Forestry England

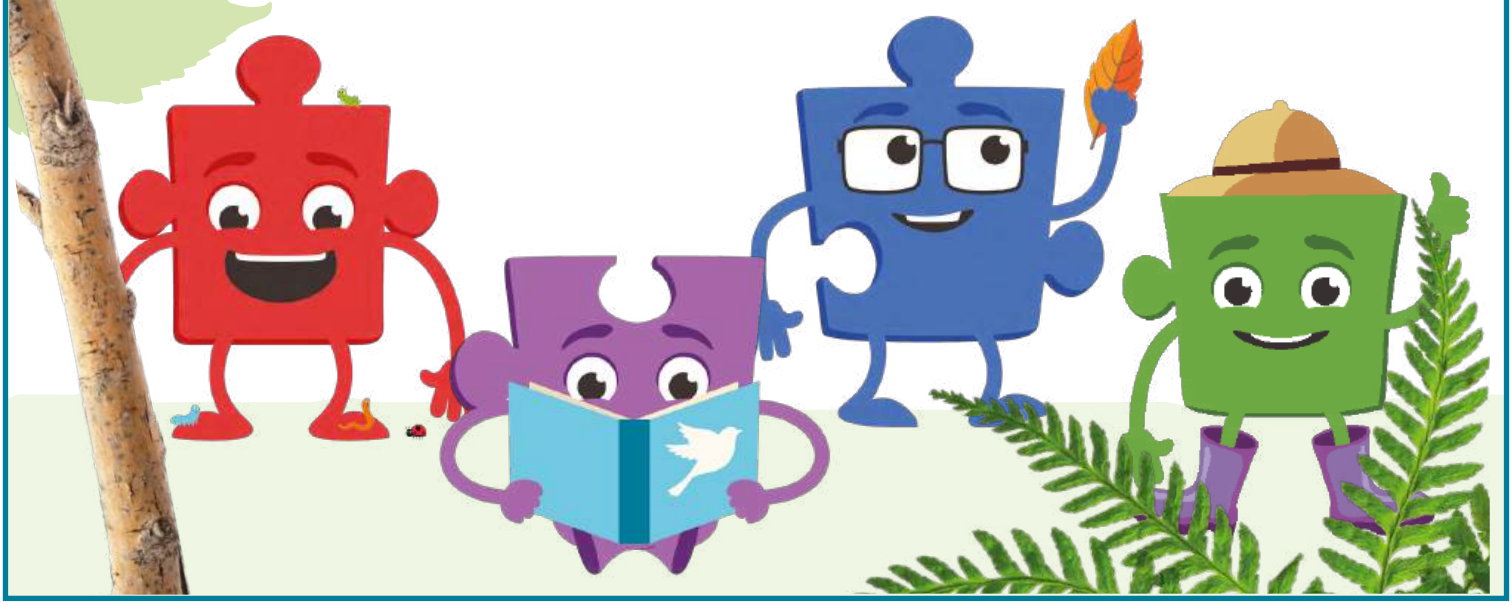
JIGSAW Education Group

# Nature and Wellbeing

## activity pack

KS2

**Forestry England** and **Jigsaw Education Group** have come together to create a fun and hands-on set of activities that will help children to connect with nature, while learning simple techniques to support their mental and physical wellbeing.



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## Welcome to this

# Nature and Wellbeing

## activity pack

**Spending time in nature, whether that's in your school grounds, garden, local park or forest, is a great way to get active, explore and make memories.**

Nature connection is about our relationship with nature – how we think, feel and interact with it. The more we are deeply connected with it the more we see ourselves as part of the natural world and this can have benefits for our personal and environmental wellbeing.

This pack is designed to take children on a journey through five different pathways to nature connection, from sensory contact to showing compassion to nature.

**Hello, I'm Jigsaw Jerrie Cat and I'm here with my Jigsaw Friends!**

We offer tips, questions and ideas to help children to explore nature and understand their feelings as they go.



## Time in nature

**Pause, notice and be present in the natural world**

### Beauty

Take time to notice beauty with our **move like nature activity**, **follow the leader** and **nature statue games**.

### Meaning

Observe and record your feelings with our **nature and wellbeing zine journal**.

### Connect

Use your senses with our **noticing nature activity sheet**.

### Emotion

Take a moment to enjoy the natural world with our **nature buddy activity**.

### Compassion

Continue further nature connection with our take home **nature and wellbeing cards**.

