

Hello, autumn detectives!

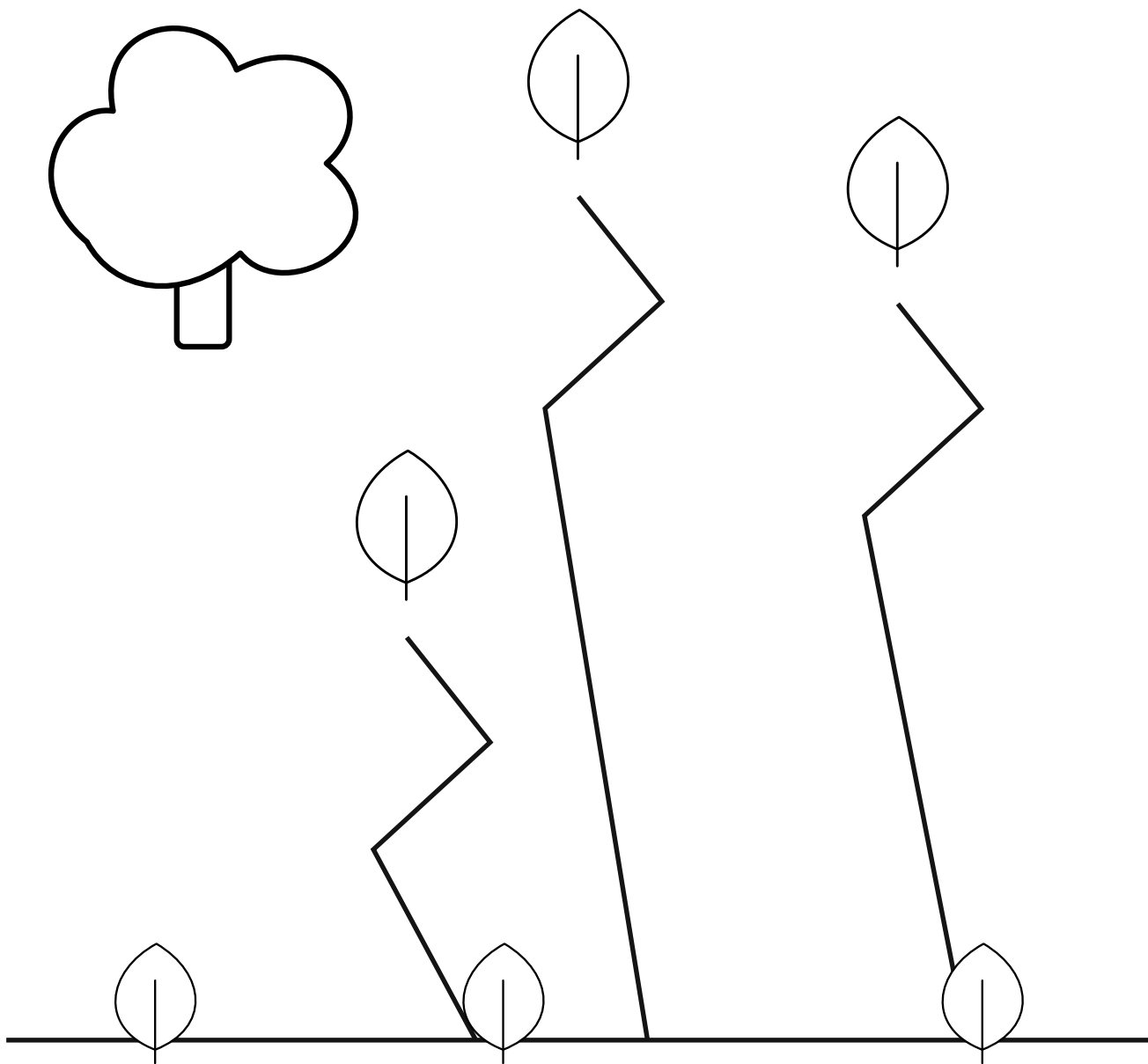
Color the hedgehog and the leaf. Point to the leaf.



This is a friendly woodland story. All activities use pictures. You do not need to pick up leaves, touch fungi, collect animals, or go outdoors.

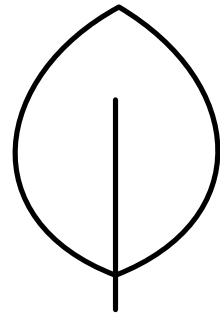
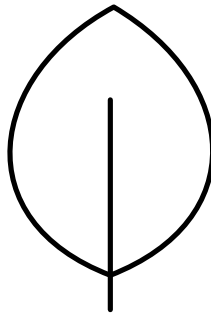
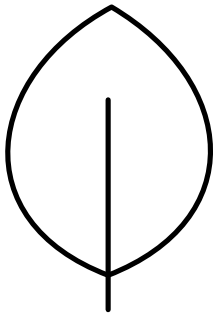
Leaves float down

Trace each leaf's path down to the forest floor.



