

## Squirrel Comics

Squirrels are nature's comedians. Their curiosity and antics can be both infuriating and hilarious. Spend some time watching squirrels in your yard or a nearby green space and then turn your observations into a comic strip of squirrely behavior.



### Materials:

Nature Journal  
Pencil or pen  
Stopwatch (optional)  
Camera (optional)  
Binoculars (optional)

### Having fun?

Tag [@naturalsciences](#) on social media, so we can see you and your loved ones enjoying your nature neighborhood.

### Common Squirrel Behaviors

**Chasing** — Squirrels chase each other for a variety of reasons: during courtship, in competition with others for food and while playing, when young.

**Freezing** — When squirrels detect a threat, they sometimes freeze and stand very still while the danger is near. The grayish-brown color of gray squirrels acts as camouflage to blend in with their environment.

**Eating** — Squirrels eat a wide variety of nuts, seeds, berries, flowers, leaves, bird eggs and occasionally even baby birds. Their sharp teeth never stop growing and can grow up to six inches a year, so you often see them chewing on things to file their teeth down.

**Grooming** — Squirrels groom themselves or siblings to help keep their fur clean. You might see them scratching, licking, rubbing, or lightly gnawing.

**Jumping and Leaping** — Squirrels can leap 5 feet vertically, and more than 10 feet from tree to tree while foraging or escaping a predator.

**Climbing** — Squirrels have sharp claws and very flexible ankle joints that can rotate 180 degrees. This gives them the ability to climb down trees head-first while still retaining excellent grip on the bark with their hind feet pointing up the tree.

**Scatter-Hoarding** — In the fall, squirrels collect and bury nuts underground to ensure they have enough to eat through winter. Though they may bury thousands of nuts, they use their keen sense of smell to find 96% or more of them!

**Dealing with threats** — Squirrels often alert predators that they have been seen and warn other squirrels of possible danger through a combination of tail-flicking, a rapid series of short “kuk” sounds, and longer “quaa” sounds as the predator moves away.

### Instructions:

1. Take your nature journaling supplies outside and find a spot with squirrels.
2. Spend at least 30 minutes observing the squirrels in your area. If possible, observe squirrels more than one time or over the course of several days to expand the types of behaviors you might see.
3. As you watch, take notes of behaviors and interactions and make quick sketches in your journal, paying attention to specifics. Include things like how long a squirrel exhibits a particular behavior, how far the squirrel moves or jumps, any food it finds if it is foraging, and its body posture as it does different things. Also make note of the sequence and timing of its behaviors (*this will help you construct your comic*).
4. Based on your observations, sketch a comic strip that captures a sequence of behaviors and interactions you observed. Your comic strip should be a sequence of drawings in boxes that tells an amusing story and uses minimal text in balloons or captions to form the narrative. You can add humor by anthropomorphizing the squirrel(s) through thought bubbles or dialogue, but try to keep the drawings and storyline based on your behavior observations.
5. Share your squirrel comic strip by tagging [@naturalsciences](#) on social media, so we can laugh along with you!