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The activities in this pack are aimed at children aged 7-11 years (KS2) and can be adapted to suit different ages or needs. For more ideas you may wish to refer to our **Nature and Wellbeing activity pack** aimed at EYFS and KS1.

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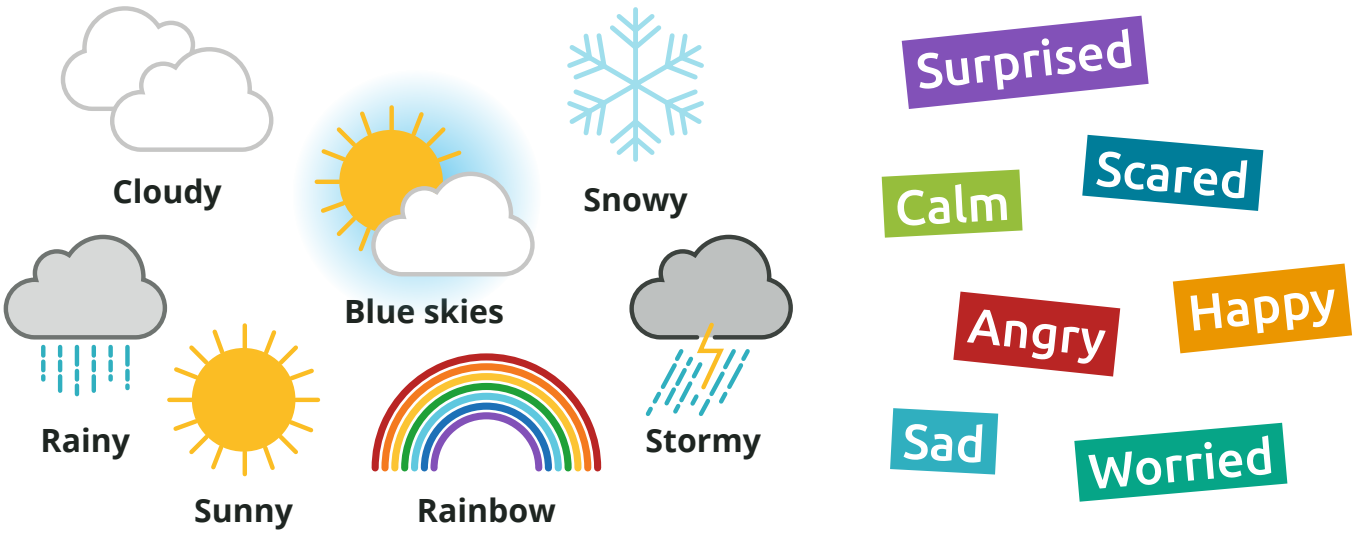
**We recommend taking time at the start and end of each activity to encourage children to check in and notice how they are feeling.**

Using the weather as a metaphor is a friendly way to describe their mood and think about what might help them feel their best. Invite the children to mix and match the weather symbols and words to reflect how they are feeling. For example, sunny and happy, a bit cloudy and worried.




## Reflection

Encourage children to reflect on the activities and notice if spending time outside helps them feel calmer or more relaxed. Remind them if they are ever feeling a little cloudy or rainy, doing something they love might brighten their mood.

At the end of the pack you will find a set of nature and wellbeing prompt cards. Children can use these to record their thoughts, reflect on activities they have tried and choose a favourite one to return to again in their own time.

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# Noticing nature

**Spending time outside and actively connecting with nature has been shown to be good for our health and wellbeing.**

### You will need

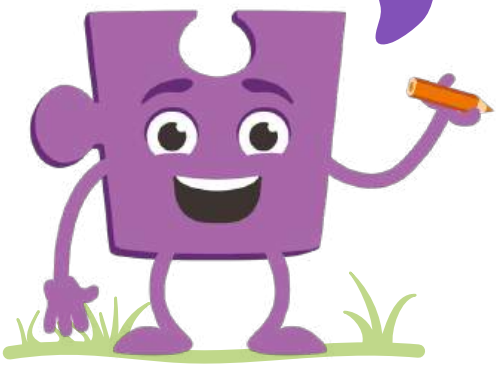
- Nature spotter sheet
- Pens

**Grounding techniques**

Help children to focus on their senses so they feel more settled and present.

### What can you notice outside?

1. Take a moment to slow down and head outside.
2. Encourage the children to look at what's around them. Allowing them time to be still and focussed can help their body and mind feel calm.
3. Use our spotter sheet to help children explore outside.



