

# Outdoor learning project pack



If you go down to the woods today...

Literacy and Science based teaching ideas and resources



## Contents

Finding your way around the project pack..... ii

Curriculum overview ..... iii

### Forest School

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Establishing a forest school..... 1

Planning through the seasons ..... 2

Breaking down the barriers between indoor and outdoor learning ..... 3

### Literacy

---

Teaching ideas bank..... 4

Resource listing..... 6

Resource printouts ..... 7

### Science

---

Curriculum coverage ..... 31

Teaching ideas bank..... 33

Resource listing..... 35

Resource printouts ..... 36

### Other areas

---

Curriculum coverage ..... 101

Teaching ideas bank..... 102

Resource listing..... 103

Resource printouts ..... 104

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## Finding your way around the project pack

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This project pack is a cross-curricular collection of creative teaching ideas and resources around the theme of *Outdoor learning*. Our aim is to bring together different resources from Teachit Primary into a cohesive whole, giving more support and structure than we can offer with stand-alone resources. The pack contains teaching activities linked to Forest Schools, Literacy, Science and other areas. Where appropriate, each subject has links to the new 2014 curriculum.

The pack lends itself to being used in different ways. It could form the basis of a whole week's project, or you could dip in and out of it over the course of a term, or even the whole school year.

The project is broken down into individual subject areas. Each section of the pack includes a set of teaching ideas, followed by accompanying resources. Wherever a teaching idea has a supporting resource we've indicated this and explained how the resource is relevant: for example, as a means to acquire background knowledge for the activity, to facilitate the recording or presentation of the activity or as an extension task related to the activity.

The ideas and activities in this pack are open and therefore accessible to a wide age range. The resources are all available in adaptable formats, making it easy to differentiate the tasks by ability.

We've included links to each separate resource included in this pack so that you can access the resources directly on [www.teachitprimary.co.uk](http://www.teachitprimary.co.uk). We've also included the file number for each original resource – just pop this into Teachit Primary's search engine. Most of the resources in this pack are Word documents, but we've also included links to PowerPoints and interactive activities. Please log in first in order to access any of these resources on Teachit Primary.

We hope you enjoy using this pack. If you have any questions, please get in touch: email [support@teachitprimary.co.uk](mailto:support@teachitprimary.co.uk) or call us on 01225 788851. Alternatively, you might like to give some feedback for other Teachit Primary members – you can do this by adding a comment on the [Outdoor learning project pack](#) resource page on Teachit Primary (please log in to access this!).

## Outdoor learning project pack – ideas and resources

Our EYFS colleagues are more than happy to take their young learners outside whatever the weather, so what are we waiting for?



Outdoor learning isn't just about exploring nature: it has a broader impact on aspects of learning such as concentration and listening and communication skills, as well as bringing many areas of the traditional curriculum to life.

With a set of ideas from a Forest School expert plus a bank of Teachit Primary resources to support your endeavours both outside the classroom and on your return, this project pack encourages you to throw caution to the wind and come outside!

### *Kick things off with an event!*

It's great to get going with a WOW event; something the children will remember. How about a teddy bear's picnic or a re-enactment of 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'? Looking for something for older learners? You could invite your local forest school in to get the party started.



### *Web links*

To save you time exploring the web we've picked out a couple of our favourite sites. The [Natural History Museum](#) website has a brilliant explore mission where children travel, virtually of course, to the island of Regaloam to collect specimens. Perfect for a little more exotic bug hunt!

Identification of different species can be tricky if you're not an expert so try using The Wildlife Trusts [Species explorer](#).

## Forest School

### *Establishing a forest school*

The outdoors is a great learning resource which can be used to complement and extend the indoor curriculum. It is a flexible and useful resource particularly suited to active learners. The outdoors provides excellent opportunities for collaborative group work, learning through questioning, potential for authentic practical work and the perfect context for engaging cross-curricular projects. We start projects with fun activities using the senses to first inspire and engage the children, planning in opportunities for skills, knowledge and a creative element and finishing with open ended opportunities for children to extend their own learning and set their own challenges.

### *Planning through the seasons*

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An essential resource when planning for outdoor learning is the seasons. It provides an ever-changing context for a broad range of exciting hands-on experiences that can help children discover the world around them in the early years and for key stage 2 it provides the perfect context for inspiring cross-curricular projects. Here are some ideas to help you deliver the curriculum outside and engage children in their learning whatever the weather.

