Pip's Perch

The Map Without Words

A family investigation with Pip the Magpie



From the perch, Pip can see a hundred ways home. From the street, Pockets can see only the next corner. Could a map show Pockets the way from the gate to Pip's tree without a single word?

Look inside the picture

Find Pip above the street. Point to where a traveler could start below. Trace a route up to Pip with one finger.

Make a dot for the gate and a tree for Pip's perch. Draw a path between them, or trace it in the air.

My route

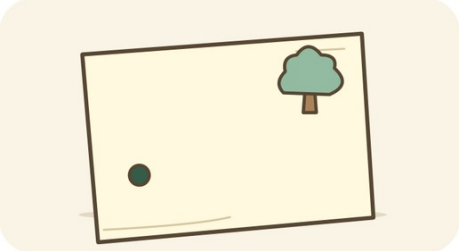
Turn the page to try it together ›

The Map Without Words

Can someone follow a route you invent without words?

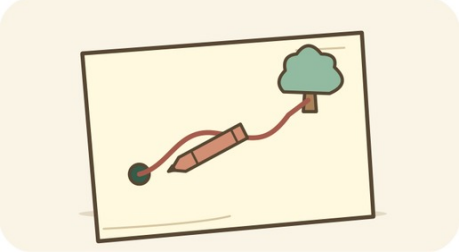
Gather A sheet of reused paper and one crayon

10 minutes • About ages 2–8 with a grown-up



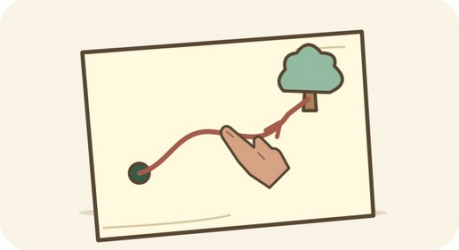
1 Mark two places

Draw a big dot near one end of your paper. That's the gate. Draw a tree at the other end for Pip's perch.



2 Connect them

Draw a winding line from the dot to the tree. You can trace it with a finger while a grown-up draws.



3 Let someone travel

Point to the dot. Let your partner follow the line with a finger while you watch. If they lose the way, add an arrow and try again.

When you're done

Fold the map and leave it for the next traveler. Put the crayon back. The blank side can hold tomorrow's route.

Another way to play

Choose where the path turns with a point or a look. A partner can make the marks.

One more wonder

Turn the map around. Can your traveler still find the gate?