## Reflection

At the end of the activity take a moment to be still again and reflect upon their physical and emotional feelings.

Ask the children to take a breath. What do they notice about how they are feeling now?

## Take it further

### Would you rather...game

Place a large stick on the ground to show a line and ask the children to stand by it.

Explain that each side of the stick represents a different choice. Call out a nature-based 'Would you rather...?' question and point to each side of the stick.

The children decide which option they prefer and move to that side. Make the game more active and quicker paced by jumping or hopping to either side.

**Here are some examples to get you started...**




- walk through a forest or sit beside a river?
- give someone a compliment or receive one?
- smell a flower or smell the air after rain?
- build a bug hotel or create a bird feeder?
- make someone smile or help someone feel calm?

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# Move like nature

**Moving our bodies in a natural setting can support our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, helping to lower stress levels, boost our immune systems, and help us feel calm and relaxed.**

When we pay attention to how we move, as well as what we move, we can build important skills such as balance, control and focus.

A few mindful moments each day can benefit adults and children. For school-aged children, regular physical activity can support co-ordination, improve health and fitness, boost mood and sleep and even performance at school.

This activity uses nature to help explore movement in fun and imaginative ways.

## You will need

- Outside space
- Movement cards




## Can you move like nature?

1. **Find a clear space outdoors.**
2. **Let's get moving!**
   Use the mindful movement cards at the end of this pack to act as prompts to move like nature!
3. **Hold each movement** - for a few seconds, or as long as it feels comfortable.
4. **Explore movement** - one at a time or work together to link several movements into a flowing sequence.
5. **Encourage mindfulness** – when holding the poses encourage the children to take slow breaths and notice how their bodies feel like moving today – slow, fast, big or small?

## Reflection

**After moving ask the children:**

- How did their body feel before and after moving?
- Describe themselves using the weather metaphors?

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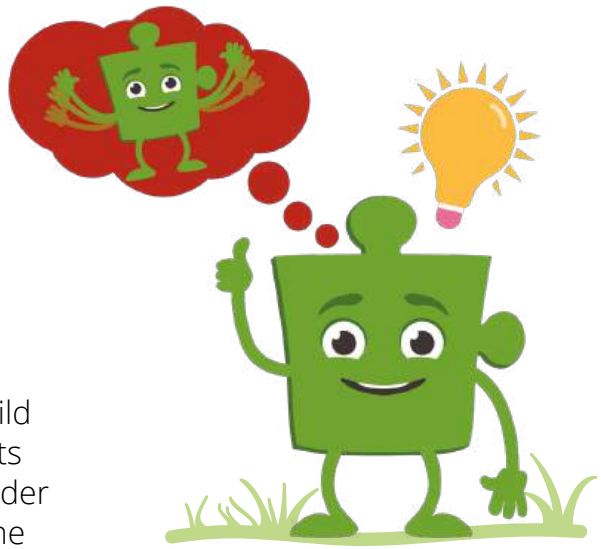


## Take it further

1. **Print out the nature themed movement cards.**

   Invite children to choose their favourites and create and name their own.

2. **Play follow the leader.**

   Ask the children to stand in a circle and invite one child to be the leader. Ask the leader to choose movements that show different poses inspired by nature. The leader starts a series of movements, and everyone copies the leader, responding as soon as the leader changes the movement.

3. **Nature statues.**

   This game can be played after the move like nature activity as a playful way to move, show how they are feeling and develop listening skills.

- Within an agreed space, ask the children to run around and listen out for when you call something that can be found in nature. They then have to stop running and be a statue, using their body to express the animal or plant.
- Here are some ideas to get you started: tree, squirrel, frog, dragonfly, a leaf floating in the breeze, a snake basking in the sun.

