

## **Fantastic Forests and Wonderful Words**

Suitable for Years 1 to 6 adapted to suit the requirements of each individual group.

This programme is designed to help children develop a greater sense of wonder and imagination and to inspire them to talk and write about their experiences in the forest. Stories, riddles and poems are a feature of the day alongside lively outdoor activities. A whole day programme involves discovering the 'real world' wonders of the forest, using and creating words to describe them, and in the afternoon the focus is on fantasy. Different stories are used for different age groups to introduce the afternoon's activities.

### **Key Concepts**

Value of forests as habitats for plants and animals; trees as a renewable resource; variety in nature; using the senses to make sense of the world; development of imagination; development of language skills; appreciation of words, poems and stories for pleasure, as descriptive tools and as encouragement for the imagination. .

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the programme pupils should

- Know that forests provide habitats for a great variety of plants and animals
- Know that forests are exciting places to visit
- Know that trees provide us with resources to make things and that they store carbon
- Know that trees and plants are renewable and that cutting them down or picking them isn't necessarily bad
- Have a greater respect for the natural world and forests in particular.
- Have learned and created new words.
- Have a greater appreciation of words, poems and stories for pleasure, self expression and as aids to imagination.
- Have used their imaginations to create stories, imaginary characters and situations and associated artwork.

### **Introduction –morning**

Learning objectives

- to prepare pupils for activities in the forest, particularly the use and development of descriptive words.
  - To ensure that safety rules are understood by adults and children.
1. Welcome to Alice Holt – today we plan for you to find out something about forests, to have fun with words and to use your imaginations. Words can be lots of fun –they can sound exciting, funny, and mysterious. They can help us explain things and they can make pictures in your mind.
  2. Forests are fantastic – wonderful places with so much to discover. You're going to go outside and discover lots of things. Words can be great fun, too and today

is partly about using words in a way that's exciting and fun. You won't have to write too much and we aren't going to worry too much about spelling and real words today (you might have to check your spelling back at school but not here today). Finally today has a lot to do with fantasy – making things up and using your imagination.

3. Ask adults them to make notes of key words during the morning so they can be used by the children later. This will make it possible for the children to concentrate better on the activities. Say to all that words are wonderful things. They describe things so we can understand about them even when we can't see them, they can tell stories, they can be exciting, they can be funny and they can be great fun to play with. Mention ACROSTICS – if we have time today you might help to write one.
4. This morning we're going to play with words and we're going to make use of poems. We'll also begin to use our imaginations ready for this afternoon when you're going to hear a story and do some pretending. The words in the story will help you to use your imagination. You'll be able to see in your head what happens in the story and then you can do some of your own imagining back out in the forest.
5. Let's start with some letters and see if we can think up some words to go with them – see how quick you can be. They can be funny or made up words. **Hexagon letter chart** – quickfire word game – children think of words to do with words.
6. Poems often play with words, putting them in a strange order or using them in ways we don't expect. Poems can be funny, paint pictures in our minds, make us puzzle and think. Do you like poems?

**Suggested poems to use before going out.** (Story books and excerpts, and laminated copies of a range of poems are kept in the Fantastic Forests folder in the office)

**For fun:**

- **Limerick** 'A Bald headed man from Dundee....' p243 The Works

**Making pictures in your head:**

- **Making the Countryside** p272 The Works get children to close their eyes and imagine the picture the poet is creating.

**Making you think / description** (riddles and kennings):

- **Squirrel** p228 The Works (a Kenning) 1<sup>st</sup> choice
- **Teaser** (elephant)-2<sup>nd</sup> choice as harder and might not be time for both

**Safety-brief outline**

**Morning Session - Blue Trail route**

Learning Objectives	Activity (adults to make note of 'key' words throughout the session)
To develop the imagination. To discover things about the environment not always	<b>Blindfold Trail</b> (in birch woodland behind marquee). Walk blindfolded in a crocodile

