

Outdoor Learning Minibeast Hunt

KEEP
NORTHERN
IRELAND
BEAUTIFUL



ECO-SCHOOLS

Eco-Schools understand the value of Outdoor Learning to the development and health of pupils. We are encouraging all schools to get involved with this beneficial and fun topic. For a more in depth look at how to get started download our Outdoor Learning resource from www.eco-schoolsni.org in the 'Resources' tab. Here is a great lesson idea to get you started:

Introduction to activity completed in class prior to going outdoors

20 mins

Pupils and Teachers can look up the RSPB or OPAL websites to read about minibeasts and how to ID them.
www.opalexplornature.org/bugscount (more suitable for KS2)
www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/lesson-plans-and-supporting-resources/spot-it/

Pupils can also discuss what they know about minibeasts at the moment –

What minibeasts do they know?

Do they like minibeasts? Why?

*What is the proper name for minibeasts?
Insects / Invertebrates*

What does Invertebrate mean? They have no spine – discuss this.

Discuss where you are going for your minibeast hunt and the expectations for behaviour while on the minibeast hunt. Pupils will be recording what type of minibeast they find and how many of each type.

Key Stage of Pupils involved in activity:

KS1 – KS2

Name of activity:

Minibeast Hunt

Key learning areas covered:

The World Around Us, Language and Literacy, Mathematics and numeracy.

Skills:

Communication, Using Mathematics, Using ITC.

Season activity occurred in:

**Best results
April - October**

Is this activity limited by season?

Spring, summer and early autumn will yield better results



Main outdoor activity

40 mins

Look for 3 different area types to survey

1 Leafy Plants – tall plants, bushes, hedgerows or small trees

2 Natural Ground – minibeast hotels, log piles or leaf piles.

3 Hard Surfaces – rocks, walls, fences, tarmac

This activity could take place in your school grounds if you have suitable areas or in your local park.

Split your class into 3 groups.

Split up any equipment you have (this could be done before you leave the class).

The group in the **Leafy Plants** area can lay out their sheet under their chosen shrub and give the scrub a gentle shake to see what minibeasts fall onto the sheet – they can also observe any minibeasts on the plants.

The **Natural Ground** group can gently lift items (logs, leaves etc.) and record what they find.

The **Hard Surfaces** group can examine the nooks and crannies in walls/fences and carefully lift small rocks while recording what they find.

Rotate your three groups through the 3 different habitats every 10 mins.

Make sure any minibeasts collected are released before returning to the classroom.

Top tip:

pupils can take note of the basic features of the minibeasts they find: colour, number of legs, winged/not winged, using a web etc.

Suggested equipment list for this outdoor activity:
Magnifying glasses, sample pots (tubs or jars can be used instead of sample pots) and a large white sheet for the pupils looking at the Leafy above ground area.
1 ID sheet for each group and a recording page attached to a clipboard. If you have a camera or iPad it could be used for later identification in class.

Plenary activity – can be partly completed outdoors and in class

20 mins

Further ID activities for unidentified minibeasts could be done online. Pupils using the OPAL resources could report their survey results in the OPAL website.

Discuss the results found in each area.

Did the groups notice a difference in the number of minibeasts found in the different areas?

Did the groups notice a difference in the types of minibeasts found in each area (size, shape, colour etc.)? Discuss any differences they discovered.

Pupils can discuss if they know more about minibeasts now than before and if their feelings about minibeasts have changed in any way.

Follow on tasks:

Create graphs showing the number and type of minibeasts you found in each area for display on your classroom wall or Eco-Schools noticeboard.

Create a drawing and short description of their favourite minibeast for display on the classroom wall.

Create a minibeast home/hotel in your school grounds. Visit www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/lesson-plans-and-supporting-resources/homes-for-nature/ for ideas.



This activity can be used as part of your Eco-Schools Monitoring and Evaluation – log into www.eco-schoolsni.org and record your actions in your Data Zone for the Outdoor Learning and Biodiversity topics.