

THE EXPLORER

FREE limited edition family magazine

Parent advice | Family activities | Kids games

**10 FREE
ACTIVITIES
TO TRY WITH
YOUR FAMILY**

**THE SUMMER IS THE
PERFECT TIME TO GROW
IN BODY AND MIND.**

Keeping minds
busy while travelling



GARDEN GAMES

The perfect antidote to too much screen

★ Trustpilot
Rated 'Excellent'



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The perfect antidote to too much screen



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Hello!

Welcome to our special family summer edition.

Our theme this summer is celebrating growth and all the ways it affects our children. It could be getting taller, stronger, fitter, happier or learning new things.

Did you know?

Contrary to popular opinion, recent research has shown that children are growing more during the school term than during the summer holidays.

Some ideas as to what might cause this slow down in growth are: less consistent daily routines, less sleep, less time outside, more snacking and less exercise (for example if they are not walking to school).

At Explore Learning, we believe that summer is the perfect time to grow in body and mind.

We've collated a host of ideas to keep your children stimulated during the break from school. Why not start with making a summer growth chart for your child and try some of the free family activities suggested in this ezine.

We're confident that with time outside, healthy picnics and daily exercise for body and mind your child will be adding on those centimeters, building strength, confidence and knowledge ready for the next school year!

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Why not measure their growth at the beginning and end of the holidays?

	Date: _____ 1 st Measurement	Date: _____ 2 nd Measurement	Total growth
Height	cm	cm	cm
Feet	cm	cm	cm
Hair	cm	cm	cm

10 FREE ACTIVITIES

to try with your family this summer

Spending time together doesn't have to break the bank this summer holiday. **As they say, the best things in life are free!**

We asked the wonderful people at Explore Learning for their **favourite ways to spend time with loved ones** without spending a penny.

Let's get outside! **Fun, free outdoor activities for kids**

We all know that getting outside is great for our health and wellbeing. Whether in the garden, local park or a trip to the beach - **make some outdoor memories as a family this summer.**

Make nature art: *"If heading out for a woodland walk or trip to the beach, we love to collect stones or shells to take home to paint; or see what nature objects we can find to make collage pictures eg. pine cones, fallen leaves or flowers, feathers etc."* Laura, Head of Customer Experience, Mum to a 10, 7 and 2 year old.

Scavenger hunt: Add some variety to your walk and **create a list of things you want to find.** Or take an egg carton and get your kids to paint each of the sections a different colour. Challenge them to find small items in the garden or park e.g. leaves, flowers, feathers that match the colour of each section.

Pavement art: Chalk drawings can be great fun for all the family. Whether it's practising your handwriting, creating beautiful pictures or making a hopscotch, **a box of chunky chalks is a very handy thing to have ready for the holidays.**

Imaginative forest walks: *"Our favourite go-to activity all year around is imaginative forest walks. We come up with a different story each time e.g. hunting for dinosaurs, hiding from the Gruffalo and big bad mouse. We love this as it gets us outdoors in the fresh air, an opportunity to get creative with our imaginations and we can have a nice picnic lunch or splurge for a hot drink and cake at the cafe."* Siobhan, Service Delivery Manager, Mum to a 3 year old.

Painting with water:

"My daughter loves to paint and join in with activities outside. Painting the fence with water is a new favourite of ours for hours of fun with zero damage.

She can create all sorts of pictures and patterns and as they dry and disappear, start all over again." Jo, Finance Transformation Lead, Mum to a 2 year old.





Garden maze: *"I first did this when we did 'no mow May' and now I do it throughout the summer. Let the grass grow a bit and then mow a maze into it. The kids love having adventures just walking around the paths, finding dead ends, planning different routes. It provides hours of entertainment and can provide a structure for so many other games!"* Martin, Head of Learning and Development, Dad to a 4 and 7 year old.

Build a garden obstacle course:

"We get out all the random bits and bobs from the garden shed e.g. balls, tennis rackets, skittles, hula hoops, chairs and benches and make a course that everyone can enjoy."

If the weather is good it stays up for days and my daughters change the challenges around every day. It provides many hours of free fun!" Carey Ann, Brand Copywriter, Mum to a 13 & 15 year old.

