



Explore

Root out the way

Stage

5

45 mins



Skills builder



Aim of activity

Do you realise you can use trees as a compass? Put the maps away and find out how to follow nature's signposts.

What you'll get out of it

- Discover how to navigate using plants and trees.
- Search for clues and solve problems.
- Work as a team.

What you'll need

- Paper
- Pens
- Play-dough
- A selection of small twigs
- A picture of an alder and willow tree
- A compass (optional)



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding



Explore

What to do

- 1 Look at the nature facts below. How could they help you find your way?
 - Tree branches grow more on the south-facing side.
 - Branches on the southern side tend to grow sideways, towards the sun, whereas branches on the northern side tend to grow upwards more.
 - Wind can flatten tree tops. In the UK, the wind mainly comes from the south west.
- 2 It's time for some tree yoga! Think about the first fact and become a tree – position your arms to show what the tree might look like. Now, do yoga positions for the other two facts.
- 3 Practise your moves a few times. For an extra challenge, change where south is. Can you move smoothly between the three positions?
- 4 Next, choose one girl to be the navigator – she should leave the area. Someone write north, south, east and west on pieces of paper and arrange them on the floor to make a giant compass.
- 5 Choose a direction you'll tell the navigator is home, like south east. Using your natural navigation knowledge and compass points, position yourselves inside the compass in tree poses as clues for the navigator.

6 Now, turn the papers over and call the navigator back in. Tell her which way home is.

7 Navigator, find your way home! Then turn over the papers to check if you were right.

8 Have a few turns, change the navigator each time, as well as the position of the compass points and poses.

9 Next, you're going to put your tree-mendous knowledge to the test! On your own, sketch out a simple map of an area in the countryside. Draw an arrow to show north. Get modelling with the dough to make trees, adding twigs to show which way branches might grow. Use the information from step 1 and below:

- Some trees, like willow and alder, prefer to grow near water.
- Moss tends to grow on the shadiest side of trees.

Top tip

You can write which direction the wind comes from and the way the trees grow on your map to help you remember.

10 Finally, go outside! Find an area with at least one tree, get into four teams and stand in a circle with your backs to each other. Each team move forward in a different direction for two minutes. Use the natural clues in your path to work out which way is north. Come together – do you agree?