

Night has captured human imagination since the dawn of time. But with modern-day electricity, it's easy to overlook the mysteries and beauty of the world after the sun goes down. So grow your imagination and expand what you know (or think you know!). Turn out the lights, tune in your senses, and step out into the night. . . .

Steps:

1. Take a field trip to explore the night
2. Tour your world after dark
3. Meet people who work night hours
4. Explore nature at night
5. Host an Extreme Nighttime Party

Purpose:

When I've earned this badge, I'll have uncovered the mysteries of the world after dark.

Sidebar: Quote

"It doesn't take much effort to lift up your eyes, and what a reward you get when you do! On a clear night you will see stars."

—Girl Scout Handbook, 1947

Sidebar: TIPS BEFORE TAKEOFF

When you're out after dark, ALWAYS:

- Be seen and be safe. Wear light-colored clothing and put reflective tape on the front and back of your clothes, shoes, and hat or headband.
- Carry a flashlight or wear a hands-free headlamp.
- Stay alert and always have at least one adult with you.
- Make sure your family knows where you are—and the adult you are with—at all times.

Step 1: Take a field trip to explore the night

Find information about life after dark. If the cultural institution or science center you choose offers overnight events, you might arrange with your family or Girl Scout sisters to spend the night. Whatever the hours of your visit, use it to become better acquainted with the night.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Share night art. At an art museum or library, find three paintings of famous nighttime scenes, or three bedtime books or poems about the night. Tell your friends the stories behind the pictures, or read the poems or stories together.

OR

Get into nightlife. At a zoo or aquarium, gather three fun facts about one creature's nocturnal habits. If you can, talk about what you've learned as you watch the creature in action.

OR

Go solar (or lunar, or extraterrestrial...). At a planetarium, find five fun facts about stars, planets, and the night sky. Share them as you enjoy a planetary show or display.

Step 2: Tour your world after dark

Get out and enjoy how the cloak of darkness and the glitter of stars make the ordinary extraordinary. How do things change after dark? Scribble thoughts in a journal by flashlight, record audio or video, or find your own way to document your experience so you can share the night mysteries with others.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Tour your neighborhood at night. First, map out your route and follow it during the day. Then travel the same route after dark. Note what's different, from shapes to sounds to creatures to your feelings about your surroundings.

OR

Visit a park, trail, lake, stream, or other natural environment. Use all five senses to notice what's different after dark. For More FUN: Put on a pair of inexpensive nighttime goggles (sold by toy or science stores) to see how they change the view of the world.

OR

Visit a place that's open 24 hours. Perhaps it's a grocery store, restaurant, hotel, or airport. How is the place different after dark? Do you feel any different being there? Head out on your tour with a group of friends and a trusted adult.

Sidebar: The Science of Reflection

The red reflectors on bikes and cars are corner reflectors. They're shaped so that when light hits them, it bounces back in the direction it came from. This ensures that oncoming drivers see the reflection of their own headlights. To get a sense of a corner reflector's angles, toss a

tennis ball directly into a corner: After bouncing off three surfaces, it should return to you. Corner reflectors have also been used to bounce laser beams back to the earth from the moon's surface. Every step has three choices. Inspired? Do more!

Step 3: Meet people who work night hours

Many people are on the job while the rest of the world sleeps—check out all the examples in the sidebar. Find out what it's like to be employed as a night owl, and capture your experience in one of these ways.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Be an investigative reporter. Interview someone who works the night shift and record audio to share, or write your interview and share it in your local paper or on a Girl Scout or family website. For More FUN: Make and share an old-fashioned radio show that dramatizes a scene at the interviewee's workplace.

OR

Take part in the night shift. Visit the person at their workplace and imagine yourself in the job. What is a typical shift like? How does having a nighttime job affect other parts of your life? For More FUN: Take video of your visit and share it with your community or school.

OR

Create a photo essay. If you can visit a night worker, take pictures of the person to include. Or find nighttime work pictures in magazines or online. Put together a photo essay or photo collage that captures your feelings about what it's like to work at night.

Step 4: Explore nature at night

From planets to constellations, from moonflower to evening primrose, from bats to owls to anacondas, some parts of the natural world come alive—or only appear—at night. Become more familiar with the natural night world.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Examine the night sky. Take this chance to learn more about an astronomy topic that interests you. You might make a drawing of the Big Dipper and North Star twice in one evening three hours apart as Cadettes in 1963 did to earn their Star badge. Or you could look through a telescope at three or more heavenly objects, such as a star cluster, a galaxy, or a moon, as girls did to earn their Aerospace badge in 1980.

OR

Cadette Night Owl

Create a nocturnal animal. How do cats see in the dark? How do bats navigate? Design your own super-night-sense animal, combining aspects of real animals and your own ideas. Share it as a sketch, sculpture, or collage.

OR

Sketch a landscape plan for your own “midnight garden.” These gardens are full of night-blooming flowers and flowers that shimmer in moonlight. For inspiration, try to see at least one such flower in the dark. A nursery is a good place to start!

Sidebar: Quote

“Nighttime is really the best time to work. All the ideas are there to be yours because everyone else is asleep.” —Catherine O’Hara, Canadian-American actress

Sidebar: Real Nocturnal Animals

Some places are famous for their amazing nocturnal creatures. There are bat caves in Texas and a bat bridge in Sydney; tenrecs and aye-ayes in Madagascar; and anacondas in the Amazon slithering through the night.

Step 5: Host an Extreme Nighttime Party

Get to know even more about those wee hours by ramping up a nighttime or slumber party with one of these activities. (Even if it’s your family in sleeping bags in the living room, it can still be an adventure!)

CHOICES – DO ONE:

A “night” activity for younger Girl Scouts. You might make a planet mobile or Star Finder (find instructions on the NASA website), paint glow-in-the-dark T-shirts, or create constellations from star stickers. Make fun snacks to share (star-shaped cookies?). For More FUN: Ask older girls to stay later and watch space-themed movies.

OR

A “Power Down!” night. Pretend you live before electricity. Spend at least three hours with your family using no lights, television, or other electronics. Figure out how to light and heat your house, cook food, and entertain yourselves. For More FUN: Give the night a theme—pretend you’re living during pioneer days or the Renaissance.

OR



Cadette Night Owl

A nighttime legend. For centuries, storytellers invented legends about the night, like how constellations came to live in the sky. Find one of these stories to tell friends and family—or find your own constellation and tell how yours came to be.

Sidebar: Fun Fact

The farther north you are in the Northern Hemisphere, the less sun you will see during the day of the winter solstice. Norway is called “the land of the midnight sun,” but could it also be known as “the land of the noontime moon”?

I’m inspired to:

Now that I’ve earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Helping an adult volunteer lead younger girls on a night appreciation hike
- Hosting a backyard star-gazing party to teach others about astronomy
- Creating and sharing a tip sheet on outer space

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