Leaf veins

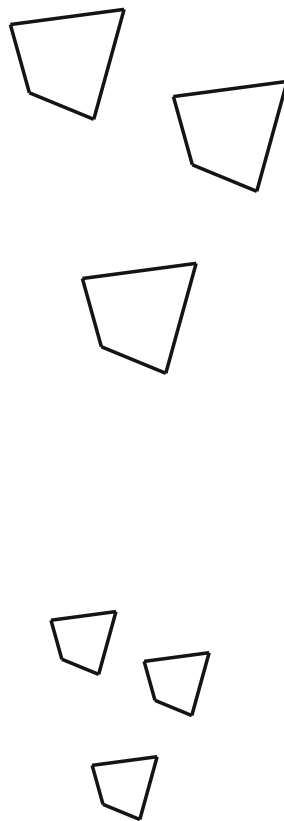
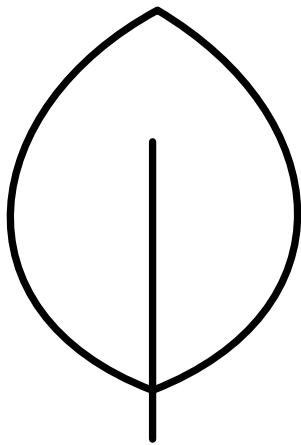
Trace the long line in each leaf. Add two little side lines.



Leaves have veins that move water and other materials. These are simple leaf shapes, not a guide to naming a plant.

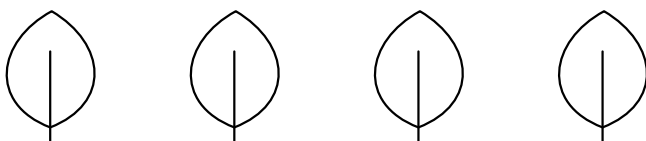
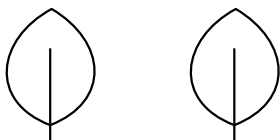
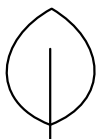
Whole or pieces?

Point to the whole leaf. Circle the little leaf pieces.



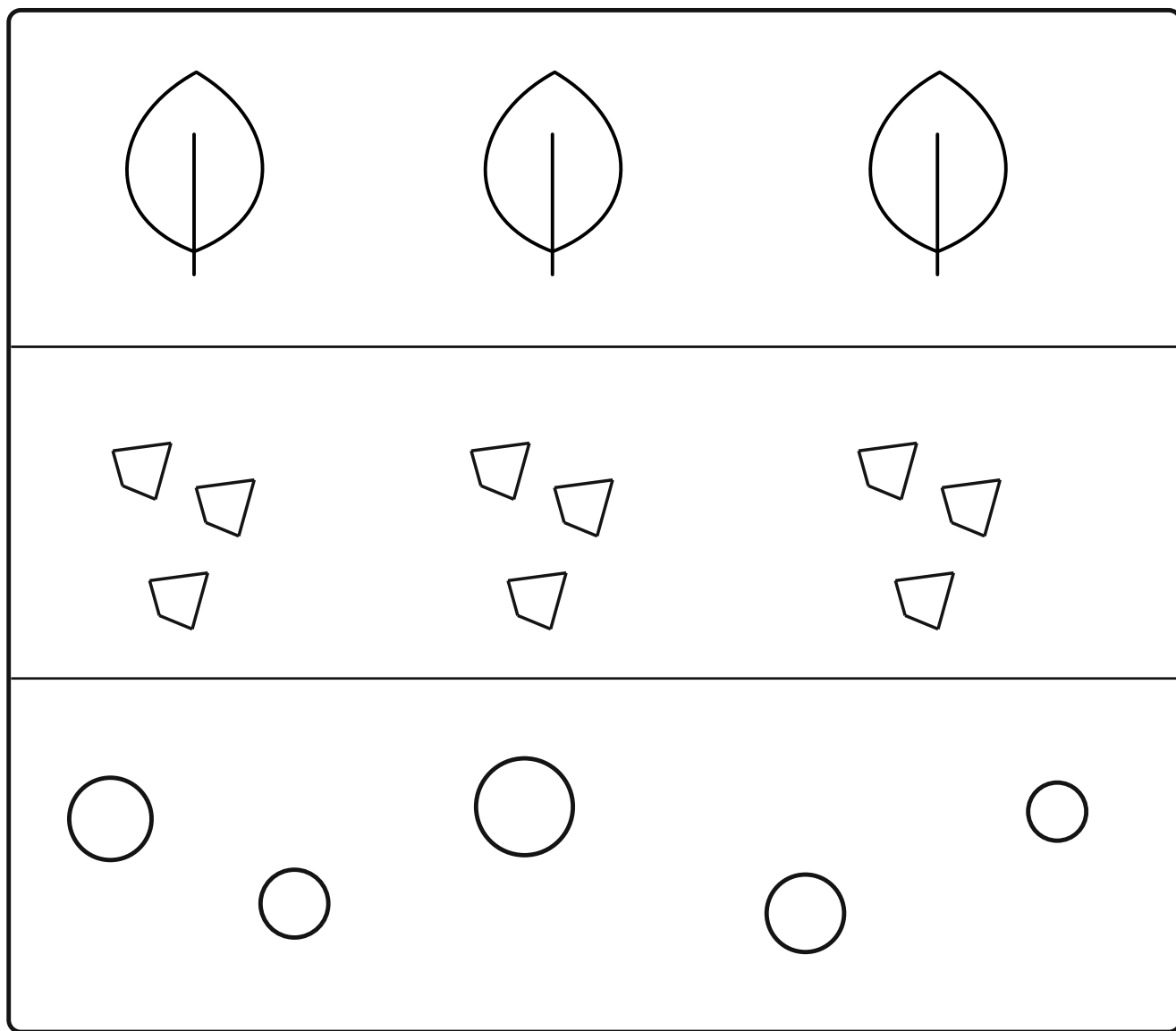
Leaf piles

Tap and count the leaves. Match each pile to its dots.



