

1. Interview a family member.

Taking the time out to learn more about the people in your family might surprise your children. Get them to dig deep and think about their questions and their responses. Save these interviews so you can read them again.

2. Measure the area and perimeter of each room in your home.

This is a maths skill everyone needs to know how to do. Bonus points if they do the windows too so they'll know what size curtains would work!

3. Graph the types of birds that frequent your yard or windows.

Bird watching is fascinating for everyone. [Check out these tips for identifying birds.](#) Once you've tracked your birds, [make a graph](#) to show how many of each kind were in your backyard during a certain period of time.

4. Be completely silent for 60 minutes, then write about the experience.

In a world where there are so many distractions, it's amazing what we notice when we're silent.

5. Write and mail a [real] letter to your teacher or principal or classroom pen pal. Address the envelope yourself.

Learning to write a letter and address an envelope is important even in the age of email. The thrill of getting a letter in the mail cannot be overestimated.

6. Build a "fable fort" out of blankets and chairs. Camp in it all day while you create stories to tell your family over dinner.

Human beings love telling stories. What's a fable? [Learn about them and read some here.](#)

7. Learn Morse Code and use it to communicate with your siblings through walls and floors.

It's pretty fun (and clever) to use Morse Code as a way to keep messages hidden.

8. Alphabetize the spices in your kitchen.

Think only books can be alphabetized? The cook in your family will appreciate an organized spice cabinet.

9. Stay up late and stargaze.

When you don't have to go to school in the morning, it can be okay to stay up late once in a while. Stretch out and watch the stars. If kids are curious about them, [show them how to learn more.](#)

10. Call a grandparent or older relative. Ask them to teach you the words to a song from their childhood days.

Just like #1, this is something that can really help kids learn more about the people in their lives.

11. [Using household materials, build a working rain gauge, barometer, and wind vane.](#)

Use this quiet time to tinker and consider how things are made.

12. Determine and chart the times that different liquids require to turn solid in the freezer.

You know that game where kids blindfold each other and then do taste tests with things like hot sauce and beet juice? This one is less messy, or likely to start sibling arguments.

13. Design and build puppets that perform a show about multiplication.

Thinking about things in new ways drives new learning. It'll be fun to get puppets teaching about math, and really nothing helps kids solidify their understanding than teaching someone else.

14. Construct a family tree.

Make this one wide-open and out of the box. Challenge your kids to create any kind of tree they want and include anyone who they consider to be family.

15. Learn ten new big words. Write them in marker on your bathroom mirror.

Don't worry, marker comes off mirrors easily. Meanwhile, yay for big words like: ubiquitous, flippant, and redundant.

16. Draw a map of your home and neighborhood.

In addition to be an important part of understanding how maps work, this activity helps kids define their world. Bonus tip: choose a safe place near your home on the map to meet family members in an emergency.

17. Sit silently for 15 minutes while you write down every sound you hear. When you are done, classify the sounds (high/low pitch, high/low volume, manmade v. naturally occurring, etc.).

Number 4 started kids off paying attention to silence. In this activity, let's get kids making comparisons.

18. Create a Venn Diagram that compares and contrasts two people connected to you in anyway.

Understanding that people who seem very different may have a lot of similarities shifts our perspective and creates room for kindness and understanding.

19. Learn, practice, and perform a magic trick.

From the [bendable spoon to the floating card trick](#), learning magic tricks takes practice. But, when magic works, it's the best.

20 Learn, practice, and tell three new jokes.

Everyone is going to need to laugh in the coming days of social distancing. [Here are some jokes to get them started.](#)

21. Use household materials to make and play stringed, percussion, and wind instruments.

Making instruments can be as easy as banging on a pot with a spoon, or you can [try out these other ways to make instruments out of household goods.](#)

22. Learn to shine a pair of shoes.

Shining shoes used to be more common when people wore sneakers only to do exercise, but it's important to take care of the things you own.

23. Collect leaves from ten different (non-harmful) plants. Sort them by size, color, and texture.

Go outside and find ten different leaves and then compare them!

24. Put your favorite book, toy, and keepsake on a small table in sunlight. Draw or paint a full color still life.

This is a great way to express your love for something. For a variation on this, try out different ways to [paint the still life “like” a famous artist](#).

25. Find, pick, and dissect a flower.

Think and act like a scientist when you choose a flower and carefully take apart its parts. Not sure what every part is? [Check out this site to learn more about dissecting a flower](#).

26. If you have stairs, walk up and count them. Walk down and count by twos. Walk up and count by threes. Continue through tens.

This simple math practice trick gets kids thinking about numbers and exercising!

27. Determine the volumes of ten containers, then display them in order on your porch.

Not sure how to determine volume? [Learn more about measuring volume here](#).

28. Write a poem on your sidewalk using chalk.

Writing poetry is freeing because there aren't a lot of rules. Or you can establish a rule and see how different people think about it. For example, write a poem about snow without using the words white or cold.

29. Classify twenty everyday objects by shape, size, color, height, mass, and material.

Learning how to classify and organize things is a skill that's helpful for reading, math, science, and history. In other words—everything.

30. Measure the length of your bed using five different nonstandard units.

My bed is 126 pieces of sea glass long, how long is yours?

31. Call a person who speaks a language you do not. Ask them to teach you five common words or phrases.

If you can't do this, change your tv shows to a different language and try to figure out what is happening.

32. Create and use a secret code.

In #7, we worked with Morse Code, now make up your own code. Send people messages in code, have them figure it out, and write back!

33. Using one type of paper (constant), build three different paper airplanes (independent variable) and test to see how far they fly (dependent variable).

34. Set a clock three hours and seven minutes ahead. Whenever someone needs to know the time, help them figure it out by subtracting.

This is both irritating and totally fun. Maybe -3 hrs 07 min can be your new family time zone!

35. Write down every adjective you say for one full day.

Depending on how much your child talks during the day, this might take a while.

36. Color in a map with every state you (or your family) ever visited.

Not only is it important to know where all the states are located, but this is a great way to set travel goals. [Try this map for a digital one.](#)

37. Write or tell a story titled “What if humans had to leave the Earth and no one remembered to turn off the last robot?”

Try using some read alouds like *The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown as a jumping off point.

38. Find ten rocks smaller than a dime.

Kids have the best eyes for this kind of thing. Give them each a dime so they can compare and an old yogurt container to hold the rocks.

39. Using paper, tape, and string, design, build, and test a device that warns you when someone opens the kitchen cabinet.

Developing ideas that can be helpful for human beings is one of the best skills we can develop in kids. If you want to dig a little deeper, teach them about [engineering design](#) to help them plan and execute.

40. Imagine, create, and fly a full size flag that tells the world about you.

Everyone deserves to fly their own flag. Talk to kids about symbols and give them the creative stuff they need create their own flag: markers, crayons, paper, fabric, glitter, glue.