<p>evident when using sight alone. To take small risks and learn how to manage them. For alternative, to learn something about the need of burrowing animals for keen senses other than sight.</p>	<p>'through the night' to the entrance to the 'tunnel then go individually following a rope tied between trees. Imagine what it would be like going down a real tunnel then think of some descriptive words in groups. Alternative to imagine being a burrowing animal underground.</p>
<p>To demonstrate variety in nature and the link between plant diversity and range of animal life.</p> <p>To encourage imagination</p>	<p><b>Count number of different tree species</b> by looking at different leaves and bark and look at examples of insect attack on different leaves.</p> <p>Keep moving and keep brief (have a few examples of different types of insect attack in leaves e.g. leaf mines, holes, sacks where insect has developed). Imagine being as tiny as these creatures. What would the world look like to you?</p>
<p>To encourage children to look closely and consider the role of colour in nature. To encourage a sense of wonder at the diversity.</p>	<p><b>Palettes</b> – collecting as wide a range of natural colours as possible –small pieces stuck onto card</p>
<p>To teach about the different role of trees and the need for forest management.</p> <p>To encourage a sense of wonder and to encourage imagination.</p> <p>To develop children's 'word bank'</p>	<p><b>Look up</b> at the big pine trees. Discuss role of trees as animal habitat, oxygen provider, CO2 storage, renewable resource, and amazing organism that makes its own food. Ask children to picture the water going up and down inside the tree and the tree making food in its leaves –would it be like making dinner in the kitchen?! Children think of some words to describe the trees.</p>
<p>To discover information through touch and to develop language</p>	<p><b>Prickly Tickly</b> - children in groups collect items in a small tray or egg box and describe textures of the items with eyes shut. Trays can be exchanged with other groups and the process repeated. Gather groups and identify the 'best' words. Do actions to illustrate the words chosen e.g. jump up and down for 'bumpy'</p>
<p>To keep the children involved while moving through the forest.</p> <p>To encourage observation and imagination</p>	<p><b>Look</b> for nibbled things along the way and evidence of those animals in the forest that we never see (where are they? What secret things are they doing? Do they know we're here?) e.g. animal paths, feathers, damage to trees, droppings, galls etc. <b>Magnifying glasses</b> or <b>mirrors</b> may be used as aids.</p>
<p>To learn about invertebrates and their importance in food chains.</p> <p>To encourage imagination.</p>	<p><b>Minibeast hunt</b> in clearing – children search in leaf litter etc. using small pots to collect invertebrates. They are asked</p>

To develop language	to imagine what it might be like to be a minibeast. The role of different invertebrates is discussed. A minibeast poem can be read before this activity and children can be asked to create riddles or kennings to describe minibeasts. (These are known as ‘Creature Features’).
To encourage children to be still and quiet and to concentrate on their surroundings.  To develop language	<b>Listening/Magic Spot.</b> Either children sit quietly and listen to the sounds of the forest, recording them in one of several ways or they ‘draw a veil of silence’ over themselves and sit quietly to listen and experience being in their special place. ( <i>Sounds poem – either read ‘Sounds of Spring’ then get children to make up a verse for the ‘Sound Catcher’ poem or just gather key words or just read a verse or two of one of these after listening</i> ).
To show how all living things are connected and that all actions affecting the living world need to be considered carefully before taking place.  To encourage a sense of personal responsibility for the environment and an awareness of actions which are problematic.	<b>Webbing game.</b> With the children standing in a circle a food chain is demonstrated and then extended to create a woodland food web. A ball of string is thrown across the circle linking creatures and plants (represented by children) which have a feeding or habitat connection. When all children are linked a few ‘plants’ or ‘animals’ are ‘destroyed’ and the appropriate child crouches down. All those who feel the pull must also crouch down. Common actions such as use of slug pellets are identified as affecting more than the intended victims.
To assess learning and to encourage descriptive and imaginative writing	<b>Choose favourite words from the morning.</b> Each group discusses its favourite words and feeds back to the class. If time an acrostic can be written while in the woods. Alternatively groups feedback what they’ve learned about the forest in connection with their favourite words.

## Introduction - afternoon

Learning objectives – to prepare pupils for the afternoon’s activities and encourage a sense of imagination.

1. ‘Fantastic’ – what does the word mean? Actually means ‘not real’, ‘magical’, ‘imagined’ but we also use it to mean ‘amazing’ or ‘wonderful’. Trees have always been important to people, providing food, clothes and homes. (*People have illustrated this link by inventing the ‘Green Man’ and making him to*

*represent man rooted in the forest. Optional).* Woods and forests have inspired lots of stories e.g. Hansel and Gretel, Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks and the 3 Bears. Have you heard any myths, legends or other stories about forests?

2. Tell 'Old Croovie', The Minpins, an extract from the Lord of the Rings featuring Ents or another story appropriate for the age and understanding of the class. The activities below follow from the Scottish traditional story 'Old Croovie' in which trees have a ball every hundred years and reveal treasure buried under their roots.