Look under the leaves

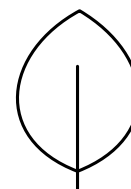
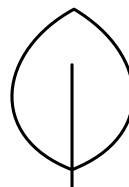
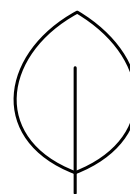
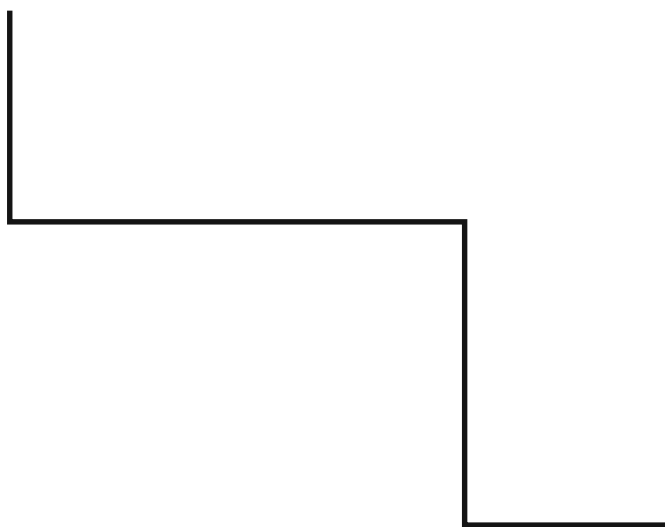
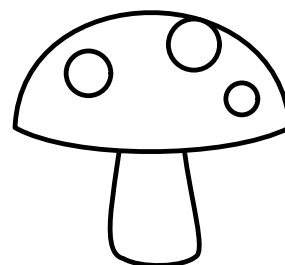
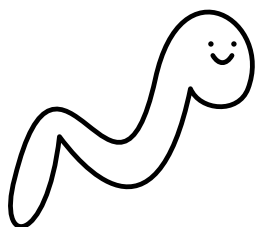
Color the big leaves. Find little pieces below them. Tap the stones.



A simplified slice of a forest floor. Soil contains minerals, air, water, living things, and material from living things; it is not just old leaves.

Who is in the leaf litter?

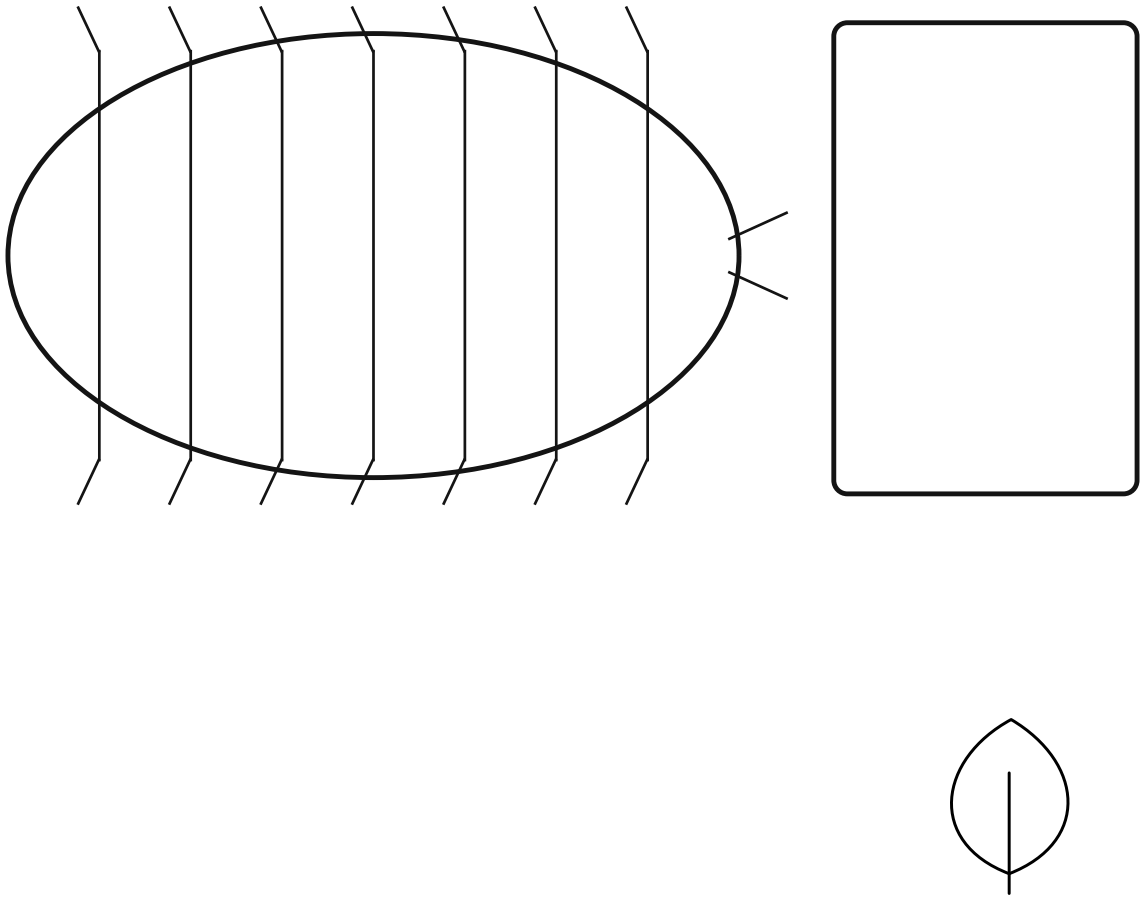
Find the worm. Trace its path to the fallen leaves.



