

Forest Homes

Suitable for Key Stages 1 and 2 adapted to suit the age of the children and the requirements of each individual group.

This programme focuses on life in the forest looking particularly at the many different habitats within the forest. Children consider, as appropriate, food chains and food webs and look at the relationship between the animals and plants in the forest. Activities are chosen according to each school's specific learning objectives and to seasonal factors within the forest e.g. hibernation in the autumn.

Key Concepts

Forests are home to a great variety of plants and animals.

An animal's habitats provides it with a place to live and with food and shelter. The lives of plants and animals are linked and removal or addition of any plant or animal will have an effect on others in the food chain or web.

Many different factors determine which plants and animals live in a habitat and how well the habitat functions e.g. sunlight, soil, man's influence.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the programme pupils should

- Know that forests provide habitats for a great variety of animals and plants
- Understand that the lives of plants and animals are interdependent, linked together in food chains, food webs. Some will also understand that many plant and animal lifecycles are interdependent.
- Know that invertebrates play an important role in food chains and in the recycling of organic matter.
- Know that forests are exciting places to visit
- Know that colour is important in nature for a number of reasons
- Understand that the senses of smell, touch and hearing are more vital to many forest animals than to humans
- Have a greater respect for the natural world and forests in particular.

Introduction

Learning objective – to prepare pupils for activities in the forest and ensure that safety rules are understood by adults and children

1. Welcome to Alice Holt - lovely woods; lots of different trees and open spaces; a place for animals; a place for people; a place to produce timber; looked after by the Forestry Commission
2. Discuss habitats and with the children provide some examples of animals and their habitat?
3. Safety, including foxgloves, fungi, slips and trips. Please keep together as a class unless asked to do otherwise. Please don't hold hands in the

woods and don't overtake the leader. No need to regroup with your assigned adult when moving a short distance within the woods.

Learning Objectives	Activity
<p><u>Morning</u> (Blue Trail) To introduce the importance of colour and camouflage in nature and start to consider habitats and animal adaptations to them.</p> <p>To show that learning outdoors can be fun</p>	<p>Woolly worms and worm charming. Children collect coloured wool pieces, demonstrating that some colours 'hide' better than others. Jump up and down to 'charm' worms into coming to the surface to see what colour they are and observe that they are camouflaged.</p>
<p>To demonstrate variety in nature and the link between plant diversity and range of animal life</p>	<p>Count number of different tree species by looking at different leaves and bark and look at examples of insect attack on different leaves. Some birds depend on caterpillars hatching at the right time to feed their chicks.</p>
<p>To encourage children to look closely and consider the role of colour in nature, building on the woolly worms game</p>	<p>Palettes – collecting as wide a range of natural colours as possible –small pieces stuck onto card</p>
<p>To encourage careful observation and use of imagination, discover features of trees, plants and animals that would not otherwise be noticed</p>	<p>Walk along and use mirrors to investigate - see things from a different perspective, 'secret world of underneath and upside down' or magnifying glasses to take a closer look.</p>
<p>To encourage concentration and teach that we can know about the presence of wildlife without seeing it. To develop language. To develop/introduce understanding of sounds, pitch, musical composition.</p>	<p>Listen to the sounds of the forest and discuss what is heard. Can involve call and response and reproduction of rhythms clapped by leader. Encourage use of descriptive words e.g. the wind 'whistling', a bird 'chirping'. Children either count sounds on their fingers, record them on small cards or listen to the sounds around them as they move silently through the forest. This can be extended to more sound collection and creation as a follow up activity in school.</p>
<p>To investigate the range of smells to be found in the forest. Link sense of smell to animal life.</p>	<p>Smelly cocktails –make a collection of small leaves or pieces of leaves and forest floor items, smelling them</p>

