

# Backyard Ecology Study

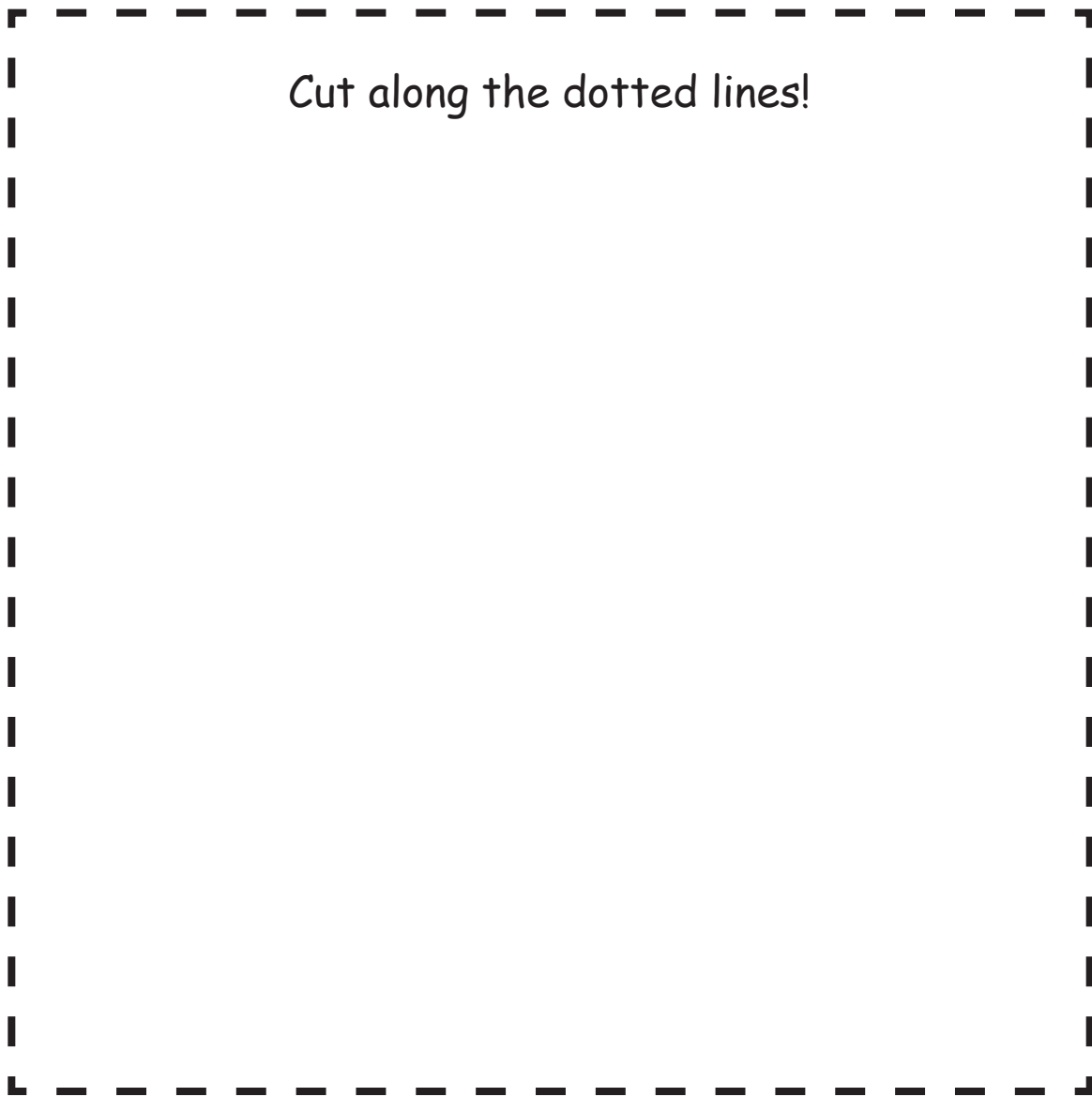


It's easy to become a scientist in your own backyard! An **ecologist** is a scientist who studies ecology. **Ecology** is the study of how living things like plants and animals (called **organisms**) interact with each other and with the nonliving environment like rocks and weather.

Here are the instructions for becoming a backyard ecologist.