Worms and woodlice can eat and break up dead material. Many fungi and bacteria break it down in a different way. Do not move worms or other animals into a new habitat.

A small litter muncher

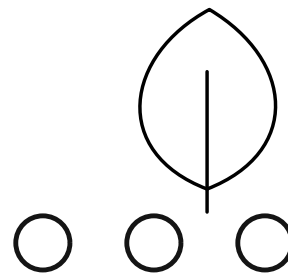
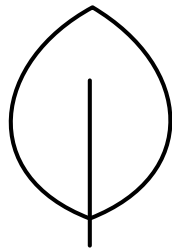
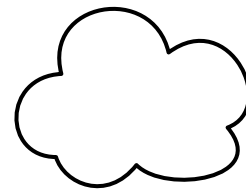
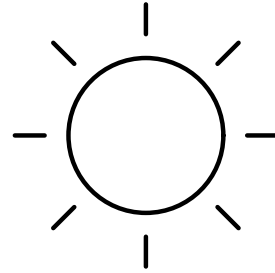
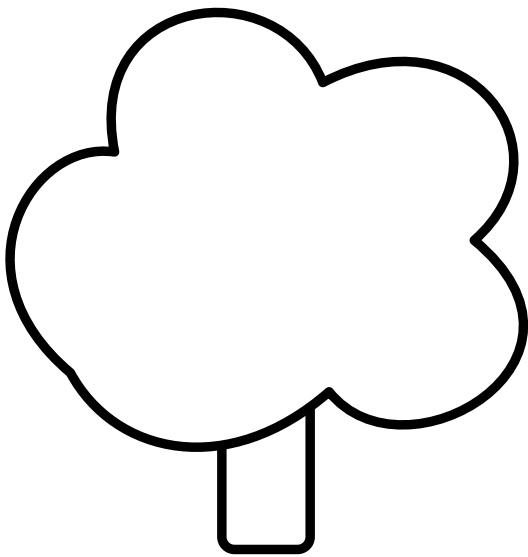
Color the woodlouse. Draw a fallen leaf beside it.



A woodlouse has seven pairs of legs. There is no need to count them here. It can feed on dead plant material; this large drawing is a model of a tiny animal.

Shade and rain

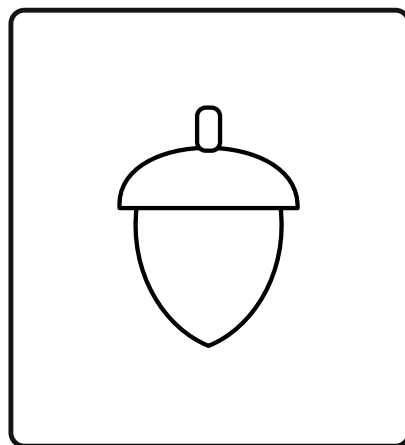
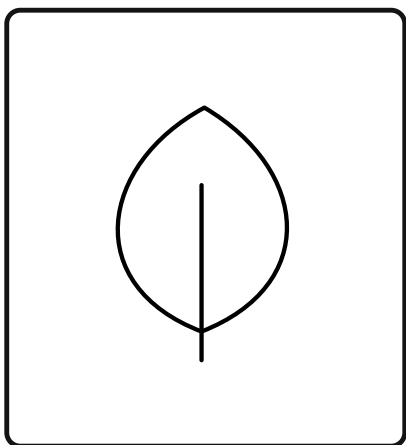
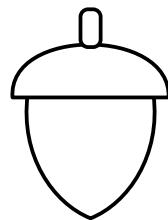
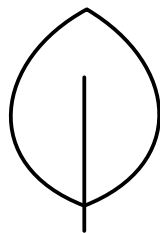
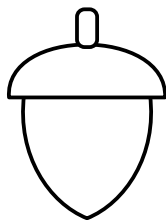
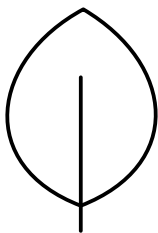
Point to the shady spot. Add three raindrops below the cloud.