Frog

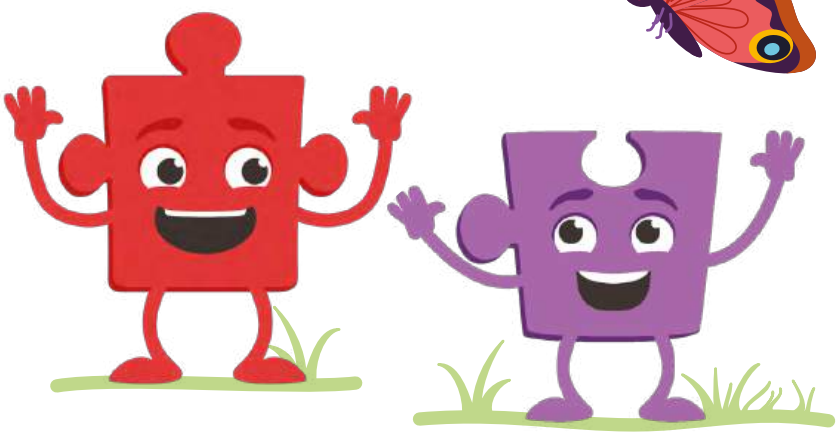
Squirrel

A snake basking

Tree

A leaf floating





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# Nature buddy

**Spending time in nature helps us feel calm, happy, and connected. When we care for a tree, plant, or special spot, we notice more, relax more, and feel proud of looking after the world around us.**

Nature gives us fresh air and beauty — and when we care for it, we give something back.

This activity requires regular visits to an outdoor space ideally with trees/plants. It can be your school grounds, your local park or community garden.

Once the children have experienced this activity you can encourage them to repeat it in their own time and find a nature buddy at or near their home, or somewhere they pass on their way to school.

## You will need

- Outdoor space
- Copies of worksheet
- Sitting mats (optional)
- Clipboard and pencils

## Visit 1

**Ask the children to pick a tree, plant or space to become their buddy.**

- What do they notice about their buddy?
- What does it need to stay healthy?

Explain that they will visit their buddy regularly, for example weekly, to help look after it and see how it changes.

## Visit 2

**Can they think of ways they can look after their buddy?**

- Keep the area clean, tidy and litter free.
- Water it in summer.
- What about the surrounding area? Does it get trampled? Insects, like bees, help many plants. Can they plant insect friendly plants?

## Visit 3

**Ask the children to sit or stand quietly by their nature buddy. Encourage them to use their senses.**

- What can they hear, see or smell today?
- Is the air warm, cool or breezy?

## Visit 4

**Ask the children what they notice about their buddy?**

- Has it changed from the last visit?



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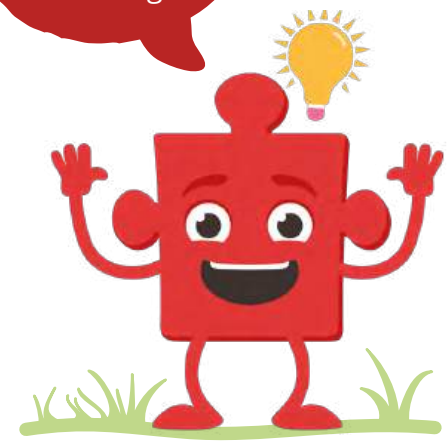
## Reflection

**Ask the children how they feel when they visit their nature buddy.**

- Are they excited to see what it will look like at each visit?
- How do they feel when they sit next to it?
- What does spending time with/caring for their nature buddy do for them?
- What gifts does their nature buddy give them that they can't see or touch? (e.g. calm, fresh air, happiness)

Here are some words children may use to describe how they are feeling.