1. Print out this workbook.
2. Gather your materials. For this project, you will need:
  - This workbook
  - Two places outside for your field study
  - A pair of scissors
  - Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
3. Cut along the dotted lines on pages 2 and 3. Ask a parent or guardian for help! These pages are your **field plots**. To an ecologist, a field isn't just a grassy meadow. A field can be anywhere an ecologist wants to observe. Plots are the specific places you choose to observe.
4. Pick two spots outside for your field plots. Try to put the plots in different places so you can compare them. You could put one in a shady spot and one in a sunny spot. You could pick a dry spot and a wet spot. Be as creative as you want! You will be able to compare the plots in your notebook.
5. Give each plot a name. Write down the date, time, and weather. Draw what you see in both plots. Answer the questions on page 6. Think about the living and nonliving things in your plots and how they interact with each other.

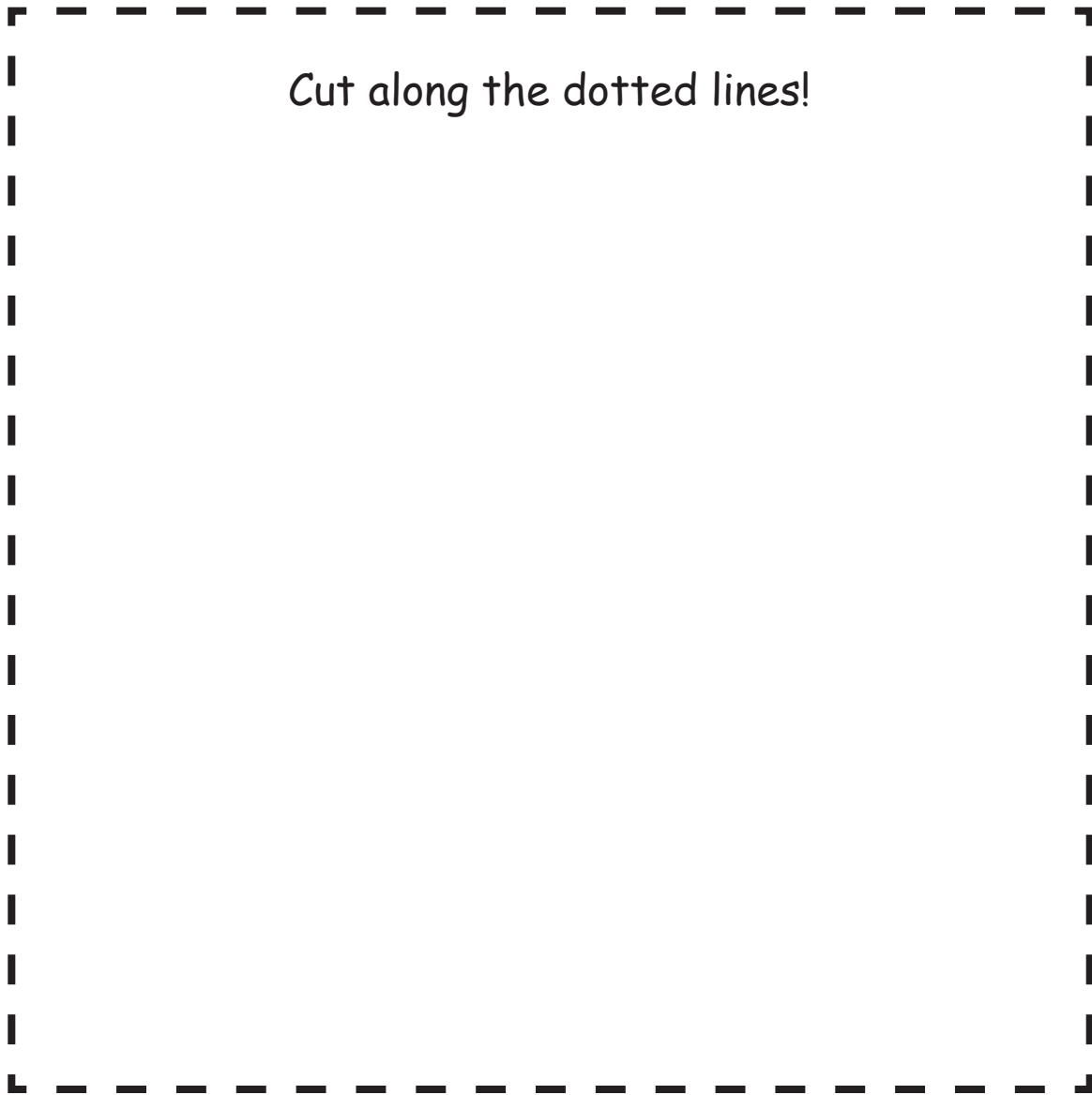
# Backyard Field Plot 1



## Instructions:

Cut along the dotted lines. Pick a spot outside to place Plot 1. Remember to practice social distancing when you go outside. What do you see in your plot? Do you see anything that is alive? Do you see anything that is part of the nonliving environment? Draw and write what you see in your field notebook.

