


SCOUTS

Activity: Night watchers (Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers)

 10
mins

Be independent

Learn to make your own decisions, succeed without adults' help, and achieve things for yourself.

Persevere more

Learn to work hard, stay focused, and refuse to let setbacks stop you achieving your goals.

Safety alerts

Dark

Provide some light, so the environment isn't completely dark. Everyone must be able to see others and move around the area safely.

Active games

The game area should be free of hazards. Explain the rules of the game clearly and have a clear way to communicate that the game must stop when needed. Take a look at our guidance on [running active games safely](#).

Outdoor activities

You must have permission to use the location. Always check the weather forecast, and inform parents and carers of any change in venue.

Sneak to succeed and retrieve the keys in this escape game. But don't get spotted by the Night Watch!

Equipment

- Chairs
- Torch or phone
- Blindfold or scarf
- A set of keys

Before you begin

- Use the [safety checklist](#) to help you plan and risk assess your activity. Additional help to carry out your [risk assessment](#), including examples can be found here. Don't forget to make sure all young people and adults involved in the activity know how to take part safely.
- Make sure you'll have enough adult helpers. You may need some parents and carers to help if you're short on helpers.

Setting up this activity

- Place a chair in the middle of the playing area, and put a set of keys underneath it. This is the base of the Night Watch.

- Make sure you have some spare torches and spare batteries.

Getting ready to play

1. Choose a volunteer to be the Night Watch guard. It'll be their job to sit on the chair with the torch and defend the keys.
2. Explain that everyone else will be escapees who'll need to retrieve the keys from the guard to get away.
3. The guard should sit on the chair and get comfortable. Their legs and feet shouldn't block any routes to the keys or be touching the keys. When they're settled, put the blindfold on the guard.
4. Everyone should use their own blindfold, such as their own necker or Scout scarf.
5. They can put on the blindfold by themselves, or they should play without and just keep their eyes closed.
6. Escapees should take up a position at either end of the room and prepare to sneak forwards to take the keys.

Run the activity

1. The guard should be ready with the torch. If they hear someone moving, they should switch it on and point in the direction of the sound. The guard should only point the torch in one direction at a time. Once the torch is lit, they may not move the beam.
2. To help everyone play fairly you could let them sneak forward one at a time. The person leading the activity should watch to make sure that any escapees who are hit by the beam freeze.
3. Escapees have three lives. If they're hit by the beam three times, they should return to where they started.
4. You could also play this game without the lives, so that each time an escapee is spotted they have to return to where they started. They could also just freeze and then continue from where they were. Whatever rules are used, the person leading the activity should try to keep track of the lives.
5. Dim the lights and start the game when everyone's ready. Escapees may move however they think is best.
6. When someone gets the keys, they should become the Night Watch guard for the next round.

Reflection

Sneaking towards the person trying to find you must've been nerve-wracking! It took courage and persistence, as well as agility, to avoid the attention of the Night Watch and retrieve the keys.

John Quincy Adams once said that: 'Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish into air.'

What do you think he meant? Bear in mind that a 'talisman' is an object that brings you good fortune!

Change the level of challenge

Set up the Night Watch base against a wall. This way, the game will be tougher for the sneaky escapees, who'll have fewer places to hide!

You could also add an element of teamwork by having escapees working together in two teams to retrieve the keys for their side first.

Make it accessible

If anyone's uncomfortable in a dark or semi-dark room, leave the lights on.

If anyone's uncomfortable wearing a blindfold, have them face the other way and shine the torch behind them, or cover their own eyes with a hand. But no peeking!

Take it further

This is a great game to play in a large, outdoor space as a wide game. Involve another group and see who can outwit the Night Watch!

Youth Shaped guidance

Once everyone knows the rules, this game can be run by Young Leaders and members of the group.

