



Short activities for use in woodlands at Key Stage 1

This is my object

Give the children two minutes to search for a natural object that they regard as interesting or unusual. Then ask the children to get into pairs and describe their object and why they chose it to their partner. On an agreed signal, the children should swap pairs and repeat the explanation to another partner. Carry on until the children appear to be tiring of the activity and then return the objects to where they were found.

Scavenger Hunt

Clearly define an area of woodland and then allow the children five minutes to find as many items as possible from the list below.

- 🕒 A feather
- 🕒 A seed
- 🕒 Something that has been partly eaten
- 🕒 Something that makes a noise when you shake it
- 🕒 Something prickly
- 🕒 Something soft
- 🕒 Something hard
- 🕒 Something that smells
- 🕒 Something beautiful

This list could be altered to allow for different woods and different times of the year or in order to get the children to look more closely or think more creatively. The scavenger hunt could also be carried out in two different areas and the differences in the items found discussed.

We Need Trees

Define an area about the size of half a football pitch. Choose half of the group to be 'trees' and space them out around the area. They should stand still and spread their arms like branches. Choose one pupil to be a 'woodcutter'.

All the other children should now become a tree creature and these should choose a 'tree' and stand by it.

When the game commences, the woodcutter should move around the area chopping down the 'trees'. Once cut down, 'trees' should lie down to show that they are no longer alive. As soon as a tree is chopped down, the creatures from that tree must run to another tree. They are not allowed to breathe when between trees. If they run out of breath they must sit down (they can then start breathing again!).

Continue until all of the trees are chopped down. What messages does the game give about the importance of trees? If wished, the game could be extended by replanting some of the 'trees'.

Caterpillar

Lead the children slowly and in single file through the wood, making as little noise as possible. Do this for about five minutes and then form small groups to share the sounds heard. What noise do the trees make? How many bird songs did you hear? Which man-made noises could you hear?

Touch a Tree

This game is played by pairs of children with one partner blindfolded. The sighted child should carefully lead the blindfolded child to a tree, preferably an interesting one with a thick trunk and highly textured bark. The blindfolded child should feel the tree for a time before being led back to the starting point. Once their blindfold is removed, can the child retrace their steps and find 'their' tree? Change places and repeat the activity.

Touchy Feely

This activity works best in groups of two to four. Each group should be given a container with a word card inside which they should not show to anyone who is not in their group. The word on the card should describe a texture or feel e.g. rough, smooth, prickly, hard, wet, dry, heavy, light, tickly, soft. Each group should spend five minutes searching for natural examples of their texture which should be placed in the box.

At the end of the time, groups should swap boxes (with the cards removed). Groups should attempt to guess the word on the other groups' cards from the objects in their boxes. The best results are often obtained if those guessing the textures have their eyes closed. At the end of the activity, return the materials to the places from which they came.