



'GET WILD, GET WRITING'

TEACHING RESOURCE

A guided exploration of an outdoor natural environment, followed by a creative writing session.
The outcome the resource is a short story, which could be entered into the Wild About Writing competition.

The plan is split into 3 parts:

1. Introduction & preparation for a walk in an outdoor natural environment
2. Activities to stimulate observation and creativity whilst exploring an outdoor natural environment
3. Back in the classroom: producing a piece of creative writing inspired by the outdoor natural environment

The resource is designed to be flexible so that it can be used in most outdoor natural environments in the UK, such as riverside walks, woods, fields, forests, heaths, commons etc.

OVERALL AIMS

- To excite and engage children in creative writing
- To encourage children to become more aware of the natural environment
- To help children find inspiration in the natural world
- To explore and develop ways of describing the natural world
- To extend vocabulary; both descriptive and in relation to the natural environment
- To improve observational skills in an outdoor setting
- To provoke thought and discussion about the importance of the natural world

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES - KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH: WRITING - COMPOSITION

- discussing and recording ideas
- organising paragraphs around a theme
- in narratives, creating settings, characters and plot (lower KS2) & describing settings, characters and atmosphere (upper KS2)
- using a wide range of devices to build cohesion within and across paragraphs (upper KS2)
- evaluating and editing their work
- reading their own writing aloud to a group or the whole class, using appropriate intonation and controlling the tone and volume so that the meaning is clear

CROSS CURRICULUM

- Science – describe and understand key aspects of physical geography
- PE - take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team
- PSHE – prompt for discussions about importance of nature; climate change; conservation

GET WILD, GET WRITING

1. Introduction & preparation for a walk in an outdoor natural environment

Explain that today, instead of reading a book or a poem or looking at an image, our inspiration for writing today is going to come from nature.

Children will need to observe the natural world, using all their senses.

They will then need to use what they've observed as inspiration for a short story.

Explain where you will be going; what sort of environment it is, ie playing field, wood, common etc.

Give each child a **Before You Go Wild** worksheet and ask them to discuss the questions either in pairs, small groups or as a class, before each completing their individual sheet.

Books you might like to mention if there are blank faces, include:

We're Going on a Bear Hunt

The Wind in the Willows

Winnie the Pooh

Little Red Riding Hood

Charlotte's Web

The Sheep-Pig

Woof!

Harry Potter (The Forbidden Forest)

The Explorer

Danny the Champion of the World

The Hobbit

The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe

The Polar Bear Explorers Club

The Enchanted Forest

The Jungle Book

The Call of the Wild

Children need to take pens/pencils with them when they visit the outdoor space; they will also need paper or the **Go Wild With Words** worksheet to complete.

Remind children not to pick flowers and plants and not to drop litter; observations should be written down, *there's no need to collect physical items*.

2. Activities to stimulate observation and creativity whilst exploring an outdoor natural environment

These activities can be recorded on blank paper or using the **Go Wild With Words** worksheet.

They aim to:

- Improve observational skills and help children take notice of the environment around them
 - help children explore language and how it can be used to describe the natural world
 - inspire creative and imaginative thinking
- Adjective hunting
PART 1: give the children some adjectives; ask them to find items that fit the description and write it down, alongside the adjective. Adjectives will vary depending on the setting but could include: slimy, hard, wet, soft, crunchy, green, damp, dry, rough, smooth, shiny, smelly, brown, grey, tiny
PART 2: ask the children to find another adjective that describes each item they've listed
 - What you can see: personification
Ask the children to stand still, be silent and look around them; choose one thing they can see and describe it using personification eg. the sun is smiling down on us; the grass is dancing in the breeze
 - What you can see: a different point of view
Ask the children to 'stand and stare' again and choose another thing they can see and try to imagine how the world looks from its point of view; write one or two sentences as if they are that thing eg. an old tree, a bird flying in the sky, a blade of grass
 - What you can hear: sound mapping
Give the children 30 seconds to find themselves a place, a little away from anyone else, to sit quietly on the ground. Each child should draw an X in the centre of a piece of paper, or, if they can do so quickly, they could draw their own face, or use the sound map sheet on the worksheet.
This paper will become their sound map.
They should close their eyes for 1 minute and listen to the sounds around them.
After 1 minute they should start to 'map' what they can hear by drawing a symbol or simple picture on their piece of paper to represent the sounds they can hear. The location of each symbol/drawing should reflect where the sound is coming from/ appears to be coming from, in relation to them.
Each child is at the centre of their own sound map and what they draw on to their map will show the sounds they can hear around them.
Encourage the children to make very simple signs or marks, so the emphasis remains on listening, not drawing.
This activity can last from 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the children's abilities and also the number and variety of sounds in the environment.
All sounds should be recorded, not just natural noises; you might expect to see a map showing traffic, voices, wind rustling, birds singing, footsteps etc.
 - Creating atmosphere: sensational similes
Ask the children to sit down and complete the sentences on the worksheet, using similes. They should try to make sentences that create a strong sense of atmosphere.
 - Making sense: describing what you can see, hear, smell and feel.
Ask the children to write down as many things as they can, that they can see, hear, smell and feel.
In pairs, ask the children to take turns picking one thing on their list and describing it to their partner without naming it. They can use adjectives, metaphors, similes, imagery. After each turn they should write down the words or sentences that were most effective.

- **Characters: who lives here?**
Ask the children to think about the place they are in as the setting for a story. What sort of characters might live here? Would they be friendly or unfriendly? Where exactly would they make their homes? Would they come out during the day or at night? They might want to remember the favourite characters and places they wrote down before their visit.
- **What sort of story?**
Before leaving the environment, give the children a few minutes to write down some ideas for their story. What sort of story would they like to tell – an adventure, a fairy tale, a fable, a ghost story? Who will the characters be? When will it be set? What's going to happen? Is there anything in the environment that they particularly want to feature or remember when writing their story?

3. Back in the classroom: producing a piece of creative writing inspired by the outdoor natural environment

Hopefully the observations and exercises in the outdoor, natural environment will have got some ideas flowing!

Now the focus is on planning the story.

1. **Characters**
Ask the children to complete the **Wild About Characters** worksheet, to build up a picture of their main character. When everyone has completed their worksheet, let each child introduce their character to others – this could be done in turns as a whole class or in small groups or pairs.
2. **Plot**
Ask the children to complete the **Wild About Plot** worksheet, to help them plan what's going to happen in their story.
Remember, stories for the **Wild About Writing** competition must be no more than 500 words long, so the plot shouldn't be too complicated
3. **Get ready...**
Suggest to the children that they read through all their worksheets, to remind them of the ideas, interesting adjectives and similes etc. they wrote down while outdoors.
4. **Write!**
It's time for the children to write their stories.
If time allows, ask them to write a first draft today and return to the stories tomorrow, with the opportunity to re-read them and think about improvements before writing a final version.
Ask the children to read the final versions of their stories to each other in pairs, small groups or to the class; focusing on effectively using and varying the tone of their voice to bring their story to life for their audience.

PSHE – The following questions are potential starting points for discussions, arising from this experience:

- How important is the natural environment to our lives?
- Is being outside and exploring nature good for our health?
- Why is nature important?
- Are we doing enough to support and look after the natural environment?
- How important are insects and bugs to us and our food?
- What is climate change?
- What does extinction mean?
- What more could we do to help protect and support our natural environment?