

Nature Activities— July

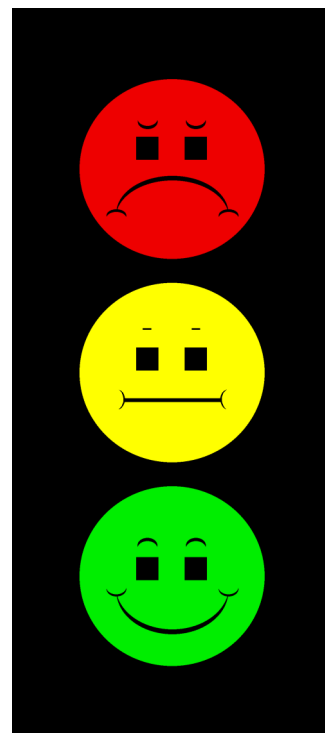
Getting Outdoors

One thing which can make taking children outdoors harder is expectations around behaviour—that can be a problem both for teachers and for the children themselves. Are the standards of behaviour you expect indoors the same as the ones you need outside? Some things you may need to worry about less (noise, perhaps?) while other things become more important (for example safety around roads).

To make things clearer for you and for your pupils—and to make it easier for you to go outside—why not work with your pupils to create a co-created standard of behaviour for the outdoors. This can be a learning activity for children creating a risk assessment. It also encourages them to think about what forms of behaviour from other pupils make their lives easier or harder when working outside.

If your school has, for example, a school council, science ambassadors, children really engaged in Forest School etc, a group of them could help to create the final set of standards.

There is a suggestion of classroom management for learning outdoors at http://en.beststart.org/sites/en.beststart.org/files/u4/B2_Classroom_Management.pdf.



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Nature Scavenger Hunt

There are lots of fun, multisensory learning opportunities to be had in scavenger hunts. Scavenger hunts can be made for school grounds, local parks or wilder areas for days out depending on your plans and time resources.

Some examples can be found here:

<https://childhood101.com/nature-scavenger-hunt/>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/activities/2016/03/spring-scavenger-hunt/>

Or to add more fun and a literacy element, you can turn a scavenger hunt into a riddle, an example can be found here...

<https://www.kidactivities.net/printable-nature-scavenger-hunt-list/>



Make it an IT project too—you can create your scavenger hunt using the free OurPlace app: <https://ourplace.app/> . That means it can be available for everyone to use outside school time too!



Nature Activities— July

Spotter sheets

Scavenger hunts are a nice starter activity to a nature topic or can lead up to using spotter sheets such as

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/activities/search/?activityType=100016071>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/lesson-plans-and-supporting-resources/spot-it/>

Dichotomous Keys

For the really adventurous classes, it may be worth investing in some field guides

Such as well know resources by the Field Studies Council

<https://www.field-studies-council.org/publications.aspx>



OPAL also have some great (free!) identification guides you can download at: <https://www.opalexplornature.org/identification> . You could take part in some of their Citizen Science projects such as Bugs Count (<https://www.opalexplornature.org/bugscount>), Biodiversity Survey (<https://www.opalexplornature.org/biodiversitysurvey>) or Water Survey (<https://www.opalexplornature.org/watersurvey>).

Remember you can borrow the bioblitzing kit from the museum—it contains sweep nets, bug pots, FSC ID Guides and more.



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Great British Bee

You can find out more about the importance of Bees and the contributions you can make to recording

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/bee-count>

There is no Bee count taking place this year, but there are lots of suggested sites to help you in your citizen science project for Bee recording, see

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/bee-count/bee-surveys-record-bees-and-help-science>

As part of a project, art can be made using the hive, bees etc for inspiration, or you could look to get a classroom observation hive such as: <https://beecosystem.buzz/>



Nature Activities— July

Food chains

Compare a selection of woodland or coastal food chains and compare it to a Jurassic food chain to make it more fun. You can mix up the cards into a card sort

eg Ferns—Diplodocus—Allosaurus

Grass—Mouse—Owl

A Newcastle University student has made a fantastic video about food chains to support Dippy on Tour. It makes a good 'grab' to start the lesson and teaches about Jurassic food webs and why we need to study them; you can find it on-line at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1RQFdwAw9E>

And of course, if you know us we like to link in all biological processes such as looking for evidence of food chains in... poop! There are lots of great ideas for teaching about feeding relationships from looking at evidence in animal poo, including indoor and outdoor activities.