Many leaf-litter animals use damp, sheltered places. Different organisms have different needs. This picture does not prove that every shady place is damp.

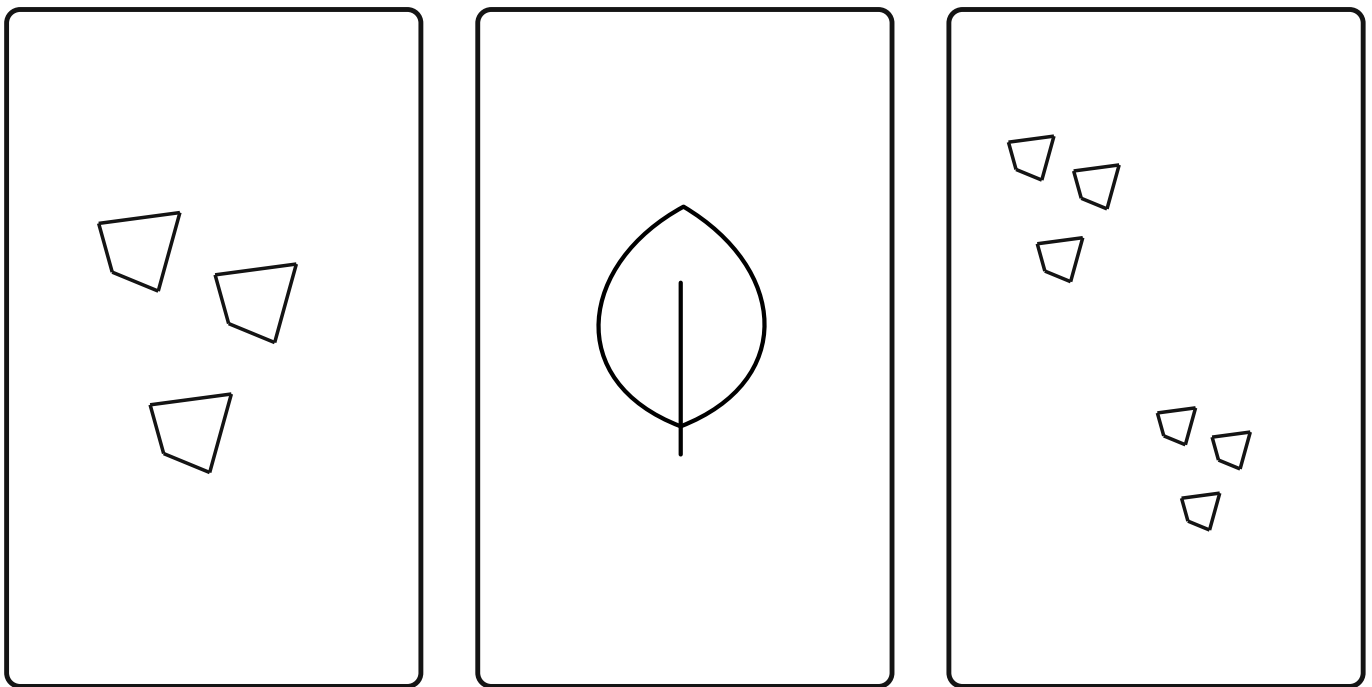
An autumn pattern

Leaf, acorn, leaf, acorn. Point to the picture that comes next.