Play pooh sticks: Do you have a stream or river nearby with a river running through it? Find sticks that you can identify as yours, drop them on one side of the bridge then run to the other side to **see whose stick is ahead as they race down the river.**



Tin can alley: Save up empty tins - 6 to 10 is ideal and stack them on top of each other to create a target. **Throw a tennis ball at them and see how many you can knock over.** You can keep score like you would at a bowling alley.

Have a games night: Bring out the board games and have a fun family game night. You can even create a tournament with prizes for the winner.

Munzee hunting: *"This is a perfect way for us to get out of the house. We love locating these little QR codes using the Munzee app (which is free). It's like doing a scavenger hunt without bringing things back home. You can scan them to win points but just being constantly on the lookout for them provides great entertainment on every trip out. It's particularly good when we need to cover any distance in an urban area as it gets them hunting for the next one!"* Rosie, Insight Lead, Mum to a 7 and 2 year old.

Screen-free indoor activities for kids this summer

Who knows what the British summer will bring! Having a selection of activities for indoor play is helpful. For many kids screen-time can be their go-to on a rainy day so try some of these ideas that offer a break and distraction from the screen.

Being a shopkeeper: *"This is our favourite activity of the moment. One of the children decides what type of shop they will own, and collects relevant toys, books or items from around the house to set up a shop on the sofa. The rest of us visit the shop to buy lots of things. It's been a great way to get my son practising his money which has been a bit of a tricky one for him this term."* Amandeep, Head of Product, Mum to a 7 and 3 year old.



Cardboard box fort:

"When the weather isn't playing ball then we get out our store of Amazon boxes, of which there seem to be many, and create a fort."

We've found building it around the sofa particularly successful. Adding blankets and lights creates a cosy play space that can last us days. Then I pack the boxes away ready for next time." Lia, Lead Curriculum Developer, Mum to a 6 year old.

Visit your local library: Be an active reader this summer! **Bring home some new books and take part in the Summer Reading Challenge.** It's happening across the country with lots of free events including some exciting mystery-solving workshops run by our wonderful Explore Learning Tutors. Find out what's happening in a library near you.

Make oobleck: A brilliant, simple science experiment you can do with your children is making oobleck. **Using just cornflour and water discover how something can be both a liquid and a solid at the same time!**

Dirty Dinosaurs: Try burying some toys in the garden or in an empty plant pot. Dinosaurs are ideal as you can pretend you are palaeontologists on an important discovery. Encourage your children to dig them up and scrub them clean. Use small brushes and a bowl of warm soapy water. Just remember where you buried them all!

Visit your local fire station: Look out for any open days happening at your local fire station. **They often have activities during the summer** that allow children to discover more about fire engines, fire safety and what's involved with being a firefighter.

Rainbow rice: Perfect for sensory play and developing fine motor skills for younger children. **Colour uncooked rice with a little food colouring** and use vinegar to set the colour so it doesn't transfer. Allow to dry. Then scoop, pour and let your hands run through it. Make pictures or shapes with the different colours. Try filling up small glasses with the different coloured rice to make layered art.

We're always looking for ideas to share with our families at Explore Learning so if you've got a new favourite activity that you do as a family please let us know. **Whatever you choose to do this holiday, we hope you have time to connect, unwind and make special family memories together.**

Mindful Woods

How many of these activities can you complete this summer?

Do yoga outside

Build a den outside

Watch a sunset

Make nature art

Build an obstacle course

Have a water fight

Cook a summer recipe

Go for a bike ride

Go on a scavenger hunt

Go on a picnic

Complete the Summer Reading Challenge

Grow a plant

Read a book in the shade

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Summer Reading Challenge 2023

Ready,
Set,
Read!

Presented by The Reading Agency.
Delivered in partnership with libraries.

Be an active reader this summer!
Visit your local library or go to
summerreadingchallenge.org.uk
to find out more.



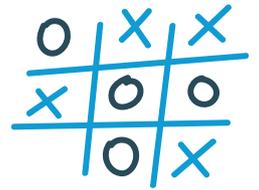
Codebreaker

Crack the message using the code provided for a secret summer challenge. Remember each picture represents a letter.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z



Keeping minds busy while travelling



Have you got a long journey planned this summer? Travelling together can be a great time to connect with your children. It's easy for them to get absorbed in watching movies on their devices but why not break it up with some other games that could be played together in the car, train or plane.

