

How to Take a Walk

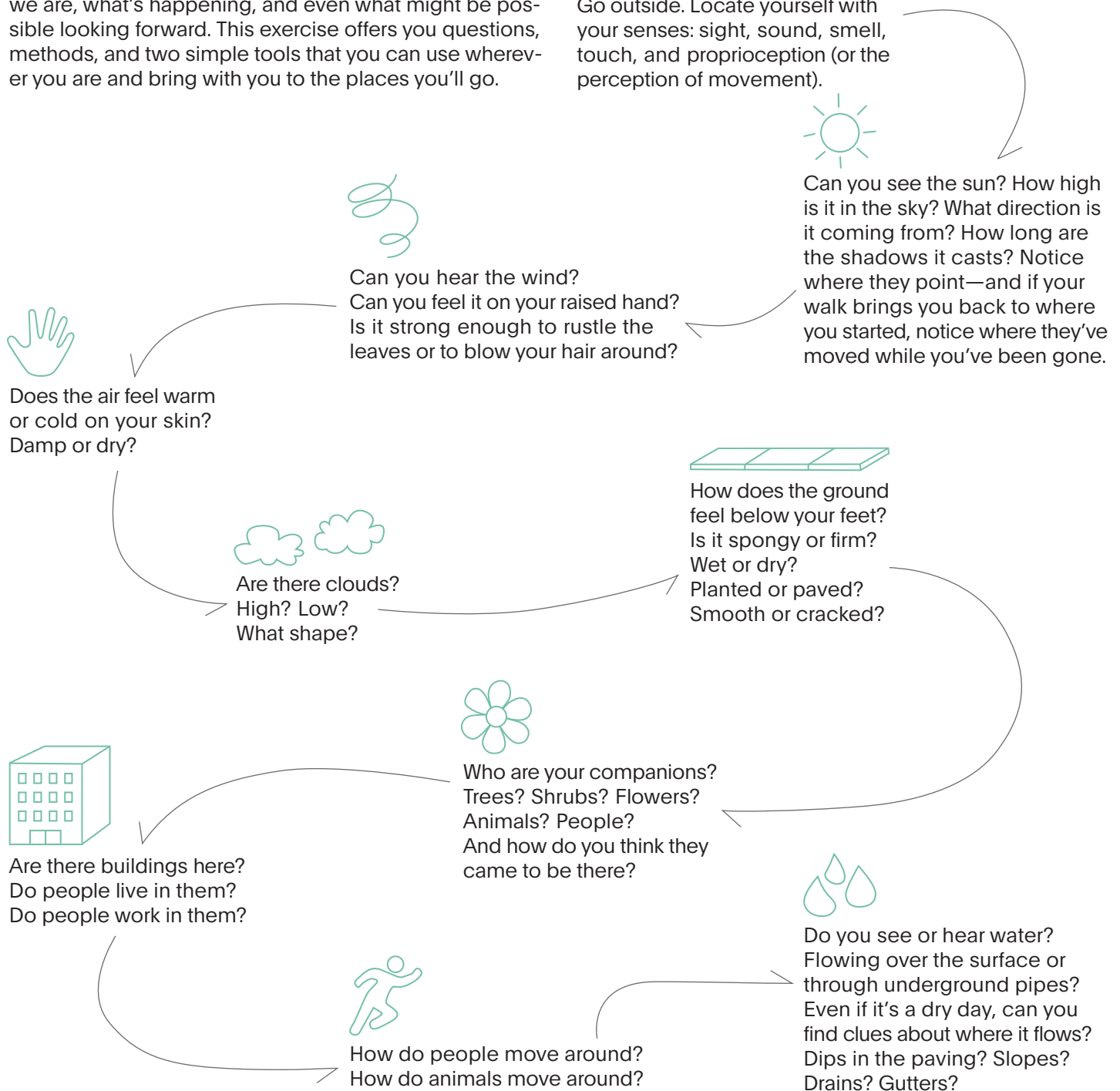
By Jane Wolff and Susan Schwartzenberg
of the Toronto Landscape Observatory

ELEMENT 1: INSTRUCTIONS

A walk is a chance to get to know a familiar place in a new way: through the observation, measurement, and documentation of relationships with the other human and more-than-human beings who belong there. Our bodies make useful instruments for observing and measuring what's around us. They can help us to understand where we are, what's happening, and even what might be possible looking forward. This exercise offers you questions, methods, and two simple tools that you can use wherever you are and bring with you to the places you'll go.

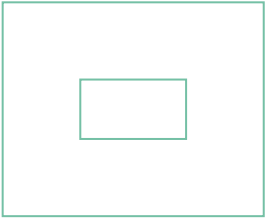
First:

Go outside. Locate yourself with your senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and proprioception (or the perception of movement).



Then: take a walk!

You'll take two tools: a tennis ball to help you follow the lay of the land, and a picture frame—cut out from the card provided—to organize your view. Before you set out:



Look through the frame in the direction you plan to walk. Compose a view that shows you something old and something new. Compose a view that shows you something dynamic and something static. Compose a view that shows you something a person made and something that was not made by people.



Allow your tennis ball to roll along the ground. Which way is it sloping? Can you see any differences that correspond to the slope? Can you feel the slope as you begin to walk?

Walk for ten minutes along whatever route speaks to you. Then use your senses, your picture frame, and your tennis ball to locate yourself just as you did at the start. What do you observe? How is the place you've stopped similar to or different from your point of beginning?

Turn around and retrace your steps. When you arrive at the place you've started, repeat these exercises. What has changed in twenty minutes? What has changed because of your active engagement with the process of observation? What new question has come to mind during your walk?

We would like to know where you went and what question you're asking because of your walk. The opposite side of this page has a map of the neighbourhood and space for your question. Please trace your route and write down your question and leave the page in our box.

How could this walk make you think differently about the walks you take every day in the course of your ordinary life? Could every walk be a chance to think about where you are? And how could your observations help to shape the way you think about the future?

ELEMENT 3: YOUR ROUTE & A QUESTION



Name: _____

Date: _____

Question: _____

ELEMENT 4: A RAINY DAY EXERCISE

If it's too rainy to go outside, you can take an imaginary walk—in a drawing. What captures your attention when you look at the maps on the Observatory table? Is there someplace you'd like to go? What would you look for if

you were outside? If you don't know this neighbourhood, draw what you think it might look like, or what you wish it looked like. Below your drawing, write a note (or a question) about what's on your mind.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Question: _____

ELEMENT 2: A FRAME



ELEMENT 2: A FRAME

