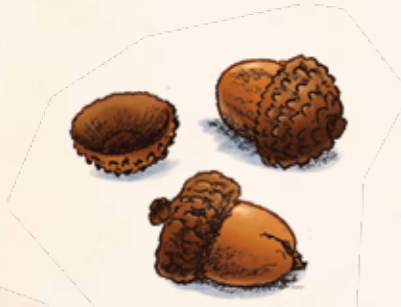
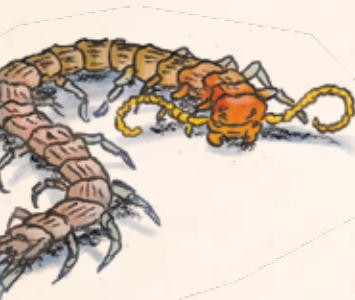


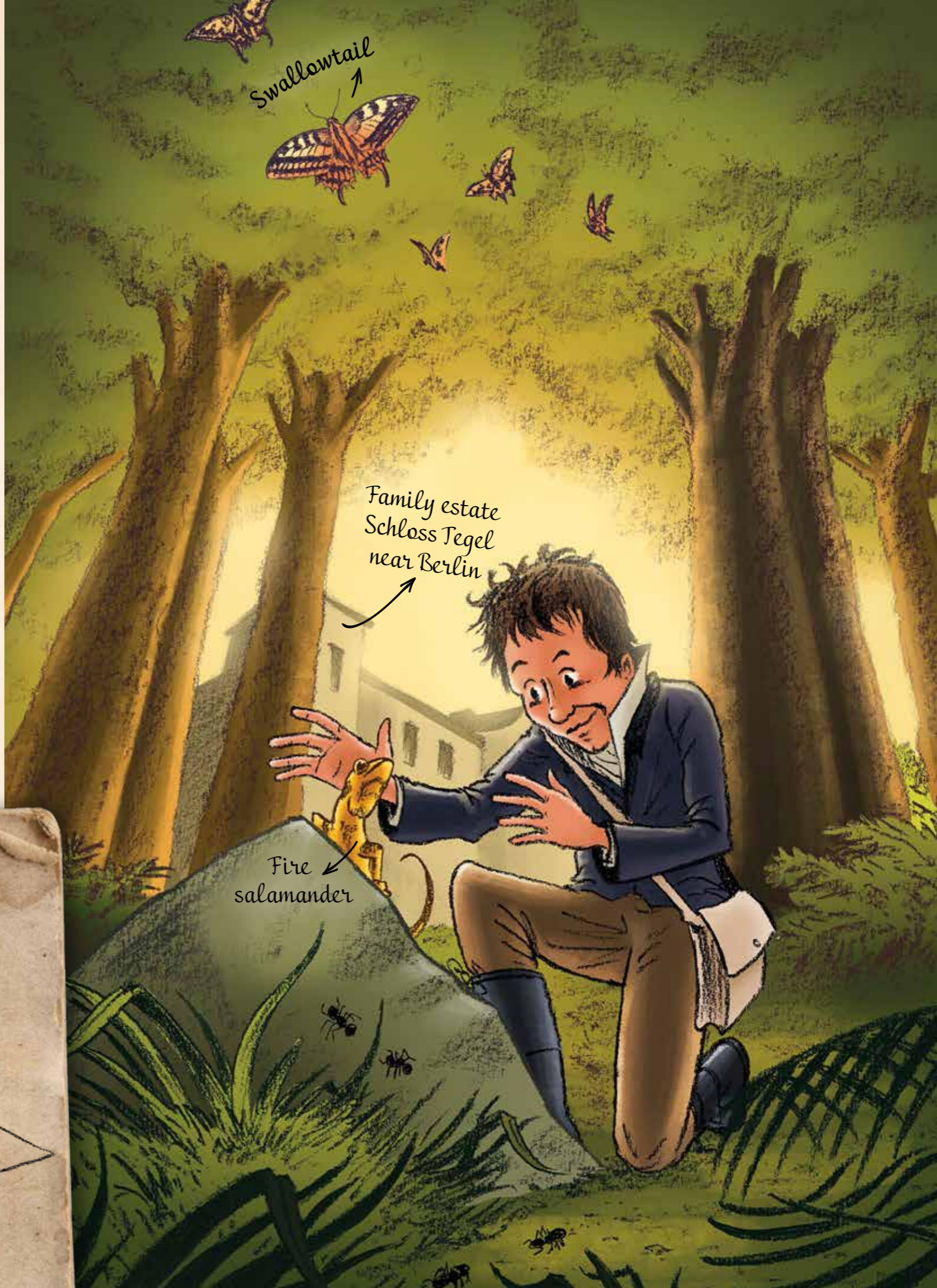
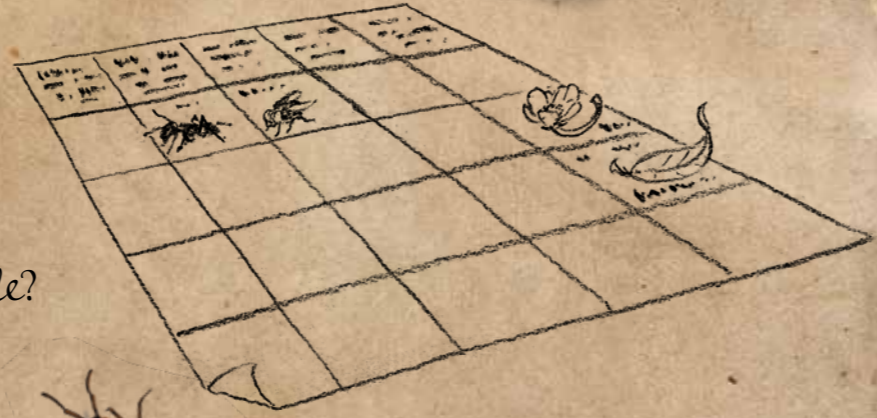


Alexander von Humboldt is a smart guy. But he's no bookworm! As a little boy, the German scientist prefers to roam the forests. Alexander loves anything found in nature, especially insects, plants, and stones. He learns a lot from his explorations. For instance, he learns that insects have six legs, stones have different colors, some plants like shade, and others don't. Alexander's pockets are always full of treasures, hence his nickname, the little apothecary.