At Explore Learning we love talking games; they are perfect for any method of transport and are great for developing English language skills and challenging your memory.

Educational travel games

I spy

It's a family classic and my brother and I could go on for hours when I was young. Have you played it with your kids yet? You can adjust it to their ability using phonic sounds rather than letters or try colours e.g. "I spy something that's purple."

Remember to choose something that you'll still be able to see in a few minutes time!

20 Questions

Think of an object, person or place. Then allow each person to ask a question. You can only answer 'yes or no' and see if you can guess it right before the 20 questions are up. For younger children you might make it more specific e.g. I'm thinking of an animal and then give them 10 questions to ask.

Alphabet game

Start with the letter 'A' and take turns finding objects around you that begin with each letter of the alphabet. For example, "A is for aeroplane," "B is for buckle," and so on.

Memory game

Turn your alphabet game into a memory game. How many objects can you remember? Begin by saying, "I'm going on a trip, and I'm bringing..." followed by an item that starts with the letter 'A.' e.g. apple. The next person repeats the sentence, includes the 'apple', and adds an item starting with 'B'. Continue the pattern and see how long you can keep going.

Storytelling

Start with a simple story opener e.g. Once upon a time there was a... the next person adds a line to the story. Take it in turns and keep adding to the story. It's bound to get silly. Get creative and have a giggle!



Perfect family games for the plane or train

Dobble

We love a game of Dobble at Explore Learning. Fast paced and flexible matching game that is ideal for popping in your hand luggage and can be played on a tray table.

Sock game

A simple game to test your sense of touch. You need a long clean sock and some small items that you can put in it. Playing pieces from board games are ideal like Monopoly, chess, scrabble and then include other items such as a hair band, dice, marble, lego piece. Make a list of everything that goes in the sock then challenge each other to find an item from the list. Make two socks with identical pieces and see who can find the items first.

Noughts and crosses

Draw out a simple grid of 9 squares 3 by 3 and take in turns to place a '0' or a 'x' in each one. **The first person to get a row of three wins.** Why not make it a slightly trickier game and draw a larger grid and try doing 4 in a row.

Uno

Another simple card game that can fit in a pocket. **Easy to adapt to different numbers of players and suitable for all ages.**

Hangman

A great way to improve **vocabulary and spelling** and you just need some paper and pen.

Pictionary

Choose a word or phrase and try to draw clues as to what it is. **Perfect for stimulating creativity and laughter!**

Tangrams

Travel tangrams are small and light, **with plenty of scope for creativity.** Some are even magnetic which is very handy to reduce losing any of the pieces. See how many different pictures/ shapes you can make with a set of tangram pieces.

Categories

Write down a list of categories e.g. fictional character, fruit, country, TV show, song and then agree a letter. **Each person in the family needs to write down a word that fits that category.** Who can do it the fastest?

Wherever you travel this holiday, have an amazing time and remember summer is the perfect time to grow in body and mind.

Car Bingo

Can you spot all of these items on your next car journey?
Who can spot them all first?

River/Lake



Hot air balloon



Ice-cream van



Bird of prey



Bike on car



Wild animal



Bridge



Flag



Tractor



Fire engine



Train



Traffic lights



Cloud



Plane



Wind turbine



Traffic cone



Flower



Stop sign



Road crossing



Recycling van



Boat



An influential teacher, mentor or role model can make a lifelong impact on a child. Not only in academic skills but also in the development of self-esteem. With increased self-esteem comes increased motivation, which in turn builds resilience and forms a pathway to learning success. The question is how do we find these important people and encourage them to be in our children's lives?

Parents as learning partners

As a parent, you are your child's first source of knowledge and you continue to offer them guidance and support throughout every milestone of their lives. However, as many of us discovered, when donning the 'teacher hat' during lockdowns, images of being your child's perfect learning partner swiftly went out the window.

One of our biggest barriers is actually the intense love that we have for our children. We want so badly for them to do well, understand things and to go through life stress-free that we add too much emotion and this emotional weight adds stress.

An element of anxiety is layered with every request for help, mistake made or moment of parental confusion so that over time every learning experience you have together gets caught up with emotions. For the perfect learning to occur we need to reduce the emotion.

