

100 UNSCHOOLING DISCOVERY DAYS

Discovery & Interest Tracker

Student: _____

School Year: _____

HOW TO USE DISCOVERY DAYS

Discovery Days are short introductions to subjects your child may not know exist yet. The goal is not mastery, a perfect project, or a traditional lesson. Introduce the subject, observe your child's response, and grade the strength of the interest - not the child's performance.

There is no required order and no deadline. Choose activities that fit your family, your location, and the materials you have available. An activity that sparks questions can become a rabbit hole; one that earns an F still taught you something useful about your child's interests.

INTEREST GRADING KEY

A - RABBIT HOLE!	Strong interest. Asked questions, wanted to continue, returned to it independently, or clearly wanted to learn more. Follow this interest now.
B - REVISIT	Definitely enjoyed it and showed interest. Put it on the list to explore again or introduce at a deeper level.
C - ENJOYED	Had a good time and participated, but did not show a strong desire to continue. Worth remembering, but no need to pursue right now.
D - NOT REALLY	Participated but showed little interest. No reason to pursue unless it naturally comes up again later.
F - NOPE!	Clearly disliked it or wanted nothing to do with it. That's still a successful Discovery Day - you learned something.
BLANK	Not yet discovered.

DISCOVER - OBSERVE - GRADE THE INTEREST - FOLLOW THE RABBIT HOLES

TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & BUILDING

Discovery Days 1-5

1. ROBOTICS - Be the Robot

Your child gives another person precise commands to navigate through the house. The "robot" interprets every instruction literally. Switch roles afterward.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

2. CODING - Code a Treasure Hunt

Hide an object and use arrows, numbers, and simple symbols to create instructions leading someone from a starting point to the treasure.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

3. GAME DESIGN - Invent a Game

Provide paper, dice, coins/buttons, and small toys. Invent a game with an objective and rules, then play-test it.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

4. ELECTRICITY - Static Electricity Laboratory

Charge a balloon against hair or fabric and experiment with paper pieces, walls, and a thin stream of water.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

5. MECHANICAL ENGINEERING - Move Something Heavy

Use safe household materials to discover ways of moving a manageable heavy object more easily.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & BUILDING

Discovery Days 6-10

6. STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING - Paper Bridge Challenge

Bridge two books using one sheet of paper. Add coins until it fails. Redesign and try again.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

7. PRODUCT DESIGN - Fix an Annoyance

Identify an everyday problem and prototype a solution using cardboard, tape, recycling, or other available materials.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

8. ARCHITECTURE - Design a Dream House

Design an anything-goes dream house, then consider rooms, doors, utilities, structural support, and movement through the building.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

9. URBAN PLANNING - Design a Town

Design a town and then solve problems involving traffic, flooding, fires, shopping, parks, and emergency services.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

10. CONSTRUCTION - House Inspection

Investigate how things around the home/property are constructed.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

MACHINES & PHYSICAL SCIENCE

Discovery Days 11-15

11. HOME REPAIR - Find Five Fixes

Find five things that are loose, worn, crooked, squeaky, or broken. Investigate one safe repair.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

12. AUTOMOTIVE SCIENCE - What's Under the Hood?

With an adult and a cool, parked vehicle, examine visible components and investigate what they do.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

13. AVIATION - Paper Airplane Laboratory

Build and test three airplane designs. Measure their flights and modify the best one.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

14. ROCKETRY - Balloon Rocket

Create a balloon rocket using string, a straw, tape, and a balloon. Experiment with the design.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

15. TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING - Fix the Traffic

Redesign an inefficient road system so people can move efficiently around a pretend town.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

MACHINES & PHYSICAL SCIENCE

Discovery Days 16-20

16. LOGISTICS - Delivery Challenge

Plan the fastest route for delivering household objects to multiple destinations.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

17. RENEWABLE ENERGY - Solar Heat Challenge

Compare identical containers placed in sun and shade and experiment with ways to capture solar heat.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