A leaf changes

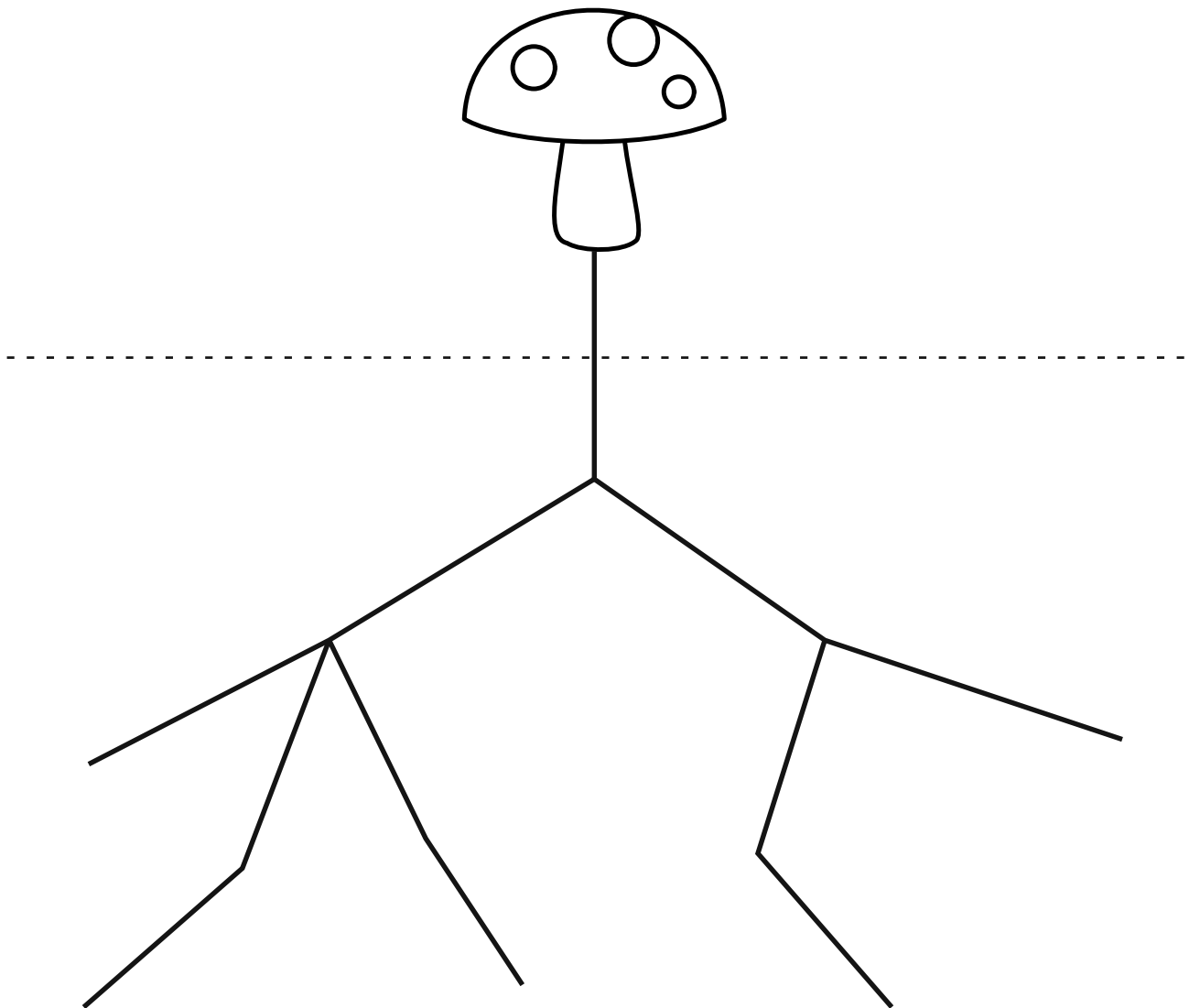
Point first to the whole leaf, then to pieces, then to smaller pieces.



This is a possible picture sequence, not a calendar. Leaves do not all break down at the same speed, and the process does more than make smaller pieces.

Fungus threads

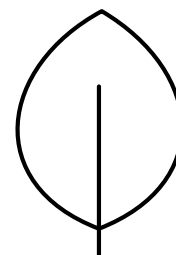
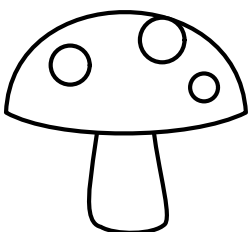
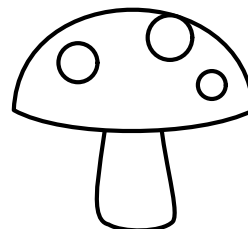
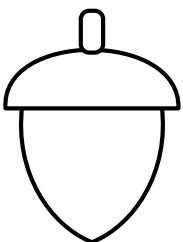
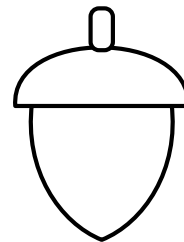
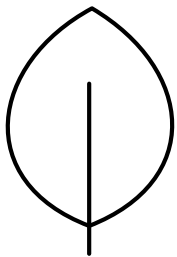
Trace the branching threads. Point to the mushroom above them.



The dotted ground line is not a thread. A mushroom is one part of a fungus. The branching threads belong to the fungus; they are not plant roots.