# Backyard Field Plot 2



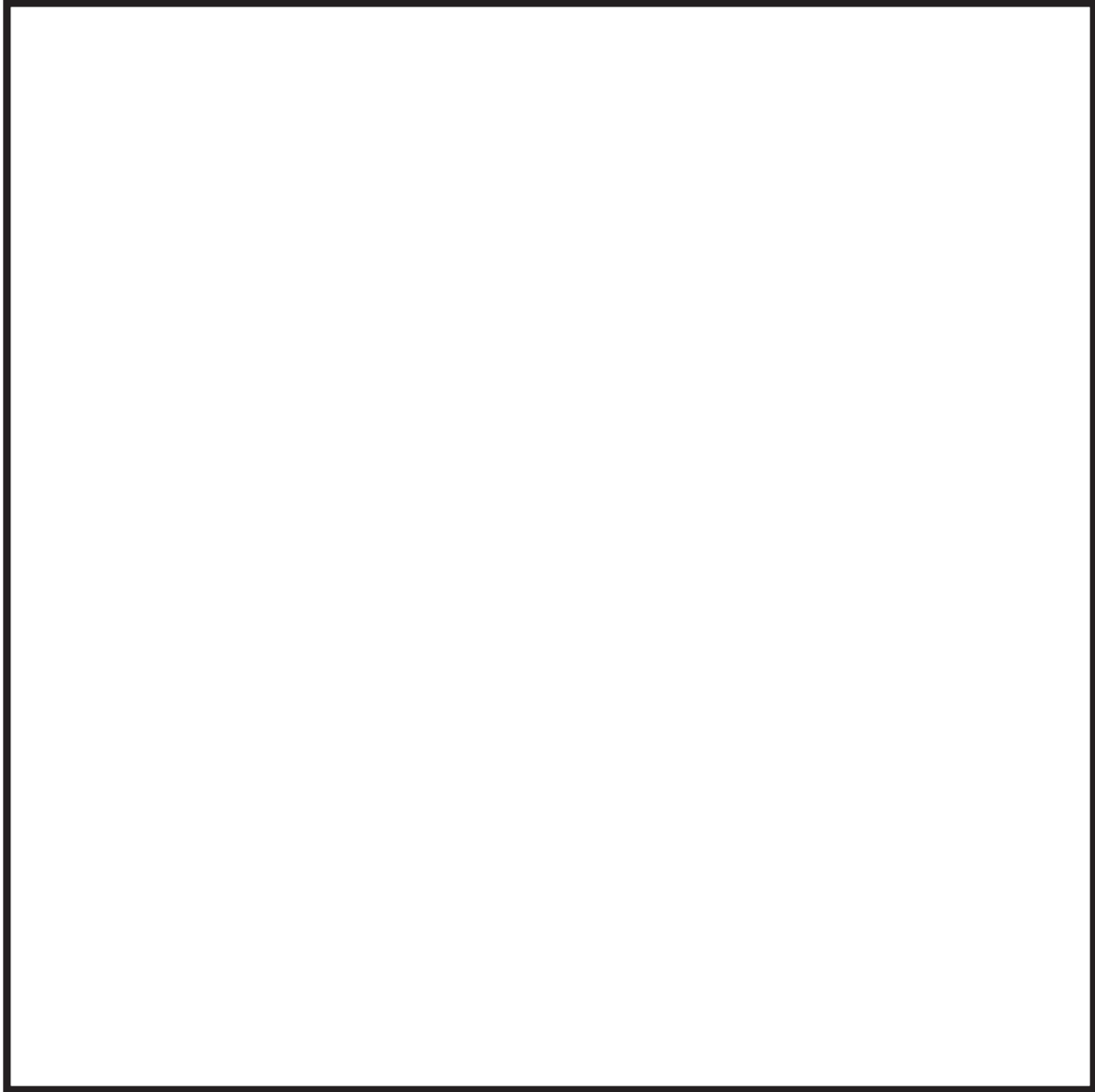
## **Instructions:**

Cut along the dotted lines. Pick a different spot outside to place Plot 2. What do you see in your plot? Draw and write what you see in your field notebook.

