



Forest School



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Willow Lane Forest School Planning
Starter (or ending activities)



Nature hunt

Could do one item at a time and keep returning to the base to find the next one or could give children collecting bags.

Nature treasure hunt:

Something beautiful

A small leaf

25 of something

Something shiny

Something patterned

An oak leaf

A seed

Something round

A berry

A forked stick

Something white

A large leaf

Something soft

A daisy

Something with tiny details

Blindfold activities

Blindfold circle – each child wears a blindfold and sits in a circle. Objects are passed around the group without talking. Once the object has made it around the circle the children can suggest what they thought the object might have been.

Blindfold partners – pairs of children take turns to lead whilst the other wears a blindfold. The blindfolded child is led carefully on a journey which stops at certain points to experience sensations using the senses such as smelling a flower or herbs, touching a tree trunk, listening to birds

Rope route. The children all wear blindfolds and are led to a route which is marked by a fixed rope that journeys round an interesting area. The children should stay on one side of the rope and keep contact with it at all times. The children should start the rope route at intervals of 30 seconds so there are no collisions. You could place obstacles along the route but make sure someone is there to supervise the children as they encounter each obstacle. You may also need a helper at the end of the route to tell the children they have finished.

Blind snakes – groups of 5 children are blindfolded except for the person at the front of the line. They place their hands on the shoulders of the child in front of them and the leader takes them on a journey to a new location. The children remove their blindfolds and try to work out the route they took to get to the new location. A new leader then takes over and goes on a new journey.

Blindfold guessing – Pairs or small groups of blindfolded children are led to a new location where they stop and use their remaining senses to investigate the environment. The leader returns the blindfolded children to the original starting point. The children remove their blindfolds and try to guess the location they were taken to.

Circle game:

Need a soft football

Rollerball: Sit in a circle with legs outstretched, put hands behind on floor for stability. The ball needs to travel all the way around the circle without touching the floor. You are only



allowed to use your legs. You need to work as a team to stop the ball from touching the floor.

(before starting – try some leg stretching exercises)

Someone great – have to roll the ball to someone in a circle and say ‘I think you’re great because...’ and then give your reason why. i.e. something I like about that person, something they have done which I was impressed with, something kind they did for me, some school value they have shown, something which they are good at or enjoy a lot. Children repeat the phrase rolling the ball to each other. Encourage everyone to be included.

Name game (good for starting the year) –when you receive the ball you say your name loudly and clearly then pass the ball to the next person in the circle once all the children have had their turn, explain that next time you have to say your name and something that you like e.g. a hobby, interest, favourite lesson, favourite food. Variations – children have to say it with an action (can be as random as they like) – everyone else has to copy

Add more lists of things for children to say

Play memory game and see if how many children you can all remember their likes/dislikes

Pass the stick

2 small sticks or other objects which can be passed along a line

2 equal teams – have teams facing each other

Tell the children to hold hands with the person standing next to them. They are not allowed to let go until the game has stopped. The challenge is to pass a stick all the way down the line without it dropping to the ground.

If the stick falls to the ground it has to be picked up with hands still held together

To make it harder – cross your arms before holding hands.

Have two sticks going in opposite directions

Memory game

Place a selection of 10-20 nature objects on a tray on the ground and cover them with a towel

You have one minute to try and remember as many items under the towel as you can.

Once the minute is up, they will be covered up again

Children write a list (could also draw each object) of all the items they can remember – the one who remembers the most is the winner

Variations

Reduce number of items and take an item away – can they work out which one it was.

Find the examples of the same items from around the forest school area.

Have 30 seconds to name out loud as many of the items as they can without repeating any.

Animal partners

Have an animal card for each child – animal cards should be in pairs or threes (e.g. 2xfox, 3xsquirrels)

Each child picks a card from the bag and keeps it secret in their pocket. Find a space and wait for game to commence.

Children need to act as the animal on their card using their bodies to similar the movement, shape and habits of the animal – not allowed to make any noises or talk. At



the same time children should be looking out for other children who are acting out the same animal as themselves.

If they find their partner-animal, they should stand together and carry on their actions until the game is finished (when you decide)

When the whistle blows for the end of the game – show their cards to their partner to see if they had the same animal.

Ants, Ants Ants

What you need:

- One long line of people
- A leader
- Woodland Objects

The Activity:

- Choose a leader
- Follow the leader as he or she moves in or out of the woodland
- The leader passes an object from the woodland floor over his or her head to the person behind
- The leader then runs to the back of the line once the object has been passed on
- If the object is dropped then he has to go back to the start of the line again
- The new leader then chooses another object to pass behind

Treasure Hunt

What you need

- Natural resources in a box or basket
- Garden space

The Activity

Ask the children to find the following:

- Something that is straight
- Something that is fluffy
- Something that is round
- Something that is rough
- Something that is smooth
- Something that is green
- Something that is yellow
- Something that is beautiful

See making mobiles to develop this in (Construction – skills)

Starter Scavenger Hunt

Divide the children into small groups and give each one a laminated scavenger hunt card and a collecting bag. The card should contain a list of at least five items for the children to find. See box for examples.

When they have found everything on their list the children should return to show everyone their treasures.

Extension - get the children to look at all of the things that they have collected. In what other ways could they sort them according to their characteristics, for example, shape (regular or irregular), colour, species e.g. a type of seed, part of an animal, plant or tree, dead/alive or never alive?