Concerned

Happy

Kind

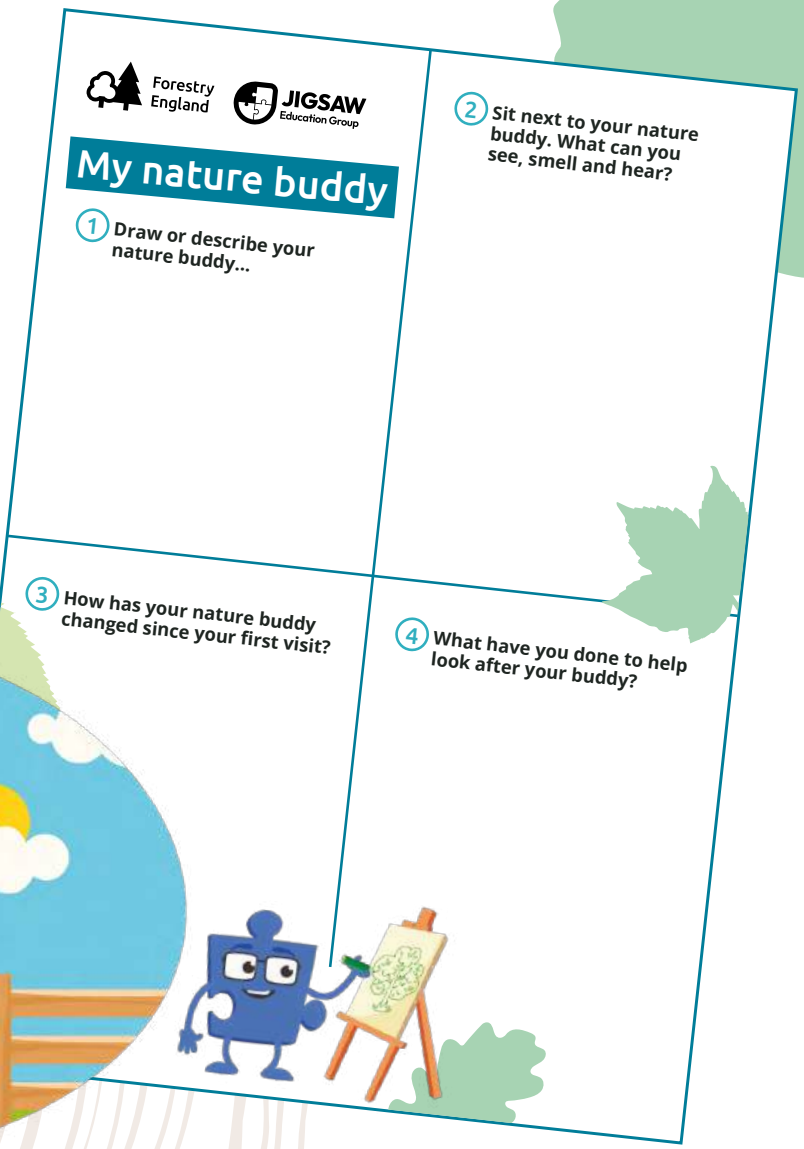
Calm

Excited

## Take it further

**Use the worksheet at the end of the pack to record observations or add them to the children's nature and wellbeing journals.**





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# My nature and wellbeing journal

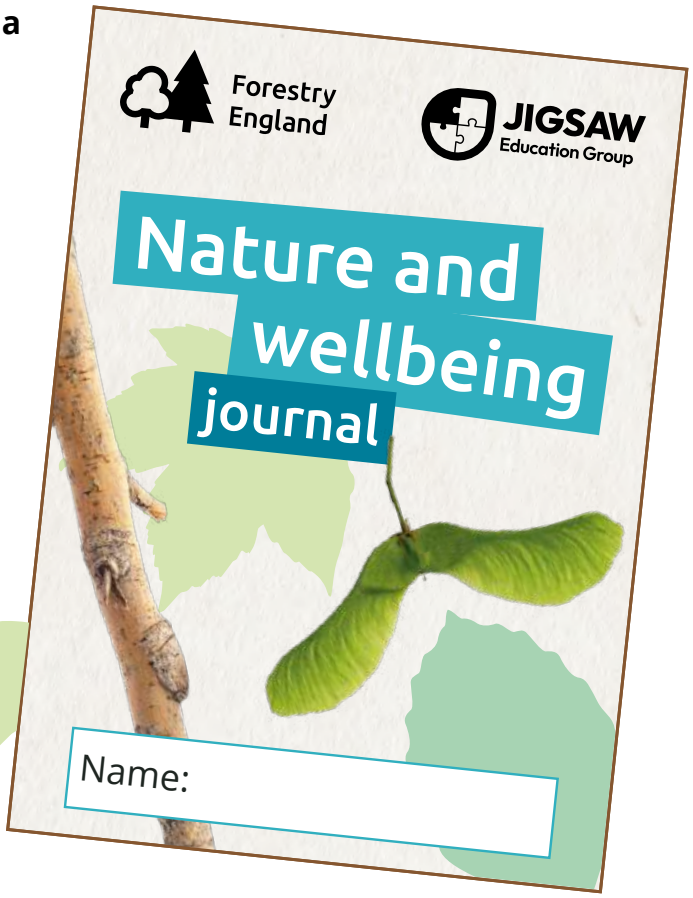
**You will need**

- Zine template
- A4 paper
- Scissors

**Creating a journal of how you are feeling and the nature you see, hear or connect with is a great way to slow down and savour special moments. It provides a personal record of sensory experiences and everyday feelings.**

Encourage the children to intentionally observe the natural world. Fostering skills around mindfulness may help them to feel calm, joy and build resilience.

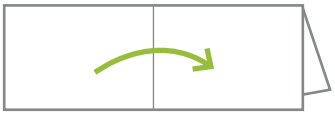
Use our template to create a small, compact zine style journal that children can carry with them and add to every day. They can pop it in their pocket and take it with them on a walk. We've popped some prompts in to get them started.



