



Colorful Aurora Art

Create your own artwork inspired by the northern lights!

Materials Needed:

Aurora stencil (or draw your own), black paper, colored chalk, scissors.
Optional: Tissues.

Instructions:

Step 1: Cut out the aurora stencil. If making your own, cut a strip of white paper or cardstock in a wavy aurora shape.

Step 2: Color the top edge of the stencil with colored chalk.

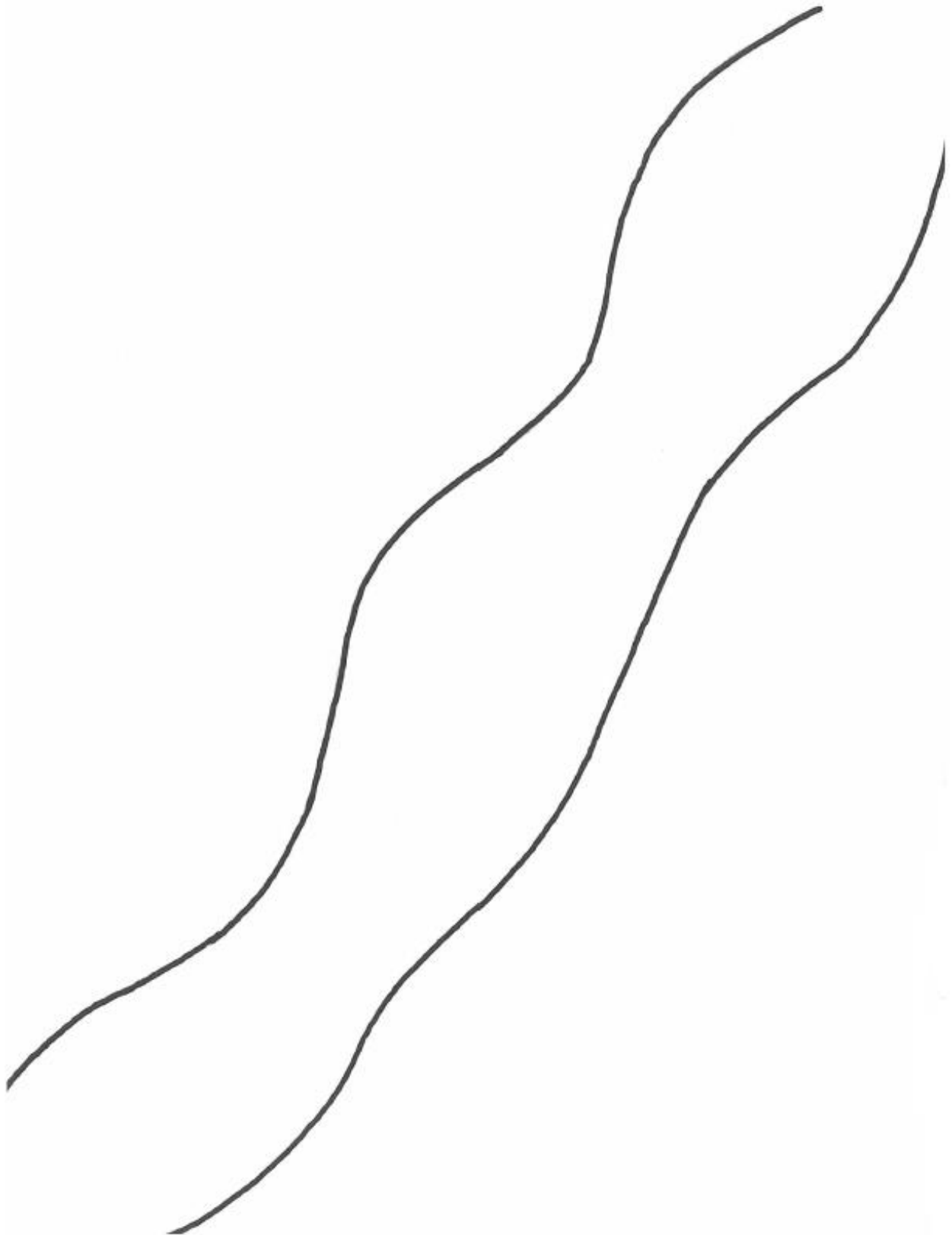
Step 3: Place the colored stencil on your black paper, chalk side up. Smudge the chalk onto the black paper using your finger or a tissue.

Step 4: Repeat using different colors to fill the sky with the colors of the aurora.

Step 5: Add a cabin, trees, campfires, or other things you might see under the northern lights. Be creative!



Aurora Stencil





Aurora Colors

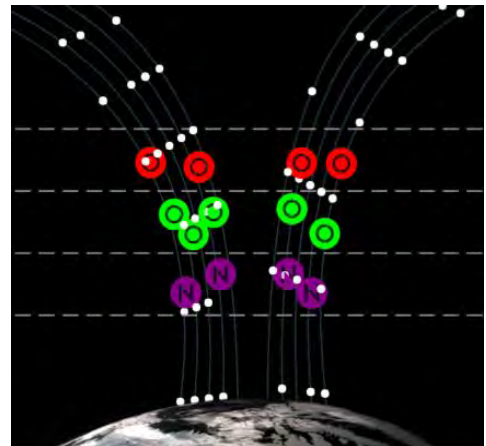
The sun emits a constant stream of particles, called the solar wind. Some of these particles get caught in Earth's magnetic field and move toward the poles. When the particles enter the atmosphere, they crash into gases. This excites the gases, and they give off light like a neon sign.

Different gases in Earth's atmosphere create different colors of the northern lights.

Red light is caused by energized oxygen high in the atmosphere.

Green, the most common light, is caused by energized oxygen in the middle of the atmosphere.

Purple light, which can appear white or light blue, is caused by energized nitrogen lower in the atmosphere.



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The aurora seen from the International Space Station. Image: NASA.



Joe Huff / NASA



Jüri Voit / spaceweather.com



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