Forest scavenger hunt

Can you find:

Something prickly

Something soft

Something smooth

Something shiny

Something hard

Something waxy

Something yellow

Something round

Something heart-shaped

Something bendy

Take a Spot

What you need:

A quiet place to sit

The Activity:

- Find a quiet place to sit
- Close your eyes and relax
- Open your eyes and look around
- Describe things that you might not normally see
- Close one of the senses (sound, sight, smell, touch)
- Think of 10 things you can either hear, touch smell or see

Tree Explorer

What you need:

A plastic mirror for each child

The Activity:

- Select a tree which is clearly visible
- Hold the mirror close to your face so that you can see the tree by pointing the mirror upwards
- Children choose a twig and follow it to where it joins the branch, and then the trunk. Finally follow the trunk to where it meets the ground. Do this all using the mirror.
- Lower the mirror and see if you can 'retrace' the steps you took from the ground back up the tree to the very twig you began with



Senses (investigate)

Reception, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3

Starter:

Crush leaves in your hand to see if they smell.

Do pine needles smell different than broad leaves?

Can you find any flowers?

What do they smell like?

Pungent Potions

What you need

Plastic cocktail glasses, one per group or pair

The Activity

- Begin a journey around the grounds
- As you travel record the journey by collecting smelly twigs, leaves etc. as you go
- Some good examples are wild mint, thyme etc.
- As you travel place small natural objects into the glass
- Complete the glass with a thin layer of grass or broken flowers
- Compare cocktails in different seasons and weather conditions
- Do all cocktails smell the same?
- Can you make a cocktail smell sweeter, stronger etc.?
- Describe the cocktail and smell

Reception, 1, 2, 3

Mini Woodlands

What you need

Plastic food trays or tuff tray

Soil

Woodland natural collections

The Activity

Create mini replicas of the wood, using materials found and collected by the children

Arrange on the tuff tray or make individual landscapes using food trays

These could then be used for small world imaginary role-play

Observe some minibeasts on your habitat – what do they like? Not like?

Extend for older children by creating tests for different environments, which type of habitat is preferred by which type of minibeast?



Senses (explore)

Reception, year 1, 2, 3

Scavenger hunt

Create a scavenger hunt for the area and time of year for children to look for things, as well as hearing things, or feeling things

Design a clue card with 9-16 things on. could be pictures or pictures and words

Laminate these and hole punch and string up so can be held around child's head.

Make sure children understand all the clues

Let children go off hunting (adults can hunt too)

Can provide some facts to go with objects

e.g. most oaks live for about 500years – but the oldest one is about 1700 years old!

Grey squirrels can jump 3m from one tree to another

Prickly leaves can protect plants from some grazing animals

a decaying log is home for many insects, mosses, lichens and fungi which in turn can provide food for other species such as birds who love to eat insects

Could find: squirrel, bird, something green

fallen log, something round, oak leaf, sound of wind, pine cone, prickly leaf.

Reception, Year 1 – starter for year 2/3

Photographic memory

Lively game that allows children to locate different objects and look closely to identify different objects

In pairs

Each player takes on the role of a camera, fixing in their mind the image of something in the natural environment (photos of something or actual examples)

Before children get there, collect different items (5-10) for children to collect/

Arrange objects and cover with a cloth

When remove the cloth the children have to focus like a lens on one object for 30 seconds and take a mental picture of all the things they've seen

Chan then find the object and place them on a ground sheet or area they are working in.

Ending – talk about each item and what it is and where it comes from – discuss its use and benefits for humans and animals and if relevant, its sustainable management.

*Year 1,2,3***Photowalk****Need:**

Ipads

microscopes for ipads

Do:

Demonstrate how to take a photo – make sure all children can do this

Children to share ipad one between two/three – taking it inturns to take photos, other children to be the spotters

Lead a walk for children to follow or to stay in a certain area

Give children a shot list of things to take i.e. a photo of a bud, a close up of a flower, a picture of something hanging from a tree, something beautiful, a landscape shot etc

Can children improve their photos with photo tricks – making the shape of the subject fit in the frame by turning the camera, turning the camera on its side, shooting with the sun behind you or to the side, change your position to get an interesting shot, take a photo from the ground, from being held next to a tree or a wall and having a photo along it.

Free walk – when children are confident at the first two activities – children can go on their own nature walk and document their journey

Extension:

Captions can be added

Photos can be used to order events

Photos can be edited by changing colours, effects, frames etc

Use an app such as book creator to document a journey/turn it into a fantasy story/create a slideshow

*Reception, Year 1, 2 and 3 – a range of activities that can be used to extend the older children.**Can also be continued for more than one session as there are lots of ideas for minibeasts – of which there should be a lot in the summer.*

Minibeast hunt

Minibeasts you are likely to find in the woodland area:

Spider
Worm
Slug
Snail
Ant
Centipede
Millipede
Caterpillar
Butterfly
Woodlouse
Beetle
Ladybird
Grasshopper
Earwig
Harvestman
Fly

Make minibeast

show photographs of snails, butterflies and spiders and we will talk about their features.

Snail- shape of the body, shape of the shell, eyes on top of the head.

Butterfly- 2 pairs of wings, shape of body, symmetrical.

Spider- small head, bigger body and 8 legs.

Use clay or mud and other natural objects to recreate your minibeast – where would it live? Can you make a habitat for it as well?