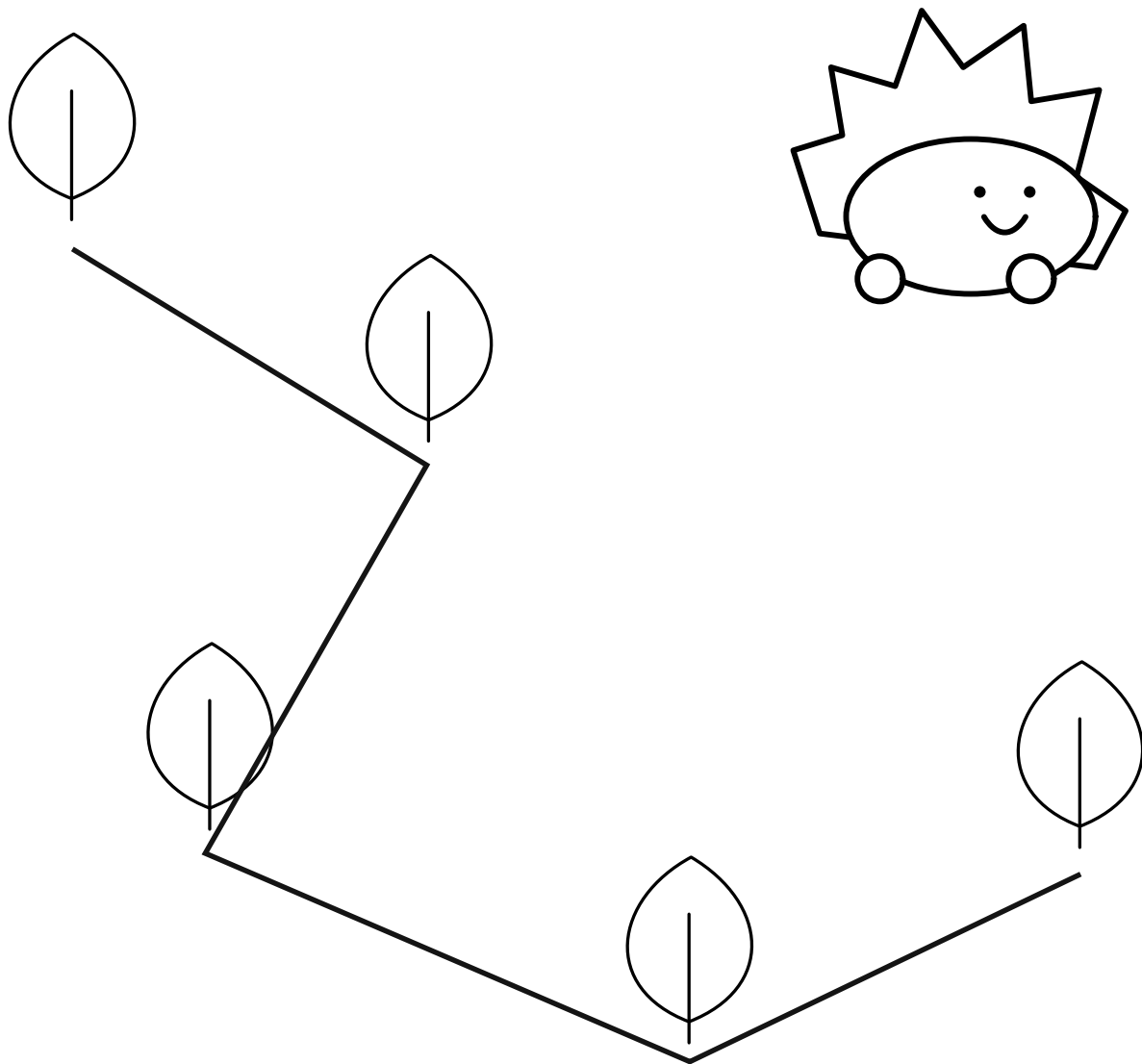
Find the forest pairs

Join each picture to the same picture on the other side.



The leaf-litter trail

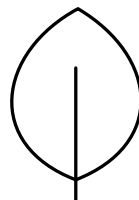
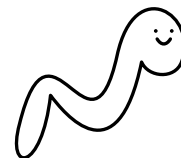
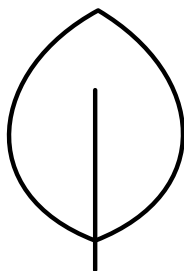
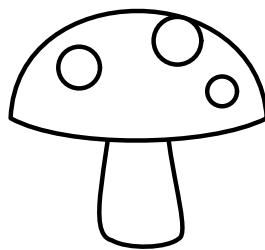
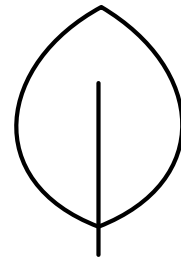
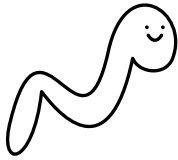
Follow the leaf trail with your finger. Draw a line along it.



A picture trail for noticing patterns and practicing pencil movement. Leave real woodland habitats where they are.