Science begins with collection and classification. On a large piece of paper, draw a series of boxes. Write the following words above each column: insects, flowers, leaves, pebbles, shells, etc. Then go explore in your garden or neighborhood. Set each item you find in its own box. Questions to consider:

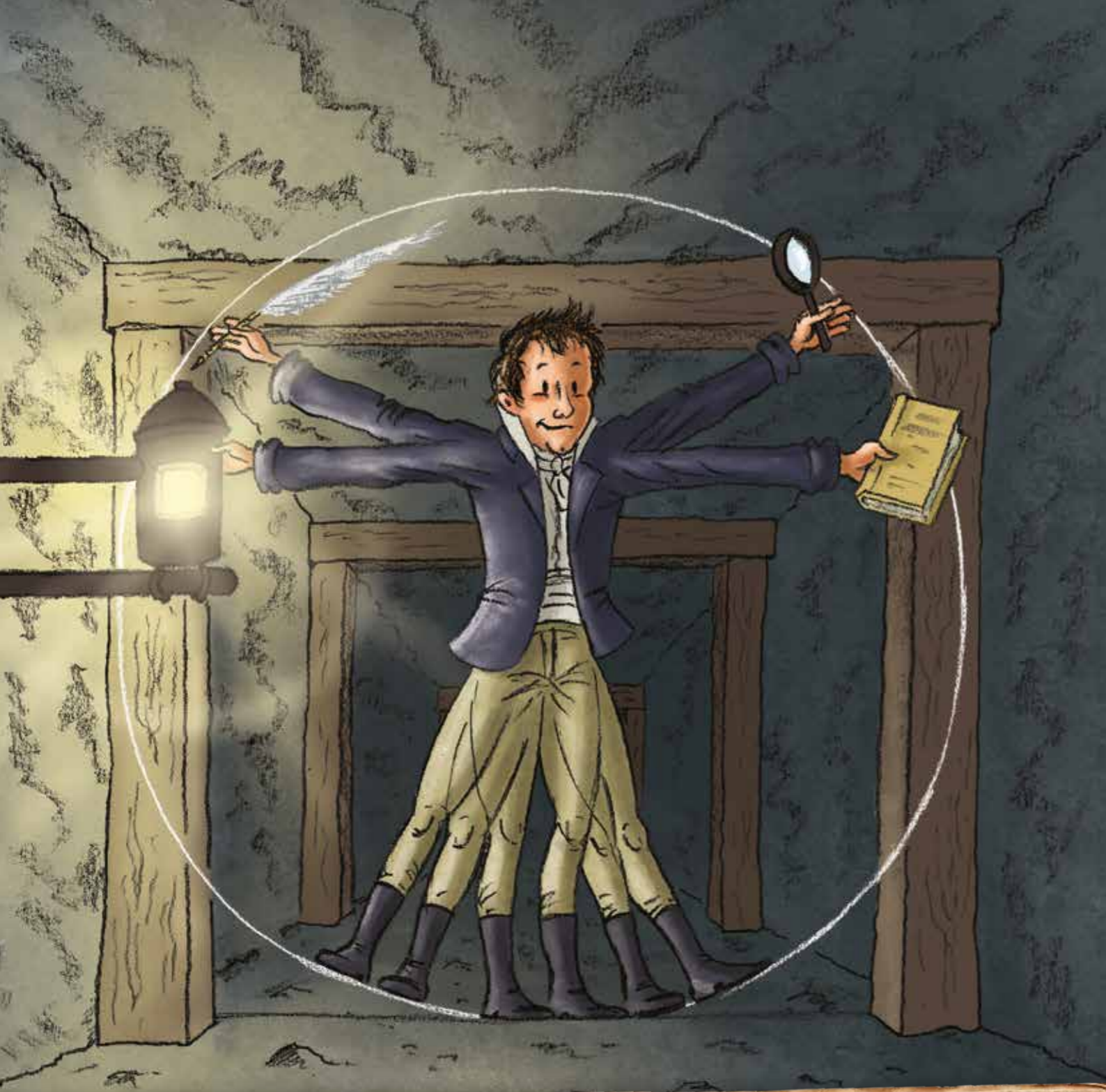
- Does a spider belong with an ant?
- Does an acorn belong with a pebble?
- Why or why not?



Swallowtail

Family estate
Schloss Tegel
near Berlin

Fire
salamander



Later, Alexander becomes an inspector of mines. He's concerned about the safety of the miners and therefore invents a miner's lamp and a gas mask. In addition, the young scientist starts a school for miners. When they understand their environment better, they can work more safely. In his spare time, Alexander studies the fungi and mosses that grow in the faint light of the mines. He works on so many things at once that his colleagues joke he must have extra arms and legs.



Alexander is a homo universalis: someone who knows a lot about a wide variety of subjects. He was a mining engineer, explorer, climate scientist, geologist, inventor, surveyor, biologist, anthropologist, archeologist, laboratory technician, mathematician, tour guide, linguist, author, illustrator, consultant, and human rights activist. Do any of these professions interest you? If so, research what they entail and what training they require.



Try this: Stretch your arms horizontally and measure the distance from one fingertip to the other (a). This is equal to your height from head to toe (b).