Collecting minibeasts

You will need to bring:

- collecting pots (yogurt pots are fine)
- spoons and / or brushes
- paper and pencils for recording what you find – you may wish to make a tick list of minibeasts (see above list for suggestions)
- minibeast (invertebrate) identification books / keys appropriate to age of learners
- bags for collecting forest materials to take back to school
- woolly worms (two sets of about 30 pieces of wool 5cm long, of 5 or 6 different colours – some which will be camouflaged in the forest environment e.g. brown, green, grey and some which will be easy to spot e.g. red, yellow, blue)

Hungry Bird and Woolly Worms

An activity to demonstrate the importance of camouflage (i.e. protection against predators)

Divide the class into two groups and assign each group to a small area of forest. Ask each group to place 30 woolly worms around their area, trying to put them in places where they will be hidden e.g. a green worm on a green leaf. We suggest that you remind the children not to place their worms in inaccessible places e.g., in the middle of bramble or nettle patches.

Once all the worms have been placed, ask the groups to swap areas and then pretend to be hungry birds, looking for worms to eat. Give them a minute to find as many worms as they can. Ask them to bring the worms to the teacher, who keeps them in the order they were found.

When you call them back together, discuss how many of each colour have been found and which were the first ones to be found (the red and blue ones should have been found more easily than the green and brown ones).

Discuss which were easier to find and why. Talk about how and why some animals are camouflaged, and why some animals seem to be deliberately brightly coloured, and therefore not camouflaged (maybe they have a different defence mechanism e.g. poison or a sting).

Give the children another minute to find the rest of the worms.

Forest habitats

Take a few minutes to explore and look around the area. Ask the children to identify microhabitats – places for minibeasts to live within the forest e.g. open grassy area, fallen log, tree trunk, puddle. Explain that the Forestry Commission looks after hundreds of forests in England, and takes care to ensure that they provide lots of habitats for minibeasts and other wildlife.

When areas of trees are felled (cut down), dead wood is often left, providing homes and food for beetles and other invertebrates. When new trees are planted, some open spaces are left to provide warm sunny areas for butterflies.

Collecting minibeasts

Give the children the opportunity to suggest which microhabitats should be investigated for minibeasts.

Hint: We recommend that you have decided where you are going to look before you arrive, and we suggest looking at two or three contrasting areas e.g. open space with long grass, under conifers (probably dark and cool with little ground vegetation) or under broadleaves (probably light, with ground plants and leaf litter). Explain how to collect minibeasts and how you want the children to record what they have found (see ‘before your visit’ above). After some time, call the group back together to discuss what has been found so far. If groups are searching in different areas, are there any noticeable differences between the minibeasts found in each area?

What are the most common minibeasts?

How to collect minibeasts:

Look carefully for your minibeast, e.g. by moving logs or by using a stick to search through leaf litter. (Don't forget to put the logs back!) When you see a minibeast, hold the collecting pot next to it and gently scoop it into the pot with a spoon or brush. Another method is to place a large white sheet under a tree and shake the branches to see what falls out. At the end of the session, don't forget to put the minibeasts back into a suitable habitat.

Extension:

Children then have to make a home for the minibeast (woodlouse) – can they make it have one part that is dark, damp quiet and another part that is opposite – which will minibeasts prefer?

Use pebbles to count minibeasts for each side.

Return woodlice to their preferred environment.

Make a minibeast

Divide the children into small groups and ask them to think of a minibeast they have found during the visit. Ask them to create a ground picture of it using natural materials. Draw attention to the body parts of the minibeast and the number of legs it should have. Can they find forest materials of the correct colours to make their picture? Finish the activity with a gallery where the children look at each other's ground pictures and try to identify them.

Be a minibeast

Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to make themselves into a minibeast (e.g. one child in the centre being a spider's body and eight others being its legs).



**Can they make the same minibeast with fewer children?
Can other groups guess which minibeasts are being made?**

Wildlife conservation

Discuss reasons why people visit forests e.g. dog walking, playing, picnics and bike riding. Explain that many people also visit forests to look for wildlife e.g. bird and deer watching. Some people even volunteer to help the Forestry Commission with conservation projects, for example creation of habitats for wildlife, and counting and recording butterfly species.

In this activity, you can help to provide a habitat for wildlife. There are two ways to do this: Either, find an area with fallen forest materials on the floor, and work in teams to create small habitat piles – stacks of sticks and leaves, in which invertebrates and small mammals can shelter and hibernate.

Or, collect small sticks to take back to school. These can be tied together in bundles and hung in the school grounds to provide 'hotels' for minibeasts.



Maths

Year 2 and year 3

Woodland mapping

create a map of the forest school area

Imagine if you actually lived in a forest – if it was your home and it provided you with food, water, shelter etc. it can be difficult to see what's around you with all the leafy trees and bushes in the way – we're going to create a map to help us know what's where

Link to survival skills and human history

Set up your basecamp where you'll be based and where everyone will be returning to.

Children to be in groups of 4+

All members of the team need to find a stick that's as long as their arm and one that's half as long.

Arrange long sticks into spokes of a wheel and small sticks as the end cross sections to turn it into a circle. Now have map which has been turned into a grid. The middle is where base camp is. And the sections correspond to the sections around them.

Set target for each triangle section (i.e. 5 pieces that show what's in that area)

Find items, making note of order you found them in. if you find water, find the thing that's closest to it.

Place the first thing you found closest to the centre, the next thing the next distance and so on until you place the last thing the furthest away from the centre

If you saw water, draw a wiggly line in the ground and soil that you found next to the wiggly line

Repeat until have map of the whole area.

How could we use the map we've made? What uses do they objects that we found have? How could a human use this map to survive in forest school area?



Reception, year 1, 2 and 3

Can be simplified or made more difficult for each year group.