Peers as learning partners

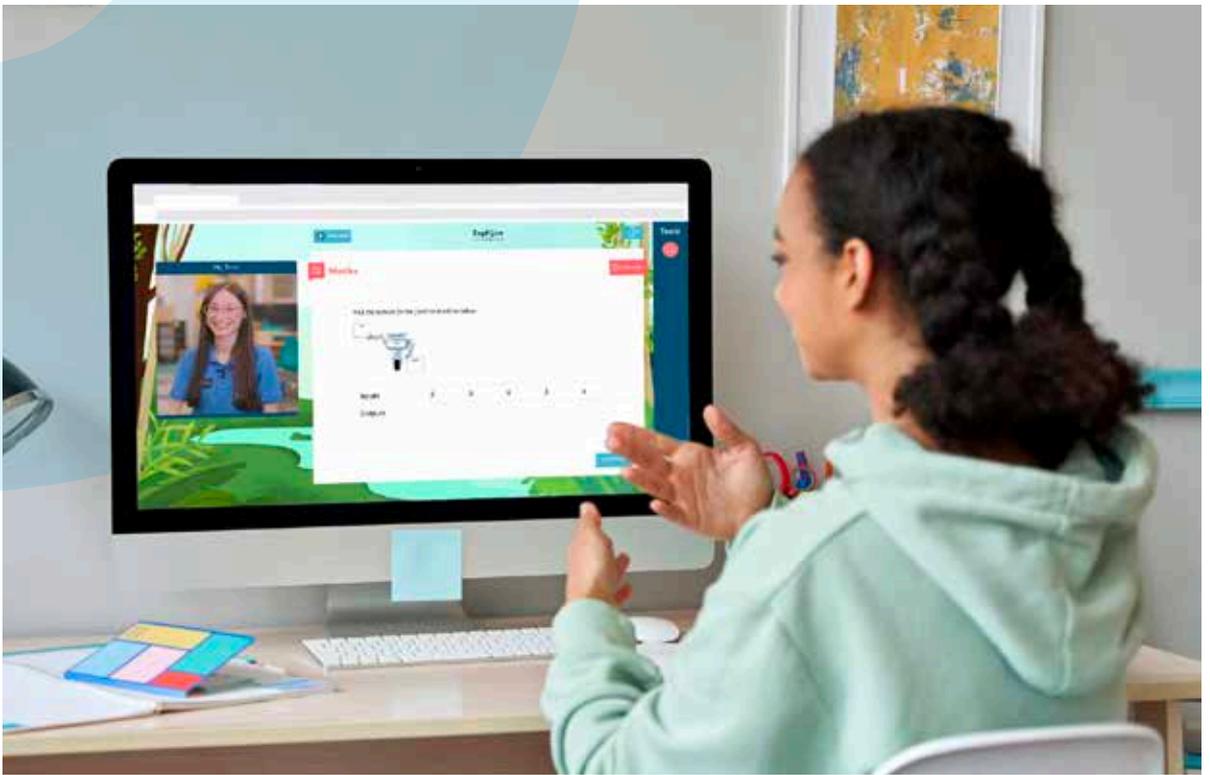
Friends, especially as our children grow older, are often sought out to be learning partners. They have all the benefits of being in the same situation yet have different ideas and different ways of tackling problems.

These relationships can be nurturing and fulfilling however they are not immune to the same challenges of parents where emotions and relationships can cause problems. Peers also may not always know the right answer or have the maturity to give sustained support.

Finding the **PERFECT LEARNING PARTNER** for your child

People make the difference.
Especially when it comes to learning.





Teachers as learning partners

When your child finds a teacher that understands them and champions their talents, they thrive. If you've experienced this yourself you likely still remember the names of those teachers and some of the lessons they taught you. This relationship is so powerful and benefits from a teacher's experience, level of authority and distance from family life. They can see your child as an individual and nurture their talents as they see them today. Not knowing their history in huge detail means a teacher won't make assumptions about what your child can or can't do. Children are more likely to grow and overcome challenges without preconceptions.

