn	Red leaf	Pinecone	Squirrel	Spider web
Mushroom	Feather	Yellow leaf	Moss	Bird soaring high
Sweetgum ball	Hole in a tree	Fall Explorer	Berry	Smooth rock
Pile of crunchy leaves	Woodpecker sound	Seed that flies	Ant	A fallen log
Pumpkin	Creek or puddle	Something round	Brown leaf	Bark with deep grooves

Little Explorers: a grown-up can read the squares aloud. Trailblazers: try to get a blackout in one outing.

Spot-It: Upstate Fall Leaves

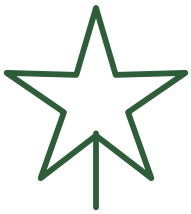
Eight trees you can find in most Upstate parks. Color each leaf the color you found it.



Red maple

Three main points with jagged little teeth. Turns bright red early.

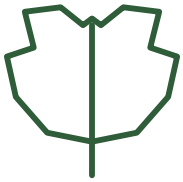
☐ Found it



Sweetgum

A five-point star. Look below for spiky gumballs.

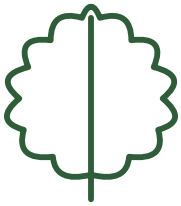
☐ Found it



Tulip poplar

Flat top like a tulip or a cat face. Turns golden yellow.

☐ Found it



White oak

Soft, rounded lobes like fingers. Makes acorns.

☐ Found it



Red oak

Pointy lobes with tiny bristle tips. Also makes acorns.

☐ Found it



Hickory

Several leaflets on one stem. Look for nuts in hard husks.

☐ Found it



Sassafras

Shaped like a mitten. The same tree can grow 1, 2 or 3 lobes.

☐ Found it



Dogwood

Smooth oval with veins that curve toward the tip. Turns deep red.

☐ Found it

Where to try it in the Upstate

Every mission works close to home, but these spots make it easy. Find full family guides with distances, restrooms and parking tips for each at **pumpkintownsc.com/kids-adventures**.

#	Mission	Try it at
1	**Leaf Shape Detective**	Lake Placid Trail at Paris Mountain State Park, Greenville; Nalley Brown Nature Park, Easley
2	**Rubbing Gallery**	Cleveland Park, Greenville; Hatcher Garden and Woodland Preserve, Spartanburg
3	**Seed Travelers**	Conestee Nature Preserve, Greenville; Doodle Trail, Easley to Pickens
4	**Color Wheel Walk**	Table Rock Lakeside Trail, Table Rock State Park
5	**Squirrel Spy**	Unity Park or Falls Park on the Reedy, Greenville
6	**Mushroom Spotter**	Carrick Creek Trail at Table Rock, or Station Cove Falls, a day or two after rain
7	**Sky Watchers**	Caesars Head Overlook, famous for fall hawk migration, which peaks in late September
8	**Sound Map**	Cedar Falls Park, Fountain Inn; Falls Park on the Reedy, Greenville
9	**History Detective**	CCC lodge and stonework at Table Rock State Park; Oconee State Park; Oconee Station
10	**Pumpkin Math**	Any local farm stand or pumpkin patch in October

Trail conditions, hours and access can change. Check with the park before you go.

My Explorer Log

Write down where and when you finished each mission.

#	Mission	Where	Date	Done
1	Leaf Shape Detective			☐
2	Rubbing Gallery			☐
3	Seed Travelers			☐
4	Color Wheel Walk			☐
5	Squirrel Spy			☐
6	Mushroom Spotter			☐
7	Sky Watchers			☐
8	Sound Map			☐
9	History Detective			☐
10	Pumpkin Math			☐

My favorite fall discovery

What I want to find next fall:

PUMPKINTOWN SC · UPSTATE EXPLORER SERIES

Certified Fall Explorer

This certifies that

_____

completed ____ of 10 Fall Missions in the Upstate of South Carolina by looking closely, listening carefully and exploring outside.

_____ _____

Explorer's guide Date

Next adventure: the Winter Mission Pack at pumpkintownsc.com/kids-adventures

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