Making tracks

Use field work skills to make maps and plans

To learn symbols and follow directions

To work collaboratively

Need: nature objects, string, prizes/rewards

Do:

An adult secretly makes a track for the children to follow in small groups. The children follow the clues on the track to find their way to a prize

Or, A small group of children make a track. The group making the track can be rotated each time the game is played

Or, the teacher creates a track by marking a route out onto a simple drawn map of the school grounds. Use symbols and arrows to lead children to the prize.

Or, groups of children use a paper copy of the simple map of the school grounds to create a track for other groups to walk follow the trail themselves before allowing others to use it.

Clues:

twigs arrange into an arrow shape to show which direction to travel

stones to make letters such as NESW or L R to show which direction to travel

Use twigs to make no entry sign to show where not to go

Make a code key which the children following the trail can take with them or remember i.e. what shapes made with twigs on the track stand for e.g a triangle on the path = turn right, a square on the path= turn left, a cross on the path= the end of the track.

Simplify: hang clues from tree branches – like a simple picture map which show the direction to the next clue

Fire and cooking

Reception, Year 1, 2 and 3

Basic Bread on a Stick Recipe:



2 cups flour (I use spelt flour to make it healthier, but pretty much any flour will work)

2 tsp baking powder

1 tsp salt

0.75-1 cup cold water

Sticks for grilling the bread

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl. Add the water a little at a time, until the dough is firm and smooth. Divide it in 12 pieces and roll them in your hands until they are long and thin (approx. 8-10 inches). Have the kids go on a hunt for suitable sticks and help them cut off protruding twigs with a knife. Then twirl the bread around the stick and make sure that it's on properly before putting it over the fire. We had an open fire in the woods, but if that's not an option for you, it can also be done on a grill.

Make sure to turn the bread while holding it over the fire and take care not to burn it. It's done once it's golden brown on the outside and baked on the inside. Gently remove it from the stick and serve with butter.

English

Reception, year 1, 2 and 3

Story book pictures

Create a picture from a story the children have been working on

Could give series of illustrations or scenes for children to do then children to see if they can visit them in order retelling the story.

Chn to collect natural objects to create their own story picture.

Chn have to explain to their friends what their picture is about – can another child repeat/explain to an adult what someone else's picture was about?

Can you use persuasive language to persuade people to step into your picture (like Mary Poppins pavement art scene) – chin could vote with a leaf next to the picture if chn managed to persuade them to come into their picture – take it in turns to have one group being persuaded, the others staying by their picture being the persuaders.

If you wanted to not base it on a particular book you could give the children free reign – children can create an ingredient for a story and see if they can link them together (like Rory's story cubes™)



Taking pictures of work could extend into classroom – children could label their picture, create an advert for it. Sequence pictures for a story, tell a story.



Reception, year 1, 2 and 3

Create a journey stick

traditionally Aboriginal people of Australia once created journey sticks to record their travels – what happened, what they saw, smelt, heard, and how they felt and what they thought.

Materials:

Sticks, lengths of string/wool

Rubber bands

Activity – explain principle of journey stick and how you could use different things to represent different feelings/memories/senses

Everyone gather their sticks

Show children how to attach things to their stick – children to then explore area and find different things to decorate their stick (rubber bands can be used to tuck things into)

Adult to lead the walk to encourage children to look carefully and slowly. As they are walking think about all their senses and find things to help remember different moments on the way.

Adult to remind chn about safety when picking up objects

Put the first thing at the top of your stick, and the last thing at the end.

At the end – recount what's on their stick and why they picked it

Talk about chosen items, where do they come from? What do plants or animals use them for? what cans we do to ensure that they are around in the future

Extension: turn objects into noun phrases/expanded noun phrases

Use time adverbials to tell the story of their stick – create an imaginative story using items found.

Year 2 and year 3

Poetry please

Clipboards, paper (could be pre divided), pencils
(something to record children – optional)

Do:

Once outside children will have to explore using their senses – discuss their senses and what words we use to describe (adjectives)

Divide the paper into the sections for the senses (probably 4 unless you wanted to do taste – allotment?)

Go through senses one at a time and get the children to immerse themselves in their surrounds i.e. close your eyes and listen to all the sounds you can hear. In one minute I will tell you to open your eyes and write down some details of the things that you could hear, what is it, what are they doing, describe the thing making the noise, describe the noise, why is it doing it, what effect is it having

If eating – make sure children only eat the items which you have identified as being edible – explain the children the importance of knowing what you eat and that some things can be poisonous and some things need to be cleaned/cooked first

Once children have complete the sensory exploration and have lots of ideas, model how they could turn their descriptive phrases into a poem i.e. acrostic, calligram, haiku, or free verse

Children can read their poems aloud while still in the environment for some performance poetry

Make evaluative comments on the things which they liked about the others poems.



Construction (skills)



Reception

(lashings) Stick frames

4 sticks per person, string, scissors, art materials, colour wool

Can be used as a frame to look at natural world. Use as frames to then take photos of the area.

make a spider web, decorate with journey items, could be a decoration for a den,

Gather sticks four per frame. Stick can be any length as long as the frame makers can handle them. they should be sturdy and rot free

To bind each frame cut an adult's arm length of string for each of the frame four corners. Lay the end of one stick across the top of another at a 90degree angle, leaving about 2.5cm sticking out to form the arms of a cross. take your sting under the vertical stick at the bottom of this cross and tie a double overhand knot

It can help to think of the crossed sticks as a compass with north south east and west bearings.

bring the long end of the string up and over the east side of the horizontal stick and then under the north side of the vertical stick, then again over the west side of the horizontal stick, and under the south side of the vertical stick, repeat this pattern five or six times pulling tightly at each turn to fix the sticks in place. Cut any excess string away. This is known as square lashing.