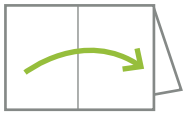

**1. Fold in half**



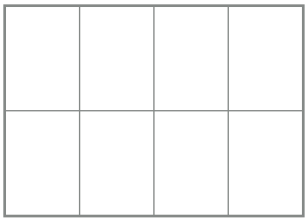
**2. Fold in half again**



**3. Fold in half again**



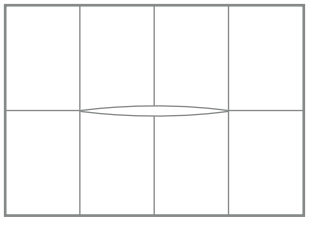
**4. Unfold to find 8 pages**



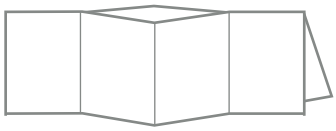
**5. Fold in half and cut the centre**



**6. Unfold, it should look like this...**



**7. Fold in half and push together**



**8. Finished!**



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# Nature and wellbeing cards

**You will need**

- Set of prompt cards per child

**The cards at the end of this activity pack have been created so that each child can create their own set of small nature and wellbeing prompt reminders that can be linked together and easily carried with them.**

They aim to continue a child's journey of exploring new ways to connect with nature, as well as mindful activities that help them to feel calm and grounded.

By using these activities, children can develop positive habits and confidence that can help to build mental and emotional resilience. Skills they can take with them into adulthood.

Remind children they can use the cards as quick prompts whenever they are feeling worried or in need of a moment to reset.



## Take it further

**Encourage the children to keep creating their own cards and add to their set.**



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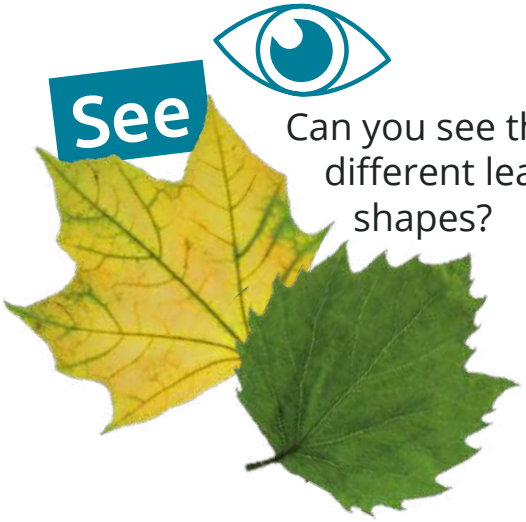
# Nature spotter sheet

**What can you spot in nature?**

We've left some blank spaces for you to sketch what you find.

## See

Can you see three different leaf shapes?



## Hear



## Smell



## Evidence that wildlife is present



## Feel

Can you find something that feels:

- Rough
- Smooth
- Soft



## Reflection

Take a breath.

What do you notice about how you feel now?



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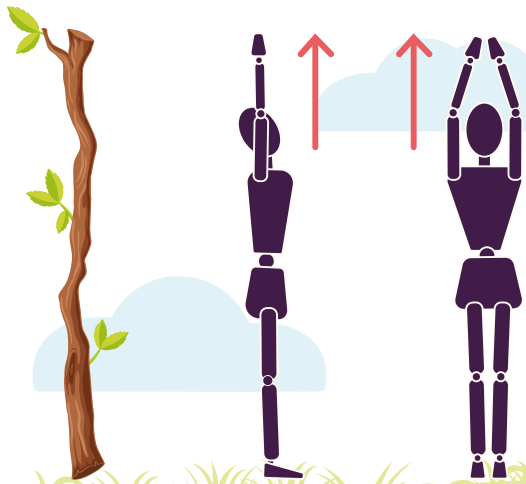
# Nature themed movement cards

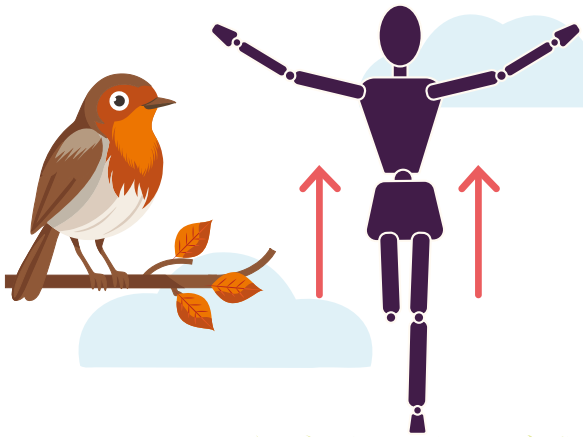
### Stretch up tall like... a straight stick

Stand with your feet together. Hook one thumb around the other and lift your arms over your head. Stretch up into the air.



