



Raising Generation AI

Summer screen-free series: The explorer's logbook

AI Skill: Text generation

Scenario: A list of things to find, wrapped into one ongoing story, tailored to wherever you actually are and whatever your child's into. A discovery mission, recorded through writing, drawing, rubbings, and collecting.

What you need

- ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini (free versions all work fine)
- Paper (or a simple homemade logbook, a few sheets folded and stapled works fine)
- Pens, crayons, and a glue stick
- Somewhere to explore, indoors or out

How to do it

1. Decide your child's age, the location(s) available to them, and what they're currently into.
2. Open the AI app and paste this prompt:

Design an explorer's mission for a [child's age]-year-old, to be completed at: [location(s), e.g. the garden, or the garden and the park]. My child likes [child's interests, e.g. dinosaurs, space, animals]. Frame it as a single ongoing investigation with a narrative reason for the mission, drawing on their interests for the theme (e.g. a dinosaur-mad child could be a paleontologist investigating ancient evidence in the garden, rather than defaulting to a space or detective theme unless that fits their interests better). Write [number] things for the child to find, ordered from easiest to hardest. For each one, specify how they should record it: write a short observation, do a crayon rubbing, draw it, or collect and stick it onto paper. Mix up the recording methods across the list rather than repeating the same one each time. Keep the narrative thread consistent throughout, so it reads as one story rather than a checklist. Keep instructions to one short sentence each, simple enough for a [child's age]-year-old to follow.

3. Check the list. Swap out anything that doesn't suit where you'll actually be, or that needs something you don't have (e.g. drop a "collect and stick" step if you don't want mess indoors).
4. Set up a simple logbook. A few sheets of paper folded together works fine, with one page per find.
5. Read your child the opening of the story to set the scene, then send them off with the logbook.

Good to know

- If the narrative feels bolted on rather than woven through the whole list, ask the AI to try again and be explicit: "keep referring back to the story in every single instruction, not just the first one".

Take it further

- Let your child name their own investigator persona and give it a title (Junior Paleontologist, Chief Space Detective) to write on the logbook cover.