Repeat for other corners of the frame.

Can be used to take a picture, weave wool around it like a spider's web, and use it as a loom to make a picture.

Construction (weaving)



Year 1

Branch Weaving

What you need

- A branch with two or three forks
- Thread or wool
- Natural collections of light garden materials

The Activity

- Zigzag and bind string over the forked branch so a simple loom is established
- Grasses, leaves and feathers may be woven through the threads at intervals over one strand and under the next

As confidence increase, more complex branch looms can be developed with string loops tied in the centre on the branch

Year 2

Spider's Webs

What you need

- Plenty of twigs and grasses
- String
- Scissors

The Activity

- Go on a cobweb search and look closely at their shape and structure
- Discuss why spiders make webs (it takes a spider about an hour to make a web)
- Collect 2 thin sticks approximately 30cm long
- Cross in the middle to create 4 spokes
- Use grasses and weave around the spokes
- Add objects from the woods to the webs such as pretend flies, creeping plants etc. to weave around in circles, working from the middle outwards

Year 3

The God's Eye Weave

What you need

- Three sticks, tied in the centre
- Wool in a variety of colours

The Activity

- Weave wool in and around each stick
- Build up gradually using a variety of wool colours
- Weave in different directions and, when a pattern starts, change the colour of the wool

Mexican people believe that this weave represents God's eye



Natural mobiles

Could be a good follow up activity/combined with forest school after a trip to the beach or other outdoor area where children have chance to collect objects to create a hanging display

Reception

Need:

Masking tape/sticky tape

cotton/fishing line/string

Collection of nature objects, including twigs to hang them from

Do:

Lead a walk where children can collect some nature objects – have to be small enough to hang from a stick – need at least 4 or 5.

Need to also collect twig/stick that is strong enough to use as a bar to hang other objects from. Choose their favourites (or give them another criteria to sort their objects) to hang from the stick.

Some objects may be tricky to hang on so can use tape to fix these.

The objects can be strung on at different lengths but the end mobile needs to balance so will need to experiment with getting the items to balance.

Tie a piece of string from the stick to use to hang the mobile.

Year 1

Variation

Cross lash two twigs together to form a strong cross to hang items from – these then have to be balanced in two different directions.

Use a palm drill to bore a hole into any strong/thick/sturdy items.

Natural mobiles

Materials

(if any old blinds are available, these could be painted and decorated and hung up on trees – perhaps with a small group while others do main task)

Natural materials,

string,

Scissors

washing line/rope

Pipe cleaners (for simplification)

Explain task of creating a mobile to decorate outdoor classroom & show children the resources they will need.

Spend time teaching children how to tie a knot – tricky for younger children (use pipe cleaners if necessary).

Encourage cooperation and collaboration. Children may need to work together to attach decorations.

Walk through the gallery of their mobiles and share success.

Year 2 and 3

Threaded Mobiles

What you need

- A variety of sticks of varying thickness and length
- String
- Measuring tools
- Natural objects

The Activity:

The activity is suitable from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 and can be adjusted to different ability levels with regard to accuracy of the measurements required i.e. non-standard, standard, amount and types of objects collected.

- Ask the children to make a mobile by tying sticks that are equal in length together
- Encourage discussion about measurements using appropriate measuring vocabulary
- Go on a walk to find objects to tie on to the mobiles





Year 3

Bow and arrow

An important tool in early humankind development – being able to make an effective bow and arrow could mean the difference between going hungry for a whole tribe.

ADULT SUPERVISION OR CONTROL MAY BE NEEDED FOR SOME OF THE ELEMENTS OF THIS ACTIVITY

Explain about safe working zone – circle the diameter of the tool user's outstretched arms. if anyone comes inside the circle, tool use should stop until the zone is empty again/

Show everyone the cutting edge of the secateurs (if these needed to cut sticks from trees) and a pen knife, how to position hands safely and cleanly, how to close and lock it and how to carry it safely (at your side with blade pointing towards the floor and now running)

Show how to handle the potato peeler, holding the stick behind the [peeler with one end on the floor to stabilise it, and peeling away from the body. All tools must go back to an adult when not being used. And stored out of the way with all security catches on. Explain about the responsibility of having a toy bow and arrow and how to play with it safely and never shoot at arrow or even aim one at a person or an animal.

For bows need sticks that are comfortable to handle, bendy and crescent shaped. For arrows, use short straight sticks. – Ideally all sticks should be from the ground.

Strip the bow with potato peeler

Use a penknife to make a notch in the outer edge of the bow

In the notches tightly tie string on to both ends

If chn can be trusted with arrows...

Potato peeler to strip bark off arrows. But all arrows should be blunt. Make a notch at the back end of each arrow.

Set up a safe target area for children to practise on.

Arrow fact – earliest arrow head dates back 64000 years

A person who makes arrows is called a fletcher

A quiver is what you carry your arrows in

Construction

Year 3 but other years could attempt it if you think children could do it/have enough adult supervision

Withy sculptures

Withy: *noun*

noun: withy; plural noun: withies; noun: withe; plural noun: withes

a tough, flexible branch of an osier or other willow, used for tying, binding, or basketry.

"it is fixed with withies tied to the common rafters"

Withies (pre-soaked in water for 24 hours

masking tape

Tissue paper

Foil paper

PVA glue and spreaders

1 strong bamboo cane per sculpture

Do :

Withies are very versatile to work with – can create all sorts of structures – children should work in small groups when using these

Before starting, look at some withy sculptures i.e. www.serenadelahey.com

To make a phoenix as shown below:

Soak the withy lengths in water for 24 hrs before you plan to use them
bend the withy lengths to make 2d shapes, egg circles or leaf shapes. And secure the ends with masking tape, fasten these shapes together with more masking tape to form 3d objects e.g. a body, wings or head

Once you have combined these parts together they can be mounted onto a strong bamboo cane
Cover the whole structure with tissue paper which has been pasted all over with watered down PVA glue

Add decoration by sticking on tissue or foil paper.