18. PHYSICS - Ramp Laboratory

Experiment with ramp height, surface, balls, and toy vehicles.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

19. ACOUSTICS - See Sound

Use plastic wrap over a bowl with rice on top to observe sound vibrations.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

20. OPTICS - Bend Light

Experiment with looking through water-filled containers at objects and printed words.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

LIFE SCIENCE, BODY & MEDICINE

Discovery Days 21-25

21. CHEMISTRY - Kitchen Chemistry

Test baking soda with several safe household liquids and observe which produce reactions.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

22. BIOLOGY - Backyard Biodiversity Hunt

Spend 20 minutes finding as many different living things outside as possible.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

23. ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY - What Does Training Do to Your Body?

Compare pulse and breathing before exercise, immediately afterward, and during recovery.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

24. NEUROSCIENCE - Reaction-Time Challenge

Perform a ruler-drop reaction test and compare repeated attempts.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

25. FIRST AID - Stuffed-Animal Emergency

Respond to a fictional minor injury involving a stuffed animal.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

LIFE SCIENCE, BODY & MEDICINE

Discovery Days 26-30

26. MEDICINE - Doctor Detective

Interview a fictional patient to gather useful information about symptoms.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

27. DENTISTRY - Tooth Investigation

Examine teeth before and after brushing and investigate tooth structure and oral hygiene.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

28. VETERINARY SCIENCE - Animal Observation

Observe a familiar animal's normal movement, eating, drinking, resting, grooming, and social behavior.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

29. MICROBIOLOGY - Wake Up Yeast

Compare yeast in warm water with yeast given warm water and sugar.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

30. GENETICS - Family Trait Detective

Explore similarities and differences in observable traits among relatives.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

EARTH, WEATHER & SPACE

Discovery Days 31-35

31. FORENSIC SCIENCE - Who Stole It?

Solve a staged mystery using clues and evidence.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

32. PSYCHOLOGY & PERCEPTION - Can Your Brain Be Fooled?

Experiment with optical illusions, memory, and attention challenges.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

33. METEOROLOGY - Be Tomorrow's Weatherman

Observe current conditions, make a forecast, and check its accuracy tomorrow.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

34. SEVERE WEATHER - Storm Detective

Choose a severe-weather event and discover how it forms.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

35. NATURAL DISASTERS - Earthquake Engineering

Build structures, simulate an earthquake, and redesign failures.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

EARTH, WEATHER & SPACE

Discovery Days 36-40

36. GEOLOGY - Rock Detective

Collect and compare five noticeably different rocks.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

37. GEMOLOGY - Treasure Hunt

Compare mineral-like materials for shine, transparency, hardness, and other properties.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

38. PALEONTOLOGY - Make a Fossil

Create impressions in dough and determine what evidence an impression preserves.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

39. METEORITE SCIENCE - Make Impact Craters

Drop objects into flour or loose soil and compare the resulting craters.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

40. ASTRONOMY - Night-Sky Expedition

Explore the Moon, stars, planets, and night sky.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

PLANET & NATURAL WORLD

Discovery Days 41-45

41. PLANETARY SCIENCE - Survive on Another World

Choose a planet or moon and determine what humans would need to survive there.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

42. OCEANOGRAPHY - Make an Ocean

Experiment with warm/cold or salty/fresh water to investigate ocean movement.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

43. HYDROLOGY - Where Does Rain Go?

Follow water across sloped ground and observe runoff, erosion, collection, and absorption.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

44. LOCAL ECOLOGY - Signs of Life

Explore your local environment and find evidence of living things without necessarily seeing the animals themselves.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

45. ENTOMOLOGY - Bug Safari

Find, observe, photograph, and investigate a safe insect.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

PLANET & NATURAL WORLD

Discovery Days 46-50

46. ARACHNOLOGY - Web Detective

Find and compare different spider webs.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

47. ORNITHOLOGY - Bird Count

Observe birds for 15-20 minutes and attempt to identify them.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