However, teachers do need to divide their attention amongst a large number of children. Their time is stretched between teaching and curriculum planning and they change classes every year or more frequently meaning this relationship isn't sustained over the long term. A high level of authority can also be a barrier for some children to really open up and be creative in their response to problems if they fear repercussions.

and they create a safe space allowing children to be fearless when tackling new problems or learning from mistakes. They have no preconceptions of a child's performance at home or at school which for many children is refreshing.

How each child develops is not influenced by parental emotions or school performance targets, it is simply down to building a relationship, encouraging effort and celebrating each child as a unique individual.

Explore Learning Tutors as learning partners

In the quest to find a perfect learning partner, we believe we have the perfect solution - our amazing tutors.

On the one hand, Explore Learning Tutors are role-models and have the same benefits of a teacher in their status of having expertise and being removed from family life. On the other, they connect with children on a more friendly level akin to peers. They work in small ratios with children giving more individual attention

The key is to surround our children in as many effective learning partnerships as possible. How are your child's current learning partnerships? Would they benefit from a boost? Why not meet with an Explore Learning Tutor today to see if we can help you enrich your child's learning further.

HEALTHY & FUN PICNIC IDEAS

We all love a picnic but it can sometimes be a challenge to think of different foods to make the experience fun and varied. Here's a few to try while you're out and about in the sunshine (we hope) this holiday.

Omelette wraps

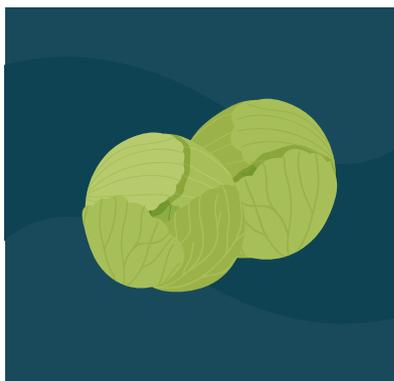
Love eggs but not the smell of egg sandwiches? Then omelette wraps are a great solution. Spread some salad cream on your wrap, whisk up an egg - add some cheese, ham, veg etc (make sure it's finely chopped and only add a little so it doesn't fall apart) and cook in the frying pan. Add to the wrap and roll.

Veggie crisps

Make your own vegetable chips. Kale crisps are surprisingly popular with my children and very easy to make. Wash and remove any woody stalks, dry, season with salt and pepper and scrunch in a little olive oil. Cook on a baking tray or crisper tray at 150 degrees for 7-10 minutes until they are dry and crispy but not too brown.

Mini calzone

Make a simple pizza dough with 400g plain flour, 1 x 7g sachet of fast action yeast, 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp sugar, 2 tbsp olive oil and 225ml of water. Mix together and knead for a minute. Rest for 10-15 minutes then split into 4 small balls. Roll out and fill with tomato sauce, cheese, your favourite pizza toppings. You could even go sweet with nutella, marshmallows and strawberries. Fold over so your ingredients are in the middle and pinch together the edges of the dough. Bake for 10-15 minutes at 190 degrees until the dough has turned golden and crisp.



Rice balls

Sticky sushi rice is perfect for picnics. Instead of rolling into elegant sushi which can take some skill, chop and combine ingredients with the rice and roll into balls. You could use avocado and smoked salmon or tinned tuna and sweetcorn, mix with some spicy mayonnaise.

Salad jars

Layer your favourite salad ingredients in a jar for a portable, healthy salad. This is a fun one for your kids to make themselves. Start with their favourite dressing on the bottom, then add protein e.g. egg, chicken, ham, cheese, tofu, top with veggies e.g. sweetcorn, cucumber, soya beans, lettuce. Shake the jar to mix everything together when you're ready to eat.

Cheese cracker sandwiches

A square of cheese between two crackers makes for a simple easy-to-transport snack, there's lots of different crackers to choose from to make it varied and why not include a slice of apple or some grapes to add a little juiciness.

Snack cones or cups

Instead of crisps and chocolate bars, fill small paper bags or cups with some of these ingredients to make the ultimate picnic snack. You could include a mixture of dried cereal, nuts and seeds for a protein and healthy fat boost, dried fruit such as raisins and cranberries, pretzels and popcorn for a salty crunch and finish off with some chocolate chips or M&Ms for a fun treat.