A group of children working together to join the withy loops together using masking tape.



Clare Summerson demonstrating how to construct the body.



Laying pva covered tissue paper over the withy frame.



A finished phoenix decorated with metallic and coloured tissue paper.





Construction (tools)



Reception and year 1

potato peelers

Magic wands

Wool, scissors, string/wool, potato peelers to strip bark/shape stick.

In forest school, magic wands are made of wood – see ogham alphabet for more info for the specific qualities the Celts viewed different trees

Elder= faery tree

Yew= death and rebirth because it's such a long lifespan

Oak = strength, endurance and courage

birch= transformations and new beginnings because it's one of the first trees to change grassland into woodland

Tell chn about the special powers that people believe are in trees – how will they use wands and who will they be when they use them?

Decorate wand with natural objects. wrap wool around stick and tie with double overhand knot

Cast some spells and let magic begin!

At end, how could they describe their wand, or the powers it has, what features of the wand provide these powers> how does holding the wand make them feel?

Looking at different wands, can you tell where the sticks came from? How can you tell?

Year 2 and 3

Knots and notches

Make a tiny bow and arrow for an elf

Find a bendy stick that will be big enough for a full grown elf.

Get an adult to carve a notch about 1cm from each end of the stick.

Tie some string to the top notch of the stick.

Make a slip knot loop in the bottom of the string.

Bend the stick into an arc and hook the loop onto the notch at the bottom of the stick.

Make sure that the knots are tied up tightly.

For the arrows, collect thin sticks from the forest floor.

Construction (tools)



Reception and year 1

Painting with Petals

What you need

A collection of brightly coloured petals and seed heads

The Activity

- Collect and share an array of petals/seed heads
- On paper press gently and smooth the petals/seed heads over the surface until a colour emerges
- Record the flowers (colour, name and where it was found)

Hammered Plants

Materials

☐ 'Soft' flowers/leaves i.e. montbretia, aubrietia, primroses, cranesbill, nettle, lobelia or most other wild flowers (do not pick any rare flowers!).

☐ Newspaper

☐ Small 2oz hammer

☐ Kitchen roll

☐ Elastic bands

☐ Masking tape

☐ Small chopping board or hard surface

☐ Soft calico or cotton fabric (works on t-shirts)

Method

1. Select a piece of fabric and a flower/leaf
2. Lay the plant face down onto the fabric and cover in masking tape
3. Lay material face down on the chopping board/hard surface with a thick layer of newspaper between them
4. Wrap a few pieces of kitchen roll around the head of the hammer and hold in place with an elastic band
5. Tap the fabric with the hammer (firmly!), occasionally lifting to see if the image is appearing
6. When you are satisfied with the print, gently peel the plant and masking tape away from the fabric, softly scraping away any pieces of the plant
7. The print can be used to decorate a card or can be framed as a gift. It could also be used on a shirt pocket on other piece of clothing and can be 'touched up' with paint to make the print stand out.



Construction (Dens)

Reception, year 1, year 2, year 3

Children should have experiences of making dens using different materials

Here are a variety of dens to allow the children to make their own choices in how to solve den making problems

Make a shelter

Tower shelter – The easiest of shelters – made by building secure towers from boxes and draping sheets over to make a roof.

Lean to shelter – made between 2 upright supports such as two trees. A wedge shape is then made by attaching a long pole or ropeline between the two uprights at appx 1 metre up and then adding a cover such as a sheet, cardboard, foliage which runs back to the ground on one side of the uprights. The cover can be secured to the ground using weights like rocks or logs

A frame shelter – made in the shape of a triangular prism. It can be made by hoining two poles together at either end on a 45 degree angle, then running a rope or a pole along the ridge between them and covering with branches/foilage/sheet. Alternatively, it can be made by making 2 rectangular frames, then leaning them onto each other at a 45 degree angle and securing them with rope/string. This cover can be secured to the ground with weights. This tupe of shelter can also be built so that it slopes down along the ridge twowards the back of the tent: making a doorway at one end

Tepee shelter – This shelter uses a large sheet or tap. A rope is attached to the top of a cone shape made using the sheet: hold the sgeet landscape, hold a top corner and have another person wrap the top around until you can tie off the top with the rope. Leave a section traling so that you can use this to tie the teepee top to a save overhanging branch which has been inspected to make sure that it has no danger of falling. The sheet can be secured to the ground using weights. Alternatively, a central pole can be used to support the cover of the tepee (a useful tip for securing sheets or tarpaulins with a rope is to place a small item such as a rock or a stick on the underside, tie a loop in your rope/string, push the item through the loop with the sheet on top of it and tighten the knot

Den building tarpaulin

Tarp
rope for ridge line
Pegs
rubber hammer

To make a tent shaped shelter the tarp will be hung over a paracord ridgeline suspended between two trees (creating an upside down v) when you've found two trees growing reasonably close together, everyone can check that they are both healthy and suitable for supporting the shelter. Look at the trunk, is it intact or does it have fungus growing from it, which indicates disease. Look up. Are there are dead or decaying branches that could fall on the shelter. – ideally you want flat ground underneath that it not too hard where you can push the pegs – also check the ground for trip hazards and ant nests.