## **Afternoon Session: Beech Wood route**

Learning Objectives	Activity
To encourage imagination and features to look for.	<b>Meet the ‘Guardian of the Forest’</b> and request permission to enter the enchanted wood. Then take a good look at trees in the beech wood to identify <b>dancing trees</b> e.g. find faces and ‘feet’ suitable for dancing.
To encourage imagination, speaking to a large group and listening to others.	<b>Tree Interviews.</b> Children, in small groups, talk to individual trees to discover what life is like for them in the enchanted wood. Oversized eyes may be pinned to the trees to assist in their character development. Each group introduces its tree friend to the whole class.
To encourage imagination, creativity, speaking to a large group and listening to others.  To be aware that an animal’s physical features are closely related to its lifestyle.	<b>Sculpture</b> of an imaginary creature that might live in the forest unknown to everyday people who don’t look hard enough for the evidence. Working in groups, children create a large model using forest floor materials. They invent a lifestyle for it and explain its physical features in relation to this lifestyle to the class in turn.
To encourage imagination and use of descriptive language  To encourage children to be still and quiet for a short time to take note of their surroundings.	<b>Disappearing.</b> A game in which children move into their own special place, pretend to disappear, quietly experience a small part of the forest and then return with a small item from that spot. They then tell stories about the item bearing in mind that the wood is enchanted and nothing is as it seems.
To encourage awareness of the variety in nature and that the forest is a wonderful place	<b>Smelly Cocktails/Fantastic Fumes.</b> An activity in which a range of small pieces of vegetation with scents is collected and then a Three Cheers for the Forest ceremony is conducted. Children have the opportunity to create an imaginative name for their smell collections.
To assess pupils learning	Most of the activities require verbal feedback from the children and provide evidence of their learning.

### **Other possible activities**

These can be used in the programme in place of some of the above activities to ensure that the content suits the age and ability of the group members and the learning objectives of the school. **Ad hoc discussions and activities** often take place in response to children’s observations and questions so programmes are adapted ‘in the moment’ while continuing to work towards achieving desired learning outcomes.

## **Morning**

Owl and Mouse – predator/prey game in which owl wears a blindfold and mouse carries a bell. Understanding of feeding relationships. Awareness of life in the forest.

Alliteration scavenger hunt – collection of specified numbers of items e.g. 9 pine cones, to be described by the children with an alliteration e.g. 9 pointed pine cones. The adjective can be a known word or one created by the children. This can be an oral or written activity. Development of language and use of imagination.

More poems read or created by children in association with activities – not often used as discovering the forest and taking part in practical activities are priority. Most written work can be done back at school.

Save the World game – in a circle the children represent the world which turns easily until they waste fuel and resources, kill wasps, eat food imported from far away etc. Forfeits are applied and the world soon fails to turn. Useful as a plenary and to teach individual responsibility for the world, of which this wonderful forest is a part.

Moving Carbon game – children represent CO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>2</sub>, factories and trees. The game demonstrates the ability of trees to sequester carbon. Importance of trees, responsibility to reduce carbon emissions.

Photosynthesis game – children represent CO<sub>2</sub> and water and are turned into sugars and oxygen. Trees are remarkable and have very complex life processes.

The Working tree game – children represent parts of a tree and take on their role in the life processes of the tree through sounds and actions. Learning about tree processes and how amazing trees are.

## **Afternoon**

### **Following the story of the Minpins**

Look for evidence of the Minpins living here e.g. small doors and windows, little stairways, tiny boot marks on branches and trunk.

Magic Painting – children look for art work left by Minpins which is always very secretly drawn or painted and usually related to their history. They use scented water to reveal the paintings on tree trunks and stumps which will fade by the time they leave the woods and retain the Minpins secrets.

**Or**

Ask children to enter the enchanted wood and see if the trees can tell them anything about life there i.e. leaving the potential observations more open. Children can then discover Minpin homes or use their imagination to find other imaginary things. Magic

painting, creating imaginary creatures with forest floor materials and story creation can all follow.

### Following stories about Ents

Looking for Ents – search for trees that may not be ordinary trees – would their feet carry them long distances, do they have faces perhaps with beards?

Describing their Ents and / or talking to an Ent about their lives and what has happened in the woods over many years. Verbal descriptions with option for written work later in school. Imagination, creativity, history.

### **Or**

Ask children to enter the enchanted wood and see if the trees can tell them anything about life there i.e. leaving the potential observations more open. Children can then discover Minpin homes or use their imagination to find other imaginary things. Magic painting, creating imaginary creatures with forest floor materials and story creation can all follow.

### Following any of the chosen stories

(KS1) Discover 'by chance' Dragon's feet (forked sticks) left by dragons after a night of dancing or evidence of other fantastic residents of the woods. This leads on to dragon dancing in the style of the dragon possessing the foot found by the child, building dragon homes or describing the dragons.

(KS2) Bat and moth – children form a circle representing the trees in a forest. One child wears a blindfold and is a bat, the other is a moth. The bat attempts to catch the moth by calling 'Bat Bat' frequently, to which the moth must respond 'Moth Moth'. Feeding relationships and link with folklore and imagination. People used to believe strange things about them, especially bats.

### **National Curriculum links**

#### **KS1 and KS2**

English, Art and Design, Science, PSHE