Salad sticks

Skewers definitely add a bit of excitement to bite-sized food. Thread some peppers, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, mozzarella balls and olives on to wooden skewers for a perfect pre-portioned salad.

Cooking Hut

Frozen Yoghurt Bark

Ingredients

- Yoghurt of your choice.
- Whatever you like! Fruit, nuts, cereal, chocolate, granola.

Instructions

- 1 Spread the yoghurt evenly over a lined baking tray
- 2 Top with chosen berries, nuts, etc.
- 3 Leave in the freezer until firm.

Bow-tie Pasta Salad

Ingredients

- 400g Farfalle pasta
- 5 tablespoons of pesto
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- Veggies of your choice e.g. cherry tomatoes, cucumber, black olives, sweetcorn

Instructions

- 1 Cook pasta following the packet instructions. Drain and rinse in hot water.
- 2 Mix in pesto, olive oil and veg.
- 3 Share with your family.

10 GARDEN GAMES TO TRY THIS SUMMER

Looking to tear your children away from the screen? Playing garden games is a great way for children to have fun, learn new skills and develop physically, socially and emotionally. If outdoor space is limited, set a playdate with friends in a local park.

It's worth prioritising because research shows that getting children to give up their devices for a little bit of outdoor fun comes with some serious benefits. It improves physical health, social development, cognitive development and emotional wellbeing.



Here are some tried and tested favourites and a few new ideas to give a go this holiday.

- 1 Balloon Volleyball:** Hang a rope or string across the garden and play a pain-free version of volleyball with a balloon. Score a point if you hit the balloon over the rope and the other person playing doesn't get to it before it hits the ground.
- 2 Boule:** Throw a small ball, a golf ball is ideal, on the lawn and take it in turns to roll other balls towards it. If you have a boule set - perfect! If not get creative with different balls you have around the house.
- 3 Capture the Flag:** Perfect for playing when you've got a group of friends together. Split into two teams and give each team a flag or object to hide.

The aim of the game is to capture the other team's flag without getting tagged.

- 4 Bean Bag Toss:** Create a target using a cardboard box or hula hoop and toss bean bags or balls and try and get them inside the box.
- 5 Nature Scavenger Hunt:** Create a list of natural items to find in the garden or park such as a feather, a leaf, a rock, etc., and race to see who can find everything on the list. If you're in a park, set boundaries of where children can go so that they stay safe and in view.
- 6 Sardines:** A twist on hide-and-seek, in sardines, one person hides and the others try to find them. When someone finds the hider, they hide with them, and the game continues until everyone is hiding together.

7 Garden sports day: Think of all your sports day favourites: tug-of-war, three-legged-race, sack race, egg and spoon, relays etc. If you've got family and friends over why not make an actual event of it and get some friendly competition going on.

8 Lawn Twister: Using spray paint, create a giant Twister board on the grass and call out different challenges for your family to complete.

9 Duck, Duck, Goose: Sit in a circle with one person walking around the outside, tapping each player on the head and saying "duck" until they choose someone to tap and say "goose." The "goose" must then get up and chase the tapper around the circle, trying to tag them before they reach the empty spot in the circle.

10 Water Balloon Toss: Fill up water balloons and in pairs, toss the balloons back and forth to each other without breaking them. A great way to start some water play that might result in a big water fight later!

Top Tip!

Be creative, use whatever you see around the house!

Obstacle Course

Create an obstacle course for your family or friends

You may need:

- Stop watch
- Clothes items, i.e. tie, gloves
- Hula hoops, balls, rope
- Pillows, cushions, blankets

Here are some ideas of what you could include:

- 1 Walk on uneven surfaces.
- 2 Dressing tasks, i.e. button up something while wearing gloves.
- 3 Throwing/aiming/catching.
- 4 Complete pushups or situps.
- 5 Do something blindfolded.
- 6 Walk like different animals, i.e. like a frog.
- 7 Handwriting tasks, write names or numbers.
- 8 Jumping jacks.
- 9 Running through hula hoops.



PUZZLES & GAMES

In a Number Pyramid, each number is the sum of the two numbers directly beneath it.

How many animals can you find on this page?

?



Can you help the fish locate their next adventure?



Can you solve the puzzle?

NUWOFLSER



Start learning a new way



ACHIEVE
success



BOOST
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EMBRACE
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