Once you've found the best spot show everyone how the tarp, cord and pegs work together, with the cord going through the tarps eyelets to secure the shelter along the ridgeline and at ground level with the help of pegs

Then it's time to design the space. Do you want a tent shaped shelter with the sides at ground level or something that's more like a roof higher up the tree? Decide before you start building so you know where to put your ridge line and how much cord to use. Choose which knots you will be using for the ridgeline and pegs as this will also affect the cord length.

See Play the forest school way for more info on knots pp 85-9



Attach ridge line with anchoring knot then pull line across and use tensioning knot to get the cord nice and taut.

Hang tarp over the ridgeline with one prusik knot at either end. Also need to cut rope for the cord for the pegs. peg the four corners

Push pegs safely in with rubber hammer – kneel down when you are hammering so you are stable

Small taps are enough – never raise the hammer above your head. Remember safe working zone.

Hammer pegs in at an angle to prevent them slipping out with the hook facing away from the tarp

– if ground is soft, no hammer necessary, can just use a foot or a log. Decorate shelter to make it fit in with surroundings.

Den building – natural materials

For long branches hold at trunk end and trail behind. Keep an eye out for others and for trip hazards. make sure trees are suitable

Make tent shape done by having one branch between the boughs of two trees and leaning sticks against it. Or use one tree as a central support – lean them at angles to the three in a circle.

Leaving space for the door. Secure them in place by pushing them into the earth or packing them with logs or soil. Use smaller sticks and bendy ones to fill in gaps or weave through. fill in the walls with leaves and make inside cosy and comfortable

Mini shelters

Good for building up den skills. see above but on smaller scale

Could also create tepee by tying three sticks together to form a tripod. Stick them into the ground and then use this as a base to put other sticks on to create a den.

Make a shelter for a toy animal or design it with a real animal in mind.



Art

Art

Stick art

to consider how natural materials can be used in their work

To show creativity through their approach to something new

To sort materials according to common features, length, shape colour

Materials

laminated pictures of 3d natural art

Wide selection of sticks

Cutting tool if necessary

Activity:

Use some large laminated photos of Andy Goldsworthy to provide inspiration for chn to create their own – what type of material does the artist use? Discuss shape and pattern? Why does he make his art work in nature and out of things from nature? How would you feel if you found something like this in the woods? Who do you think he does it for?

From some of his art work – choose some examples of 3d art work based on the floor for children to try to imitate or use the ideas from to create their own picture.

Teach chn cross hatching of sticks to lay in a quadrilateral shape – can do this around a tree stump or other object

Encourage collaboration, sharing

Take photos of chn's artwork.



Jewellery



Reception & year 1

Woodland jewellery

Oldest piece of jewellery is thought to be 130,000 years old and is a necklace made of eagle talons

Small secateurs, small, medium large knitting needs (3mm,7mm 10mm) or sturdy twigs

Sting and scissors

Best wood to use is elder bushes because in spring and summer the pith (centre tissue) of the stem is soft, spongy and easy to poke out.

Bamboo might be a good option as well.

Choose items of the right size, if making bracelets need to be big enough for small knitting need and string to pass through, if making necklaces, need to make sure that big enough for larger knitting need to pass through – if not using knitting needles, gather sturdy twigs of the equivalent size.

Remind chn of safe working zone – show everyone cutting edge of the secateurs demonstrating how they work and how to close and lock them.

Use the secateurs to cut a stem. Make a clean cut without tearing the bark, to protect the tree from damage. Non cutting hand needs to be at least a hands width away from the cutting edge.

May need to use two hands to cut it.

Cut the stem into beads

Always hand tools back to an adult when finished

Use knitting needle or sturdy twig to poke out pith. All poking should be done away from the body.

Once you have your beads, string them. Cut a piece of string long enough to overhead or hand with a little left over for knotting. Once all beads are on tie the two ends together and wear with pride!

Year 2

Hazelnut pendant

this idea uses acorns but we have hazelnuts in our area.

Gardening gloves for protection

Palm drill

permanent marker pens

Lengths of string or wool thin enough for hole

scissors

Optional: decorative materials i.e. oil based pastels

Somewhere to use as a drilling platform

Collect two nuts (at least) per person – larger the better

show everyone the drill, indicating he handle and the drill bit. Remind everyone about the importance of using tools safely and the safe working zone.

Demonstrate how to use the drill to make a hole through the acorn from side to side by pressing and twisting the drill through the acorn just beneath its cap

Each child rests their acorn on a solid surface – use a glove on non-drilling hand holding the acorn but not the other one as you don't want to lose grip. Drill a hole through the side of the nut. The acorn can split if they drill too vigorously – they'll need to apply steady but gentle pressure and take their time. If it splits – not a big deal, that's what the second is for.

Decorate and string: once everyone has at least one acorn with a drilled hole, it's time to use a marker pen to draw a funny face or a pattern such as spots or stripes. Thread the string or wool through each acorn, checking it's long enough to fit over the head when tied.

If it's difficult to get it through the hole, poke or thread it onto the wool needle and push it through. Once the string or wool is threaded through, pull it to even up the loose ends, and then



use an overhand knot to tie them together. Now everyone has an acorn friend to wear around their neck.

What do children like best about their jewellery? What did they enjoy most about the activity, what was the most difficult? – What other items of clothing do use jewels and decorations? Why do you think people wore them? Sometimes they symbolised other things and showed their status like jewels in a queen's crown. Ancient Egyptian amulets were shaped like their animal gods and they thought they gave them special powers.