48. ANIMAL TRACKING - Who Passed Through Here?

Use tracks and other signs to reconstruct animal activity.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

49. HERPETOLOGY - Reptile Recon

Safely observe reptiles or investigate what makes suitable reptile habitat.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

50. ANIMAL HUSBANDRY - Animal Scientist

Observe a domesticated animal in person or through a live camera/video. Look for feeding, movement, communication, resting, grooming, and social behavior.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

PLANTS, LAND & HUMAN HISTORY

Discovery Days 51-55

51. POLLINATOR SCIENCE - Who's Visiting?

Observe flowering plants and record their visitors.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

52. GARDENING - Seed Experiment

Grow identical seeds under different conditions.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

53. FORESTRY - Tree Detective

Examine and identify a tree using its characteristics.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

54. MYCOLOGY - Fungus Hunt

Photograph and investigate fungi found outside. Do not taste wild fungi.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

55. BOTANY - Take Apart a Flower

Dissect a safely obtained flower and identify its structures.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

PLANTS, LAND & HUMAN HISTORY

Discovery Days 56-60

56. GEOGRAPHY - Map Roulette

Randomly select a place on a map or globe and discover what's there.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

57. NAVIGATION & ORIENTEERING - Lost Treasure

Use directions, landmarks, or a map to locate hidden treasure.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

58. CARTOGRAPHY - Map Your Space

Create an overhead map of your home, yard, neighborhood, or another familiar place.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

59. ARCHAEOLOGY - Trash Archaeology

Examine modern discarded objects as though they were future archaeological artifacts.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

60. ANTHROPOLOGY - How Would You Live Here?

Determine how humans could live in an unfamiliar or challenging environment.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

SOCIETY, HISTORY & BUSINESS

Discovery Days 61-65

61. ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS - Build Like the Ancients

Recreate an ancient structure and investigate how it was originally constructed.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

62. MEDIEVAL STUDIES - Defend the Castle

Design a castle and modify its defenses in response to fictional threats.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

63. VIKING & NORSE HISTORY - Navigate Without GPS

Investigate Norse navigation and experiment with navigating without modern technology.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

64. EXPLORATION HISTORY - Expedition Packing

Choose only 10 items for an imaginary historical expedition.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

65. CIVICS - Solve a Town Problem

Consider the needs of different fictional residents and develop a solution to a community problem.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

SOCIETY, HISTORY & BUSINESS

Discovery Days 66-70

66. LAW - The Cookie Trial

Conduct a fictional trial and evaluate evidence from both sides.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

67. ECONOMICS - Snack Market

Use pretend money and limited supplies to explore scarcity, supply, demand, and prices.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

68. PERSONAL FINANCE - You Have \$20

Make purchasing decisions while staying within a hypothetical \$20 budget.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

69. ENTREPRENEURSHIP - Invent a Business

Create a business idea and consider customers, supplies, costs, prices, and profit.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

70. MARKETING - Sell Me This

Create an advertisement for an ordinary household object.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

MEDIA, ARTS & MAKING

Discovery Days 71-75

71. JOURNALISM - Breaking News

Interview family members and produce a short factual report about something that happened.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

72. PHOTOGRAPHY - Tell a Story in Five Photos

Tell a complete story using five photographs and no words.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

73. FILMMAKING - 60-Second Movie

Create a one-minute movie with a beginning, problem, and ending.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

74. STOP-MOTION ANIMATION - Make a Toy Come Alive

Animate a toy using a sequence of photographs.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

75. VISUAL ART - No-Rules Art

Create artwork representing "motion" without writing the word.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

MEDIA, ARTS & MAKING

Discovery Days 76-80

76. SCULPTURE - Invent an Animal

Sculpt an imaginary animal whose features help it survive in a chosen environment.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

77. THEATER & ACTING - Secret Character

Invent a character and remain in character during an interview.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