### Balance like... a robin on a branch

Stand on one leg and reach your arms out wide. Focus your eyes on something in front of you to steady your balance.



### Curl up like... a pinecone

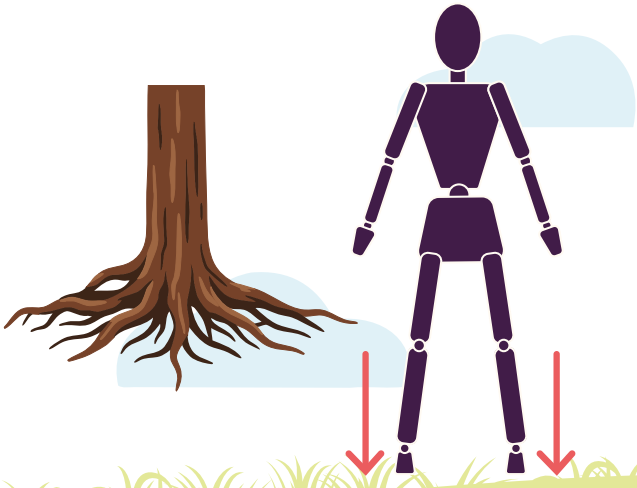
Crouch down to the ground and curl up into a small ball.



### Reach out like... roots of a tree

Stand with your legs hip width apart.

Wiggle and move your arms like they are roots growing underground looking for water.



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# Nature themed movement cards

### Sway side to side like... a tree in the wind

Stand with your legs hip width apart. Put your arms up like branches.

Move the top part of your body gently from side to side. Like a tree swaying in the wind.



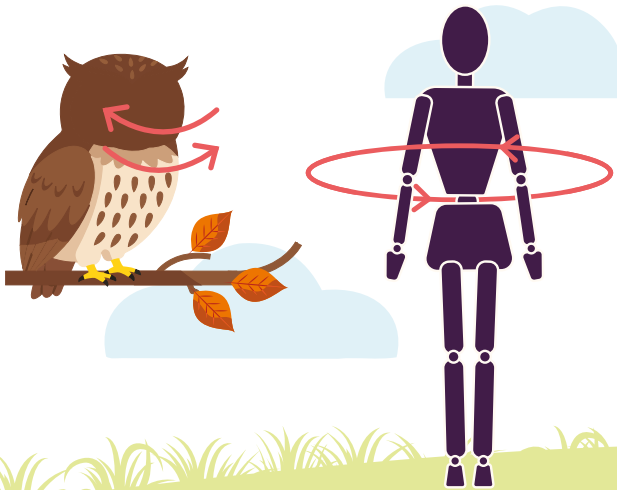
### Rotate your arms like... a sycamore seed spinning

Stand with your legs hip width apart. Fling your arms from side to side, rotating through your mid-back, or spin on the spot like you are a sycamore seed whirling to the ground.



### Twist your body like... an owl turning its head

Slowly rotate your body from side to side, letting your eyes look behind you as you move.



### Crouch down like... a frog

Keep your heels grounded and your knees bent. Bring your arms to the insides of your knees and, if you feel like it, croak like a frog.



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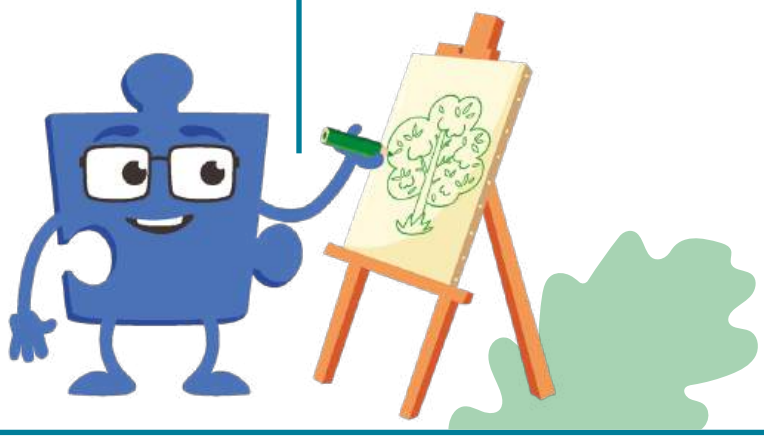
# My nature buddy

