

**National
Literacy
Trust**

Change your story

Healthy Planet, Healthy People

Activities to try in nature

Learn more about the environment through a set of activities that you can complete in any green space! This could be a local park or woodland.

Name:

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Before you go...

A good explorer will always be prepared for an adventure! Ask an adult to help you pack...

- A pencil
- A phone or camera to take photos
- Something to collect your natural items in, like a bag or a box
- Water and snacks to enjoy
- A carrier / bin bag and gloves for the **Plastic not fantastic** activity
- If you have one, you could also bring a magnifying glass and some string for the **What minibeasts can you find?** activity
- A book and outdoor blanket for the **Build your own reading den!** activity

When you're exploring...

- Only collect items that have fallen on the ground. It's important not to damage flowers, plants or trees.
- Make sure you take home any rubbish that you brought with you.
- Avoid disturbing wild animals and minibeasts, however small they are! Keep a safe distance, especially from nests.
- You can complete as few or as many activities as you like, and you don't need to do them in the order they appear in this booklet – choose what interests you.
- Have fun! There's so much to see and learn about in parks, gardens, and woodland.

A note for parents and caregivers

Research evidence shows the positive impact of spending time outdoors on the mental health of both adults and children. Air, wind, rain and sun provide different 'sensory' experiences to being inside, which can have a positive effect on our mood. There are lots of activities in this booklet designed for you and your child to enjoy the nature around you!

Plastic not fantastic

Join **Kids Against Plastic** on their mission to pick up 1,000,000 plastic bottles, lids, cups and straws.

Step 1: Grab a bin bag and some gloves.

Step 2: Pick up plastic rubbish! Remember to keep track of how many pieces of rubbish you collect so you can log your litter later.

Step 3: Send a photo to Kids Against Plastic and tag **#1millionlitterpick**

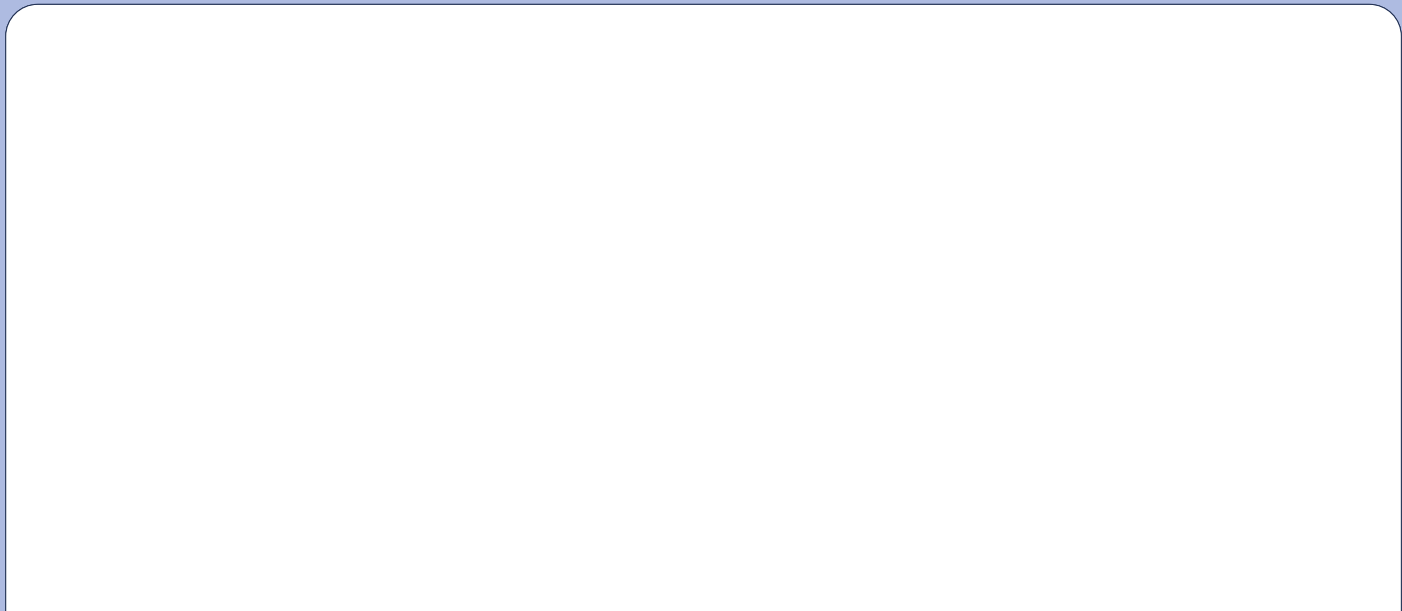
Share your photos with the National Literacy Trust too – we'd love to see them!



You can find out more about **Ali's One in A Million Litter Pick Challenge** by scanning this QR code. Ask an adult to help you.

Let's begin with some cloud spotting...

Clouds change shape all the time, and sometimes, they take the shape of other things! Try and spot some interesting cloud shapes and have a go at drawing one below.



What shapes or images can you see in the clouds?