You can try and find some poo to identify on a nature hunt

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife/how-identify/identify-poo>

You could even make some replica animal poop and link to herbivores, carnivores, insectivores, omnivores and what their respective poo looks like for your students to conduct their own investigation, such as

<https://www.collaboroo.com/t5/Closed-Share-Your-STEM-Activity/Herbivore-Carnivore-or-Omnivore-Investigating-Poo/cns-p/9515>



Nature Activities— July

Get Outside and Clean Up!

We all get outside more during the fine weather in summer and things like litter become very obvious. Find out how long a piece of litter can stay in the environment using a 'How Long Before It's Gone' timeline:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/ui2-sc-77-how-long-before-its-gone-timeline-activity-sheets-english>

Work scientifically by designing an experiment to see how long different objects take to decompose—you could even bury a time capsule of objects to rot as part of your transition activities and dig it up in the new school year to see what's happened (for added excitement, bury a bit of school uniform or someone's exercise book!). Think about how you will record data and how you can display it. You could produce some persuasive writing, infographics or a poster to advertise your findings.

Have an end of year school grounds cleanup with prizes for the winners—issue groups with a bag and cleanup equipment. You can weigh bags at the end, go by volume or give prizes for the most unlikely bits of rubbish cleared up! Make sure that you set some ground rules for safety before you begin.



Nature Activities— July

Make a Sundial

We mentioned this briefly right back in November, but July is a great time of year to make a sundial—at least you can live in hope that the sun might stay out long enough to get some good readings!

You can find some instructions to create different styles of sundial at:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/its-about-time-to-make-a-sundial/>

<https://www.skyandtelescope.com/astronomy-resources/how-to-make-a-sundial/>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Sundial>

One way to make a real impact with a sundial is to use one where a person creates the shadow with their own body. You could have a temporary human sundial using outdoor chalk or make a more permanent one with paint, flagstones etc:



<http://www.sunclocks.com/> (including a KS2 lesson plan from the Royal Observatory Greenwich at: <http://www.sunclocks.com/data/RGOks2.pdf>)

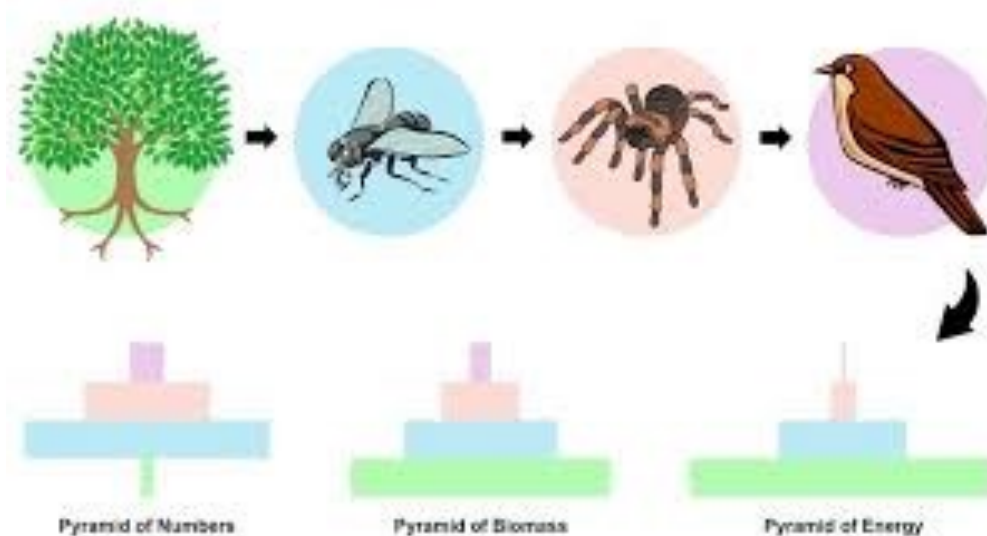
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDzaivKKXhk>