1. Draw or describe your nature buddy...

2. Sit next to your nature buddy. What can you see, smell and hear?

3. How has your nature buddy changed since your first visit?

4. What have you done to help look after your buddy?



1. Draw a picture inspired by nature

2. Write a short poem

3. Describe how you are feeling

4. Make a leaf rubbing

5. Write four words to describe how a tree feels

6. Draw a cloud you can see

7. Sketch your favourite outside activity

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# Nature and wellbeing journal



Name:

# Nature and wellbeing cards

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## Nature and wellbeing cards



Name:

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## How are you feeling today?

Stormy

Snowy

Sunny

Rainy

Blue skies

Rainbow

Cloudy

Angry

Calm

Sad

Happy

Surprised

Scared

Worried

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## Nature scavenger hunt

**Sketch or write about your connections in nature.**

When I am in nature I can...

See

Hear

Smell

Find evidence of wildlife

Feel

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## I spy... nature

**Use your senses to spot, feel or hear something in nature that begin with the following letters?**

N .....

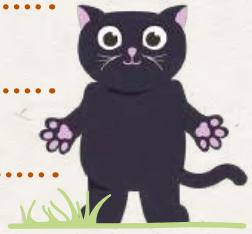
A .....

T .....

U .....

R .....

E .....



# Nature and wellbeing cards



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## Move like nature

**When you are feeling tired or need a boost, moving your body is a great way to help yourself feel more energised. Can you...**



**Stretch up** like a stick

**Spin** like a sycamore seed

**Sway in the wind** like a tree

**Curl up** like a pinecone

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## A mindful moment

**Take a moment to feel calm and find your sit spot.**

- Find your spot and sit comfortably.
- Take 3 deep breaths and close your eyes.
- Be still and tune into what is around you – what can you see, hear, smell, feel?

Return to your sit spot regularly and notice the changes and deepen your connection with the area.

A sit spot is a place you go to, to sit quietly, and connect with the environment and nature around you.



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## Taking care of nature

**Spending time in nature is great for our mental wellbeing. Think about what you could do for nature in return.**

**Here are some ideas to get you started.**

- Litter pick
- Recycle as much as possible
- Try to avoid disturbing wildlife
- Re-use plastic

Protect wildlife by being quiet, not picking flowers or walking on plants.



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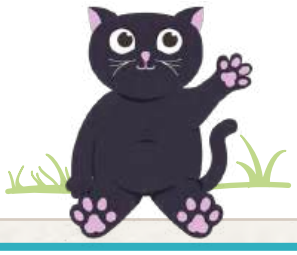
## My favourite nature activity is...



# Resources

Research demonstrates outdoor learning and regular physical activity are vital for children's wellbeing. **The Mental Health Foundation (2024)** highlights that nature supports emotional, psychological and physical health. Physical activity is also one of the NHS's **five ways to wellbeing** (NHS, 2025) and both the NHS (NHS, 2024) and World Health Organisation **recommend daily movement for children** to support their physical and mental health.

Discover more about **nature connection** and related resource ideas.

**YOUNGMINDS** offer help and advice for those working with children and young people.

**Children's mental health week** provide ideas and inspiration for activities to support children with their mental health.

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Forestry England manages more land and trees than any other organisation in the country, caring for the nation's forests for now and future generations. Guided by its Growing the Future plan (2026 - 2031), it focuses on sustainable management, timber and high-quality recreation, supported by a national learning strategy that builds children's connection to nature.

Forestry England aims for every child in England to benefit from educational experiences in the nation's forests.

**forestryengland.uk/learning**

Jigsaw Education Group supports over 6,500 schools worldwide with evidence-based PSHE, RE and wellbeing programmes, combining education with psychology and neuroscience. Its whole-school approach builds emotional literacy, social skills and mental wellbeing, with mindfulness at its core.

The Jigsaw Outdoors Programme extends this through meaningful outdoor learning for ages 3–11, linked to the PSHE curriculum and RSHE guidance, helping children explore nature, respect the environment, and connect physical activity with wellbeing and personal growth.

**jigsaweducationgroup.com/programmes/pshe-3-11/**