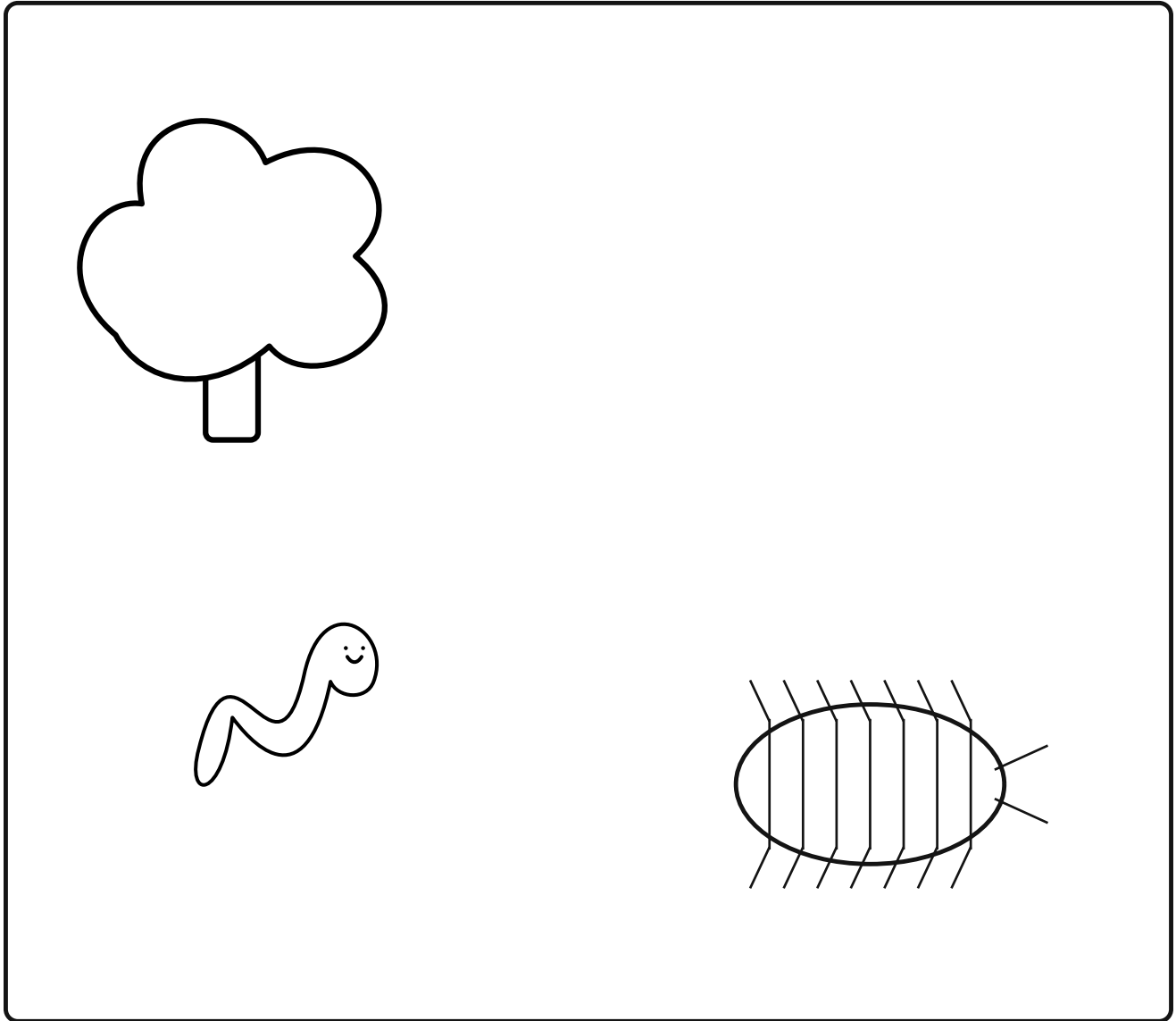
The forest-floor audience

Point to two worms, one mushroom, and three leaves. Tap to check.



Make a leaf-litter home

Draw fallen leaves around the small animals. Add a shady place.



A paper habitat only. No real animals need to be moved or kept. Some worms are not native to a place and can change its forest floor.

Grown-up guide

Read one prompt at a time. Point, trace, and talk together.

Small actions, useful ideas

The pack practices matching, counts of 1-4, tracing, and noticing changes. It introduces a forest floor as a habitat, not a mess that must be tidied.

Keep the living roles distinct

Worms and woodlice are detritivores: they eat dead material and help break it into pieces. Many fungi and bacteria are decomposers that break material down chemically. A mushroom is a fungal fruiting body; underground threads are not roots.

Use the models carefully

The layer picture is simplified: real soil layers differ. Soil also contains minerals, air, and water. The leaf sequence has no fixed number of days. Moisture, temperature, leaf type, and other conditions affect decomposition.

Stay on paper

No collecting, keeping animals, touching fungi, or growing unknown microbes is required. Do not introduce worms into a habitat; non-native worms can harm some forests. Use pointing or spoken answers whenever drawing feels hard.

Materials and pacing

Crayons or colored pencils and a pencil are enough. No cutting or glue. Try 2-4 activities at a time; print at 100% or Actual Size.

Sources for grown-ups (click a title in the PDF)

NPS: Mushrooms and Other Fungi

NPS: Soil Food Web

NPS: I Didn't Know That! Leave the Leaves

Answer and conversation notes

The page numbers below are also the activity numbers.

- 1 Point to the big leaf beside the hedgehog.
- 2 Trace each leaf route downward to the forest-floor line.
- 3 Trace the central vein; any two small side lines are fine.
- 4 The large leaf on the left is whole; both right-hand groups are pieces.
- 5 Leaf piles 1, 2, 4 match the middle, bottom, and top dot groups.
- 6 Big leaves at top; pieces in the middle; five mineral-stone symbols below.
- 7 The worm is at upper left. Follow its path to the leaf pictures.
- 8 Color the woodlouse and add a leaf. No leg-counting test is needed.
- 9 Shade is under the tree. Add three raindrops below the cloud.
- 10 Choose the left picture: a leaf continues the alternating pattern.
- 11 Whole leaf is middle; pieces left; smaller pieces right.
- 12 Trace solid branching lines. The mushroom is above the dotted ground.
- 13 Leaf to bottom; acorn to top; mushroom to middle.
- 14 Follow the five-leaf picture trail; the hedgehog is a story companion.
- 15 Two worms, one mushroom, and three leaves are drawn.
- 16 Accept added leaves and a shady space around the paper animals.