78. MUSIC - Make a Beat

Create rhythms using household objects and layer sounds together.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

79. SOUND ENGINEERING - Foley Studio

Recreate the sounds from a muted video using household objects.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

80. SEWING & TEXTILES - How Are Clothes Made?

Examine garments inside out and investigate seams, hems, buttons, elastic, and construction.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

FOOD, LANGUAGE & THINKING

Discovery Days 81-85

81. CULINARY ARTS - You Make Lunch

Plan and prepare an age-appropriate meal or snack.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

82. FOOD SCIENCE - What Makes Popcorn Pop?

Make popcorn and investigate what happens inside a kernel.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

83. FOOD PRESERVATION - Which Lasts Longer?

Compare safe methods of storing/preserving portions of the same food over time. Never taste suspected spoiled food.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

84. WORLD CULTURES - Visit a Country

Choose a country and explore everyday life, food, music, homes, clothing, and traditions.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

85. FOREIGN LANGUAGES - Can You Talk to Me?

Learn enough of a chosen language to conduct a tiny conversation.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

FOOD, LANGUAGE & THINKING

Discovery Days 86-90

86. AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE - No Talking Allowed

Use learned signs to complete an activity without speaking.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

87. CRYPTOGRAPHY - Secret Message

Decode a simple cipher containing the location of hidden treasure.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

88. COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY - Communicate Without Talking

Invent a communication system using light, sounds, hand signals, writing, or another method.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

89. LOGIC - Mini Escape Room

Solve a sequence of homemade puzzles and clues.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

90. STRATEGY - Outsmart Me

Play several rounds of a strategy game and examine which decisions worked.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

COMMUNICATION, BODY & REAL-LIFE SKILLS

Discovery Days 91-95

91. STORYTELLING - Mystery Objects

Create a story incorporating five random household objects.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

92. PUBLIC SPEAKING - Teach Me

Teach another person something the student knows well.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

93. LINGUISTICS - Invent a Language

Create words and simple language rules and attempt to communicate with them.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

94. FITNESS & CONDITIONING - Beat Yourself

Complete a safe obstacle course, practice, and attempt to improve the student's own result.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

95. SPORTS SCIENCE - Engineer the Perfect Throw

Experiment with throwing variables and determine what improves accuracy.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

COMMUNICATION, BODY & REAL-LIFE SKILLS

Discovery Days 96-100

96. WILDERNESS SKILLS - You're Stranded

Imagine being outdoors until morning and determine the most important survival priorities.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

97. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS - Five-Minute Evacuation

Choose what should go into a backpack during a pretend emergency evacuation.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

98. FIRE SCIENCE & SAFETY - Escape Engineer

Inspect smoke alarms, exits, obstacles, and possible escape routes.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

99. MATERIALS SCIENCE - Which Material Wins?

Compare household materials for strength, flexibility, water resistance, and other useful properties.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

100. BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING - Invent an Assistive Device

Identify an ordinary task that could be difficult for someone with limited hand movement and invent a simple device that could help.

Date: _____ Interest Grade: _____

Notes / What caught their attention:

END-OF-DISCOVERY REVIEW

After completing a group of Discovery Days, look back at the grades and notes. Use this page to decide what deserves another look and what might become a deeper rabbit hole.

A - RABBIT HOLES

These deserve deeper exploration:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

B - DEFINITELY REVISIT

These deserve another Discovery Day:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

SURPRISE INTERESTS

Things your child enjoyed that you did not expect:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

QUESTIONS THEY ARE STILL ASKING

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

POSSIBLE NEXT RESOURCES

Books, equipment, field trips, kits, classes, documentaries, projects, or people who could help you go deeper:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

REMEMBER

You are not grading how well the student performed. You are grading how strongly the subject captured their interest. A "failed" Discovery Day is not a failed learning experience. An F tells you just as much as an A.

DISCOVER - OBSERVE - GRADE THE INTEREST - FOLLOW THE RABBIT HOLES

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