How would you describe the clouds? Do they look scattered, fluffy, big, white or grey?

How would you describe their movement? Are they staying still or moving quickly?

Take a rainbow walk

As you walk around, look out for colourful items that you see around you. Write them down below.

Something red

Something green

Something orange

Something blue

Something yellow

Something purple





Forest bathing


You might be thinking – how can I take a bath in the forest?! However, the term ‘forest bath’ doesn’t need to involve any water at all. In fact, all you need to do is walk around some woodland whilst paying more attention to your senses.

Forest bathing began as a Japanese practice. It encourages people to engage with nature slowly and deliberately. Give it a go by trying the activities below.

Find a quiet space and close your eyes for thirty seconds. Focus on your senses and complete the sentences below.

I can hear _____ 

I can smell _____ 

I can feel _____ 

Pay attention to how it feels when you’re sitting, standing or walking. Chat to the adult with you about how the activities feel different. When you’re walking, you might hear the crunch of leaves under your feet. When you’re sitting down, pay attention to the breeze. Is it a windy or a calm day? Is the air cool or warm?

What minibeasts can you find?

Minibeasts are invertebrates, which means they don’t have a backbone. They could include insects, spiders, beetles, snails, worms and centipedes.

Choose an area to investigate and look for minibeasts. If you have some string, you could outline a circle somewhere on the ground. Otherwise, you could use some sticks to create a space to examine. Look for any small creatures that you can see moving around. How many different minibeasts can you spot?

Can you pick the correct word to describe a group of these minibeasts and draw a line between them? Some are trickier than others, so check our answer key on the final page if you’re not sure.

A swarm of...

A colony of...

An escargatoire of...

A clew of...

A loveliness of...

A colony of...

A kaleidoscope of...

ladybirds

worms

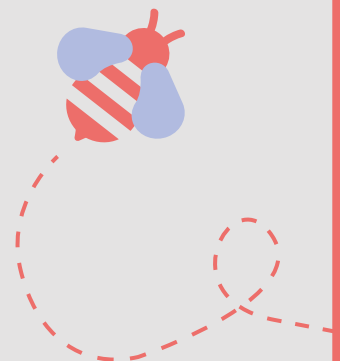
ants

flies

snails

woodlice

bees



Tree-mendous

We have so many different trees here in the UK, and all of them have different leaves. Search your local parks or woods and circle the leaves that you can find.



Oak



Sycamore



Ash



Horse Chestnut



Hawthorn



Silver Birch


Trees have very different bark textures. Often bark is rough and bumpy. Can you think of some other words to describe tree trunks?

Silver birch tree bark looks very different to oak tree bark. If you hold a piece of paper against the trunk of a tree, and lightly rub a pencil or crayon against it, you'll be able to see the different textures and patterns of that tree's bark.


Choose three trees that have different looking bark. Use these boxes below to create some bark rubbings. You might want to use a separate piece of paper for your bark rubbing, then cut and glue the picture here. If you know the name of the tree you have taken it from, write it below.




Blank space for drawing or writing.



Blank space for drawing or writing.



Blank space for drawing or writing.



Look for pine cones and make a homemade bird feeder

Bring feathered friends to go with your very own naturally made bird feeder!

Can you find any pine cones?

This activity will be completed at home, but you can use your time exploring as an opportunity to look out for pine cones! Pine cones fall from conifer trees. They are most often on the ground from September until December. If you can't find any pine cones, you can also use an apple for this activity.

What you will need:

- Pine cones or apples
- String
- Lard or peanut butter
- Bird seed
- Peanuts
- Raisins
- Cheese

Method:

1. Tie the string around the pine cone, so that you can hang it up. Ask an adult to help you – you may need to weave the string tightly around the pine cone.
2. Cover your pine cone in peanut butter or lard, making sure to get it in all the nooks and crannies. This will give birds the fats they need to survive.
3. Now roll your pine cone in bird seed so that the seeds stick to the outside. You can even do this in layers to make sure it's properly covered.
4. To make it even tastier, add other bird-friendly ingredients, like peanuts, raisins and cheese.
5. Hang your bird feeder outside somewhere. Lots of birds look for trees, but they will fly to new places when they're looking for food!



Build your own reading den!

If you go out to the woods, you can make your own shelter out of fallen branches. You could build a den at any time in the year, but autumn is ideal because there are more branches and leaves on the ground.

Here's how to make your own den - the perfect place to play games, listen to the sounds of the forest or even read a story!

1. Find the right tree - the best trees are one with a Y-shaped fork in their branches low down. This will be the main frame of the den.
2. Now, to create the 'walls' of your den, you'll need some long sticks you've foraged from the woodland floor. These need to be leant against the tree at an angle to create a teepee-like shape, using your main frame for support.
3. Keep adding more branches to the sides, weaving them together when possible to help add stability.
4. If you want to make your den even more weatherproof, you can weave smaller sticks into the gaps between branches, or add mud or moss to fill any holes.
5. Next, scatter some dry leaves on the floor to make it cosy, or bring a blanket from home to sit on.
6. The sounds, smells and backdrop of the forest make a fantastic place to read. Now it's time to share in a book together!