## Spring

- Discovering new life – watching and measuring bulbs, growing seeds, planting fruit and vegetables
- Baby animals and their homes, birds beginning to nest, life cycles of butterflies and frogs
- Nature walks to discuss and record buds, blossom, the weather, seasonal changes, weather stations, recording temperature and rainfall
- Visit to farm to see lambs, ducklings, chicks
- Listening to bird song, making bird nests, feeding the birds

## Summer

- Minibeast hunt – make mystical bugs and create an island world with food, water, habitat
- Bees and honey making – pollination
- Habitats - what do plants and animals need to survive
- Pond dipping
- Food chains
- Web of life – how we are all connected – biodiversity
- Journeys, exploring and map making, identifying geographical features in the local landscape
- Tree Project – identify and find out about trees
- Summer colours and landscapes in art
- Composting, looking at soil composition, wormeries

## Autumn

- Exploring the colours of leaves – Scavenger hunts – making pictures with the natural materials
- Tasting different fruits – apples, plums, cooking, harvest time
- What is happening on the farm? Set up a Farmers' Market role play area
- Why do some trees lose their leaves? What is happening to them?
- Collecting seeds and start a tree nursery
- Observational drawing of seeds and fruit
- Fire and cooking – how we keep ourselves safe
- Singing around the campfire
- Celebrate Apple Day, Harvest festival
- Making bug houses, designing and testing waterproof dens, preparing for winter

## Winter

- Hibernation and animal stories
- A day in the life of a hedgehog
- Making maps and trails – creating stories
- Memory games – hiding nuts, where did we hide them?
- Making natural Christmas decorations
- Recording and describing the weather, temperature, rain gauge
- Feeding the birds

### *Breaking down the barriers between indoor and outdoor learning*

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- Spend curriculum planning time building learning in the school grounds into your scheme of work for all subjects
- Provide training and support to staff
- Use the seasons to guide your planning
- Plan a school grounds improvement project and involve the children in its design and creation
- Create a rich outdoor learning environment with plenty of opportunity for real learning experiences and contact with the natural world
- Provide different learning environments and resources e.g. habitats for wildlife – a wild area, pond, a food garden – a vegetable and fruit growing area, a small orchard (remember fruit trees can be grown against a wall and offer a host of learning opportunities – highly recommended), a muddy digging area, a minibeast sanctuary, a den building/construction area, a sensory garden
- Ensure children and staff have appropriate clothing for the weather
- Have clear agreed expectations for behaviour when outside
- Use curriculum opportunities to involve children in projects to improve and protect the biodiversity within the school grounds
- If space is limited at school consider using a local park within walking distance

## Literacy

### Get inspired by the great outdoors

Where a story is set often dictates its events, so when children read 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' they are able to predict the hazards that lay ahead. Take story mapping to another dimension by asking children to re-enact the family's journey! Alternatively, create a bear hunt set in a different environment, or explore other traditional tales set in woods and/or containing a big bad wolf.

### Teaching ideas

- Go on a scavenger hunt around your school grounds collecting items for a seasons trail. Write descriptions of these objects as a starting point for some seasonal poetry. [Resource 10185: On the ground](#) will get this off to a flying start!
- Who can resist 'Owl Babies' by Martin Waddell? Whether you choose to act out the story using masks or just explore the words used to describe the story setting, it's a must and [Resource 8398: Owl Babies](#) might have been made for you!
- Just as in 'Owl Babies', sometimes the woods can be perceived as a frightening or dangerous place. Help children overcome possible fears or worries by talking about the positive aspects of this environment. Our familiar friend Floppy can help here and [Resource 15122: Frightened Floppy](#) is all ready for you to use.
- Taking a senses walk around any environment brings a new depth to descriptive writing- to actually be there rather than just to imagine it. [Resource 8189: Setting the scene](#) is a great starting point to help children describe what their senses pick up.
- Using stories with a very strong pattern makes them easy to adapt to create similar versions. So when the mouse takes a stroll in 'The Gruffalo', it's easy to adapt the story to your own similar setting, exploring who he may meet along the way. Who knows, maybe the Gruffalo will be replaced by the head



teacher! [Resource 10763: Gruffalo Choptalk](#) is a great activity to tie in with this.