Year 3

Cookie necklace

Look for large trunk or sturdy stump for base to work on. Talk through safety advice of how to use hand held saw and hand drill.

Pre session: Find a knot free branch 5-6cm in diameter.

Demonstrate how to cut wood cookie, prop branch up against log or tree stump. Kneel down in front of branch (this ensures a steady position and keeps limbs out of harm's way). Put a gardening glove on your free non cutting hand. Free hand should be about 15cm away from the cutting edge. Saw off the end of the branch to create a clean flat surface.

Then move your saw a couple of centimetres along to cut another section – this is your cookie. Move the branch out of the way and put the disc on top of the supportive surface. hold the wooden disc still with your gloved hand and use the palm drill to make a hole through the wooden cookie close to the edge.

Work one to one. Or one to two.

For drilling – adult hold cookie steady while child uses drill.

String wood and decorate by painting or carving in patterns. – When designs are finished, thread a length of string through and tie knot.



Art

Sticky pictures

Need:

Sticky backed plastic
string/ribbon
scissors
Hole punch
Natural objects
tape

Lead a short walk where the children can collect some nature objects that are flat and thin to make a picture

Rtn to the classroom and peel of the backing sheets from the sticky-backed plastic (could be done by TA when children are out) – secure the sheets to the table using tape

Children place their objects on a whiteboard to design their picture – think about the way it will look when it hangs up – the plastic is transparent so light will get through but it wont get through some other material as much – will it create any interesting shadows, with it change the colour of the light when it passes through

Then transfer this on to their sticky-backed plastic

Once designs are complete, hand out second piece of sticky-backed plastic to peel off and seal the picture

Use hole punch and ribbon to hang up pictures



A "Green Man" picture.



An arrangement made using flower petals and grass.

Art

Natural collage

What you need:

Photographs of art i.e. Andy Goldsworthy
collection of natural materials
Digital camera
large sheets of paper

What to do:

display/arrange photos of art work – make sure the photos include artwork made from natural materials
discuss/identify key features/themes of art work
Explain to children their activity: Children with create their own natural collage, need to carefully think about the arrangement that could be made. Once happy with the art work take a photo of it to display.
Children collect items for their natural collage
Discuss the different surfaces that children could arrange their picture and the benefits and cons of each. Alternatively – could arrange on big pieces of paper in classroom.

A piece made using pebbles, cones and canes by children at Castle Bromwich Infants School.



Made during an outdoor workshop with Clare Brewer.



A collage on grass using feathers to create a border.



A giant leaf made using leaves, grasses and twigs.



A collage made using daisies, leaves and twigs on a picnic bench by KS2 children at Luxulyan School, Cornwall.

Leaf rubbing

Need: wax crayons, pieces of paper, whiteboards to lean on leaves, masking tape (optional)

Do: explain and demonstrate leaf rubbing

Take a leaf and place it on flat surface, vein side up. Place a piece of paper on top of the leaf and secure with tape (tape is optional)

Take a wax cray and turn it on its side and gently rub over the top of the sheet of paper

Variations:

Leaf hunter – children have specific names of trees to find and have to find the tree, take a leaf rubbing and label

rubbing bingo: give children different bingo cards with the names of tree species and objects such as feathers, grass, bark, the first children to return with all of the rubbings completed are the winners.

Leaf detectives: ask the children to collect 3 rubbings of different leaves on a plain piece of paper. The children return to the classroom and swap sheets and use books, leaf cards or iPads to research and label the eaves on their new sheet

Leafy picture: lay out lots of leaves in a pattern or randomly and secure them then do a rubbing.

Try using different coloured crayons on the same paper

Use an a3 piece of apple, draw the outline of a tree and do rubbings of leaves to make the foliage and bark for the trunk

Leaf parts – after completing a simple rubbing ask the children to label the different parts of a leaf with the correct terms

Blade – the flat surface of a leaf

Stalk/petiole – the part which joins the leaf to the plant/tree

Margin – the edge of the leaf, this can be entire, lobed or toothed

Vein – the lines which run from the top and the edge

apex – the tip of the leaf

Investigate what each part does why/how



A colourful layered pattern.



Making animal shapes with leaves.



Careful arrangement of leaves to make a picture



Reception, Year 1

Spring/Summer headdress

Use card and staple gun to create circle crowns – put double sided sticky tape on the crowns

Explained to children that they need to find evidence on the floor that spring is coming/ winter has finished to make their seasonal headdress

Once children have found items, help children take off the double-sided sticky tape to stick onto their crowns.

Talk about the headdresses they've created

Where did the items come from that you found? Why did you choose them? Do they symbolise anything now they are part of your headdress? – could lead onto discussions about how clothing, i.e. crowns can symbolise different things like importance, medals of a soldier, rubies in a crown, feathers in a native American headdress

Also talk about bowerbirds and jaybirds in nature who collect things they find to impress/attract a mate.

Year 2, year 3

Nature sculptures

Need:

Large collection of rocks, slate, pebbles, sticks, twigs and other natural objects

Sticky pads, masking tape, string/fishing line, blutac/clay

Do

Visit website www.chrisbooth.co.nz (www.greenmuseum.org for more)

Go to the bio section and find out some facts about the artist

View works on his website – and discuss some of the artwork. Discuss their opinions on the art, the materials used, the size of the sculptures, the techniques used, colours, textures etc

Children will make their own sculptures on a smaller scale

Children to collect their own material for their sculpture

Discuss some of the methods of joining/fixing objects in place using hidden sticky pads, tape, clay or string. Highlight the importance of balance in the sculptures – but children can experiment with unusual or creative ways of assembling their sculpture.