	first. Collect in a small cup or in hands and (optional) add some 'magic mix' (coloured water), stir and celebrate.
To investigate a habitat and discover the life in it. To introduce the concept of food chains	Minibeast Hunt in leaf litter and discussion of the roles of different minibeasts.
To look in more detail at individual invertebrates, their role and their adaptations to habitat and lifestyle. To encourage careful observation and confidence in communicating with peers and adults.	Minibeast Sculpture Children use information cards as guidance, having returned invertebrates to the forest floor, and build 'sculptures' from sticks, leaves etc. All children then tour the 'Minibeast Gallery' and each group tells the class all about the creature they've sculpted.
Afternoon (Beechwood) To experience what it feels like to be without sight and link this to burrowing woodland mammals. To develop imagination. To discover things about the environment that might not be noticed by using sight only. To take small risks and learn how to manage them	Blindfold Trail – walk blindfolded in a crocodile to the 'entrance to the tunnel', holding onto the person in front, then to move individually along a route holding onto a rope tied between trees.
To gain some understanding of the interdependency of plants and animals. To take part in physical activity conducive to the development of co-ordination and general fitness.	The Seed Game – children take on the role of seeds and run to collect basic necessities of soil, air, sunlight and water. The game is replayed with seed eating animals 'collecting' seeds i.e. running and tagging seed children. If a suitable balance of seeds and seed eaters has been chosen there will be sufficient trees left growing well and producing seeds for the future.
To encourage closer observation of surroundings and to observe signs of animals not present at the moment	123 walk – children link arms in groups of 2-4, take 3 steps, stop, close eyes, open eyes, call out first thing observed and point to it with knee, foot, nose (not finger).
To learn importance of water as part of whole ecosystem and the importance of wet habitats for wildlife. Learn about seasonal changes, including hibernation. Learn about adaptations and variation in nature.	Look at the pond , consider life in it and the importance of ponds and streams as part of the whole forest. Consider conditions for plant growth and animal life in and around the pond, plant and animal adaptations, seasonal changes –question and answer session. Observe life in and around pond – plants, dragonflies,

	fish, moorhens, pond skaters
To have fun getting from the pond to the woods, improve concentration, take small risks conducive to improvement of balance by going over uneven ground, become more aware of tree roots extending beyond the base of the trees and other ground features.	Play follow my leader into the woods
To maximise opportunity of seeing wildlife e.g. squirrels and birds, promote concentration	Creep quietly into the woods. Younger children can put on a 'cloak of silence' to help them concentrate on moving quietly.
To observe evidence of life in dead wood and understand some of the adaptations animals have to help them survive	Story of damaged tree –children listen to story beside tree damaged by deer, beetles, woodpecker, fungus
To draw together aspects of the day's learning and increase understanding of the connections between plants and animals in ecosystems	Both or one of the following activities can be done as time allows: Food Chain Packs – children place picture cards in the correct food chain order radiating out from the sun. The links are discussed Webbing game – children form a circle and throw a ball of string across the circle as questions (e.g. Jack is an oak tree, what might eat his leaves?) are answered, the child giving a satisfactory answer receiving the ball of string, to create a food web.
To complete the day's learning and enable children to empathise with a particular animal and its lifestyle. To encourage creative language work. When appropriate to provide an opportunity for children to develop speaking and listening and presentation skills. To end the day on a note of fun.	Animal Homes game –children work in groups as animal families, find a home (as described in given information), name their home, describe it creatively and report back to the whole class. As part of the activity children wear masks and become the animal, acting out their role in the food chain.
To assess students' learning and sum up the day	Ask questions e.g. "Can anyone tell me something they didn't know before they came to the forest?" "What happens to all the leaves when they fall off the trees?" "What job do woodlice do in the forest?" "Why do you / I think forests are important?" or

	Play a running game in a suitably flat space in the wood e.g. If you think what I say is true, run this way and if you think it isn't, run that way.
--	---

Other possible activities

These can be included in the programme in place of some of the above to ensure that the content suits the age and ability of the group members and meets 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.

Spider and Fly game- spider wears a blindfold and grasps ropes (set out as a horizontal web), other children attempt to cross the web without disturbing it. Spider feels for vibrations and shouts 'stop' when felt, thus fly is caught. Understanding of aspects of invertebrate life, development of balance, agility, concentration, taking turns.

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

Mini nature trails – investigation of life (plant and animal) on the forest floor. Can link to story telling and language development.

Collecting evidence of animal life – feathers, droppings, holes, nibbled cones and nuts, damaged bark etc. Can use magnifying glasses.

National Curriculum links

KS1 and KS2

Science, English, Maths, PSHE, Art and Design, PE