Can you match the animal to its home?

After you've made your den, draw a line between the clue and the name of the home where the animal lives. Go to the back page of this booklet to check your answers.

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Birds like to fly high and need to keep their home away from predators. | A) sett |
| 2. Worms love the cool, damp earth and need to stay away from sunlight! | B) soil tunnels |
| 3. Rabbits prefer to live in groups, so need a space where they can live together. | C) dam |
| 4. Beavers live in rivers and lakes but prefer slow-moving water. | D) web |
| 5. Foxes need their homes to be well-hidden, so they can store food and raise their young. | E) den |
| 6. Badgers' homes need to be large, dark, and comfortable. They spend a lot of time there during the day | F) treetop nest |
| 7. Spiders use their homes to trap flies and other creatures, so it needs to be sticky! | G) warren |

Collect natural materials to make your own wild ink

Did you know that you can make your own wild ink using foraged materials like leaves, berries and petals?

Follow the steps below to make your own wild ink!

Look out for berries, fallen leaves and petals

You will complete this activity at home, but you can use your time outside to look out for natural items that have bright, pretty colours. Think of juicy blackberries, golden yellow dandelions, or even bright green grass.

Method:

1. When you get home, gather your collection of fallen petals, leaves and/ or berries.
2. Separate these by colour and place them into jam jars or small bowls and mash them up with a spoon. You'll see the colour start to appear.
3. Ask an adult to pour a little hot water into each of the containers. If you have any white vinegar, you could also add about half a teaspoon to each container. Don't worry if you don't have any – the water will help to bring out the bright colours too!
4. Leave to cool, then sieve your liquid to remove any lumps.

Remember – when collecting your petals, leaves and berries try looking for fallen items, or pick them from an area where there are plenty of them. Being careful to only use a small amount means we're not taking too much away from any wildlife that might need them!



Create a poster for a family fun day in your local park.

Use your colourful wild ink to decorate the borders.

Join the family fun day!

Place _____

Date _____

Time _____

Activities at the event:

What to bring:

Make a nature mandala

These beautiful works of art, called mandalas, are made using repeating circular patterns around a central point. They are easy to create from natural items!

Create your own nature mandala at home, or just find a place on some grass, build your mandala and take a photo so that you remember it. Make sure you only use natural items that have already fallen to the ground.



Method:

1. Collect items like leaves, conkers, acorns, pine cones, moss and stones. Look out for different colours, shapes and textures to make your mandala look really interesting.
2. Place your favourite item in the centre and begin laying items around the outside in a repeating pattern.
3. If you need to stick some items down to stop them from moving, try using a pebble or small rock. You can make this a part of the feature.

Now you've made your artwork, draw a picture of it in the box below!

A large, empty white rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for the user to draw a picture of their nature mandala.

Joke Corner

So funny you *wood* not believe it!

Share these jokes with your family or friends and then draw a line to match the question to the answer. Go to the back page of this booklet to check your answers.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. What type of plant sneaks up on you? | A) Through trowel and error. |
| 2. How do you grow the best flowers? | B) Bumble gum |
| 3. What do bees chew? | C) Thunderwear |
| 4. What type of clothes do clouds wear? | D) An ambush |
| 5. How did the tree get lost? | E) It took the wrong root. |

Question time

Answer the questions below.

My favourite book about an animal is

My favourite place to go for a walk is

My favourite thing to do at the park is

My favourite insect or minibeast is

The best thing about my local area is

Well done! You've completed our activity booklet. What next?

Check your answers

What minibeasts can you find?

- A clew of worms
- A colony of woodlice
- A loveliness of ladybirds
- A colony of ants
- An escargatoire of snails
- A swarm of bees
- A kaleidoscope of butterflies

Can you match the animal to its home?

- 1F, 2B, 3G, 4C, 5E, 6A, 7D

Joke corner

- 1D, 2A, 3B, 4C, 5E



We would like to thank the **Bupa Foundation** for the generous support of this activity booklet. The Bupa Foundation helps create healthier communities by supporting practical projects that improve both people and planet health. Find out more at [bupafoundation.org](https://www.bupafoundation.org)

Foundation



Try our eco-booklet at home

You've proven yourself as a nature explorer, but have you tried our activity booklet that you can complete at home? Scan the QR code to download your copy. Complete the survey to enter our prize draw – you could win a bundle of books and a year-long subscription for National Geographic Kids magazine!

Sign up to your local library

Did you know that joining UK public libraries is completely free?

You'll be able to choose from a huge range of books, to inspire your imagination and build your reading journey. If you aren't already a member, find out where your nearest library is online at [gov.uk/local-library-services](https://www.gov.uk/local-library-services)

Follow the National Literacy Trust to find more free, fun activities at [wordsforlife.org.uk](https://www.wordsforlife.org.uk)

Share photos of your creations from this booklet with us on social media - ask an adult to help you.

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