# Plot 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Time:



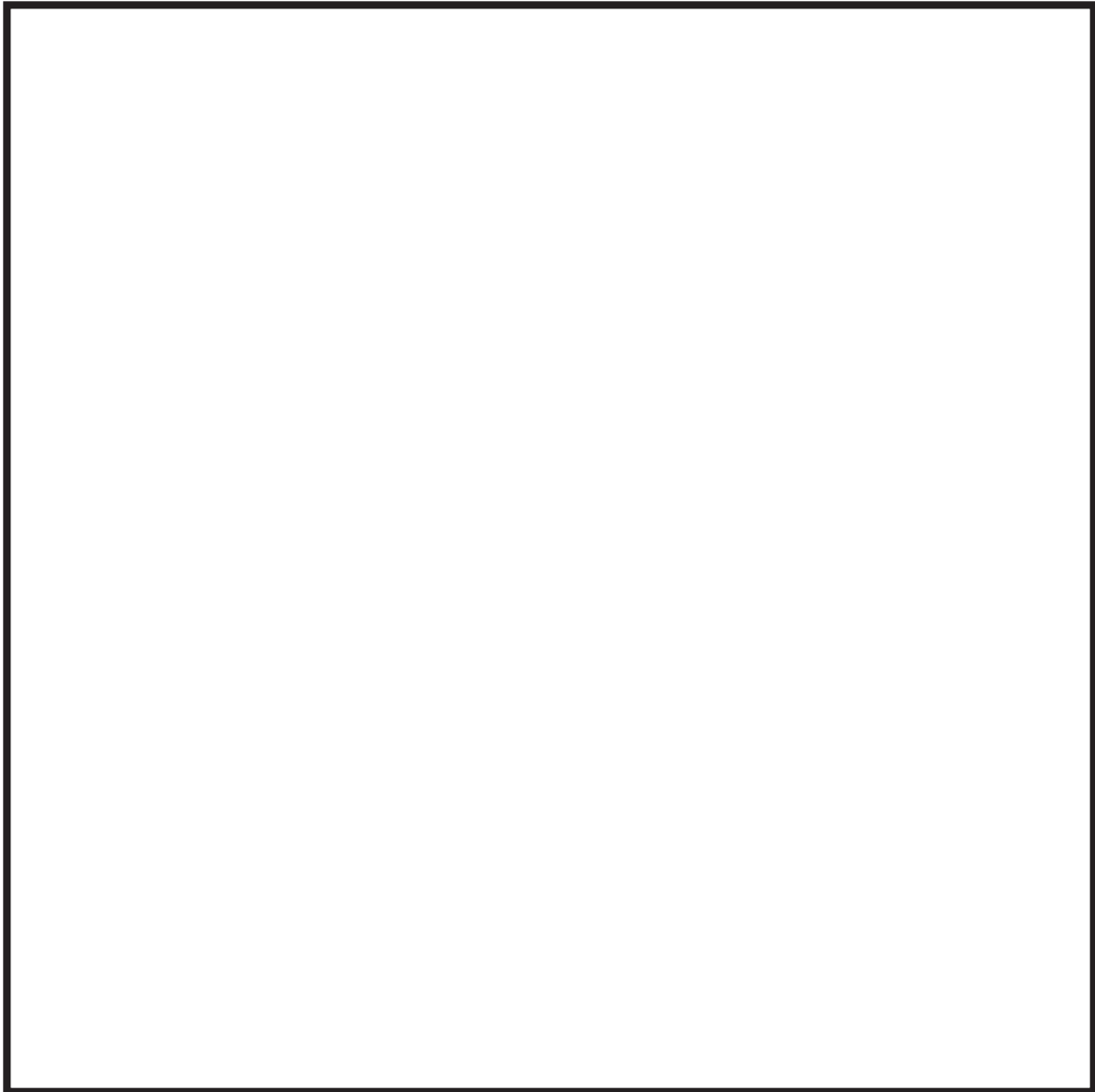
## Instructions:

Name Plot 1. Draw and label what you see inside this plot. Do you see any living organisms? Do you see anything that is part of the nonliving environment? Label what you think is an organism and what is not.

# Plot 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Time:



## Instructions:

Name Plot 2. Draw and label what you see inside this plot. Do you see any living organisms? Do you see anything that is part of the nonliving environment? Label what you think is an organism and what is not.

# Field Notebook

In Plot 1 or Plot 2, did you see any organisms interacting with each other or with the environment? An example would be a blade of grass growing in the soil or a butterfly drinking nectar from a flower. Write what you saw in the space below.

Did you notice anything that was in both Plot 1 and Plot 2? Did you see anything that was in only in one plot? If you only saw something in Plot 1, write it in the Plot 1 circle below. If it was only in Plot 2, write it in the Plot 2 circle. If you saw it in both plots, put it in the middle where the circles overlap.