Maths Activities— July

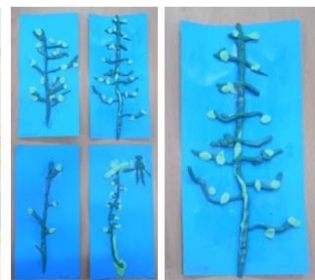
Whilst looking at numbers and linking it to food webs, we could look at Pyramids of numbers (and even biomass) for older students. You can provide data to turn into a chart. There is a good resource here: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/natures-home-magazine/birds-and-wildlife-articles/food-chains/pyramids-of-numbers/>

Each group of children can be provided with a information card on species from a habitat. It contains information on one species numbers, biomass, and energy for that habitat. The children piece the cards together to make a pyramid of number or biomass in graph form.



Literacy Activities— July

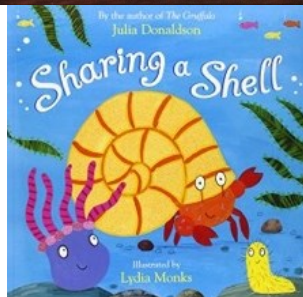
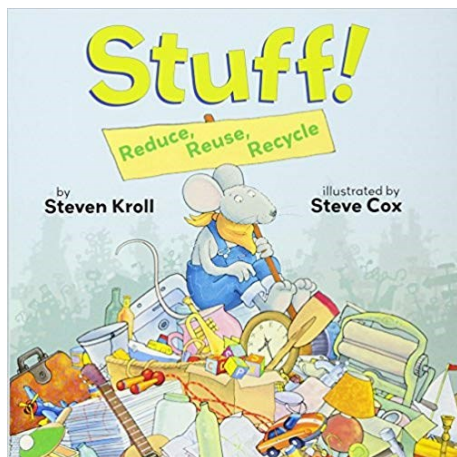
Some visual ideas for classroom displays around reading



Journey sticks (Bear Hunt)

Jack and the Beanstalk

Stuff! Reduce, Reuse, Recycle by Steven Kroll



Sharing a Shell by Julia Donaldson



Art, Artsmark, Arts Award — July

July is a lovely month for learning outside the classroom to take place. There is a multitude of activities that can take place all of which have lovely research projects linked to art.

Some ideas include:

- Nature rubbing mobile (tin foil and natural materials)
- Rorshach-like leaf prints such as <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/155092780892687378/?lp=true>
- Make a fun identification guide with pictures for a specified area, such as school grounds, or local park, or turn it into a classroom book challenge, where each child researches an animal and makes a page to add to the book. Use some books to inspire the art. Good for an Artsmark Discover.
- For the really adventurous you could combine this with a day out to the coast, and learn about rockpool habitats then create a classroom display or other output in natural materials or mosaic.



Crest Awards — July

Crest Awards (<https://www.crestawards.org/>) are run by the British Science Association and support science work and working scientifically. Star level is aimed at KS1; Superstar at KS2 and Discovery at KS3 and all have pre-made downloadable challenges which you can put together to achieve the awards. Beyond that, Bronze, Silver and Gold levels give more scope for individual projects. The awards are cheap to do (£1 per child for Star and Superstar and £3 each for Discovery) and you can record the activities online to get the children's certificates and badges.

Investigating Nature Challenges

Star (<https://www.crestawards.org/crest-star>)

Sneaky Shadow (S);

Superstar (<https://www.crestawards.org/crest-superstar>)

Bumblebee Mystery (SS); Journey Stick (SS)



Things to look out for in July

flowers



'cuckoo spit' (Froghopper larvae in protective foam)



caterpillars



butterflies



dragonflies



wading birds returning from northern feeding grounds