- Take a walk around your school grounds to see what obstacles you might use to create your own version of 'We're going on a Bear Hunt'. [Resource 11454: We're going on a ... hunt](#) is a great resource for younger learners but could equally be used with older age groups writing for a younger audience.
- Even just a small wooded area gives enough of an impression to allow children to imagine what it would be like for characters living there. Just imagine you were Little Red Riding Hood lost in the woods. Or perhaps you are the poor hungry wolf? These three resources: [11460: The hungry wolf](#), [8823: Little Red Riding Hood – my version](#) and [15484: Postcard from a character – Little Red Riding Hood](#) all offer alternative ways to look at the story.
- What weird and wonderful creatures are lurking under rocks and hiding in tiny cracks? After a good old fashioned bug hunt ask children to report their discoveries in the form of a news article.
- The poem Trees by Harry Behn is a wonderful way to look at different aspects of wood. [Resource 15489: Activity Pack – Trees by Harry Behn](#) makes this easy for you and fun for the children.

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**Resources contained within the Literacy section of this project pack**

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On the ground .....	7
Owl Babies .....	9
Frightened Floppy.....	11
Setting the scene.....	13
Gruffalo Choptalk .....	15
We're going on a ... hunt .....	16
The hungry wolf.....	19
Little Red Riding Hood – my version .....	20
Postcard from a character – Little Red Riding Hood.....	22
Activity pack – <i>Trees</i> by Harry Behn.....	26

Go for a walk outdoors and collect things found on the ground, e.g. leaves, stones, twigs, pine-cones etc.

Each group of pupils could look at what they have found.



For example:



Next use the words that the children have found to write their autumn poem!

Each verse has a simple structure, with repeated lines and places where pupils can choose their adjectives.

On the ground

Five **prickly** pine cones

**Hard** and **pointy**

Autumn is here

On the ground

Four \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Autumn is here



On the ground

Three \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Autumn is here



On the ground

Two \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Autumn is here

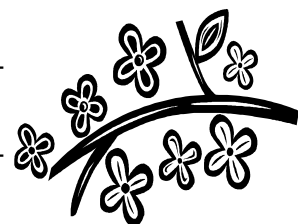


On the ground

One \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Autumn is here



Name: .....

Date: ..... LO: .....



Share the story of *Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell.  
Read the questions below and write your answers in the boxes.

**Opening**

What happens at the beginning of the story?

**Middle**

What was the problem in the story?

What do they see?

Who do they meet?

## Story writing

Use the words from the word bank to write your own version of the story.



dark	clammy
daunting	wet
scary	stale
damp	musty
creepy	mouldy
rustle	crackle
rough	crunch
coarse	jagged
tall	huge
fox	soft
wood	cold
trees	windy
shadows	grey
creatures	twinkling
insects	breeze
noises	shining
howling	blustery

## Teaching notes



- Discuss the fact that the story takes place in different places. Ask the children to list the different settings: home, the wood and The Dragon Tree.
- Explain that they are going to explore how Floppy is feeling when he is in the woods. Look at the pictures on pages 8-9 and ask the children:  
Why does Floppy look frightened?

What do you think he can hear, see, smell?

Discuss all the things that Floppy might be frightened of (the wood, the darkness, the owl, the goat, the fox, the cold, the noises in the wood etc.). Write the children's ideas on the board. They will need to refer back to these when they do their writing.

- Ask the children: If you were in the wood would you be frightened of anything? Are there some things you would not be frightened of? Note down their ideas.
- The children use their ideas to complete simple sentences on the pupil sheet. E.g. Floppy did not like the dark; Floppy did not like the owl etc. Remind the children to complete each sentence with a full stop.

Floppy did not like lots of things in the wood. Use your ideas to complete the sentences.



Floppy did not like the .....

Floppy did not like the .....

Floppy .....

Floppy .....

What would you not like in the wood?

I would not like .....

.....

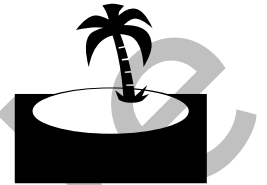


Name: ..... Date: .....

Learning objective: .....

All stories need a setting – the location where the story takes place.

Use all of your **five senses** to help you create an effective scene.  
Imagine that you are **on a beach**.



What can you...

A photograph of a beach scene with five speech bubbles overlaid. The background shows a sandy beach, clear blue water, and a line of trees in the distance. A person is visible on the beach. The speech bubbles are:

- Top left: "... see?"
- Top right: "... smell?"
- Middle left: "... hear?"
- Middle right: "... taste?"
- Bottom center: "... touch?"

Photograph by notacrime <http://www.flickr.com/photos/notacrime/62535160>

You can use **positional vocabulary** to help to create a sense of place.

Use your ideas about the beach to complete the following sentences:

**The beach**

Up above me .....

.....

Behind me .....

.....

Underneath me .....

.....

Next to .....

.....

A short distance in front of me .....

.....

The sound of .....

..... can be heard.

