Forestry England

KS2 lesson plan

English



Forestry England looks after more than 1500 woods and forests. Forests provide plenty of inspiration to enable children to compose poetry and write stories. A forest visit also provides numerous topics suitable for non-fiction reading and writing.

Curriculum links:

Spoken word: Speaking audibly, giving descriptions, building vocabulary.Preparing and listening to poems, recognising different forms of poetry, participating in performances.

Reading: Comprehension (increasing familiarity with a wide range of books, including fairy stories, myths and legends).

Writing: Composition.

Wood you believe it?

As an alternative to the poem, or in addition, use 'Wood you believe it?' (See end of lesson plan). The children have to identify the 30 things mentioned in the text that come from trees.

Before your visit:

- Study the poem 'Tribute to Trees,' by Elizabeth Barling (see end of lesson plan for copy of poem).
- Talk about trees and how and where they grow – if we provide the right conditions for trees to grow, how many things do they give us in return?
- The way in which we use wood has changed over time – discuss which of the wooden items in the poem are still relevant today. Can the children think of new uses to replace some of the more outdated ones from the poem?
- Ask the children to explain what the man promises the tree at the end of the poem.

You will need to bring:

- paper and writing materials (pens/pencils)
- clipboards
- tree identification guides
- laminated photos of a selection of forest creatures
- voice recording equipment

To help your class prepare for their forest visit, take a look at our education resource hub and use the pre-visit filter to find some fantastic resources. These include thinking about what to expect from the forest and what your class will need to do to keep themselves safe whilst looking after the forest.

For health and safety advice and some top tips for teaching outdoors, visit **forestryengland.uk/planning-your-visit**

For more learning resources visit **forestryengland.uk/learning**

Starter activity



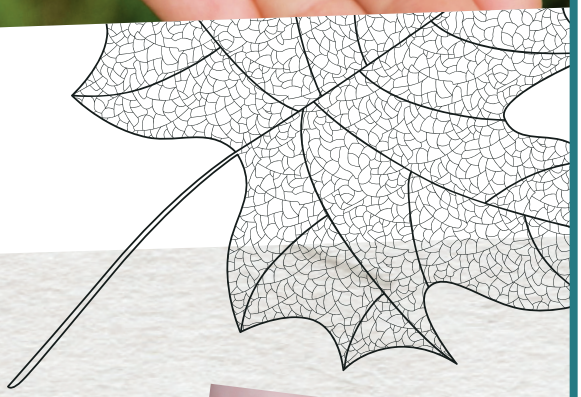
Guess what it is?

Ask the children to work in pairs and explore a small area of forest and collect one or two woodland objects, which they should keep hidden.

The children take it in turns to describe one of the objects to their partner, using only single words.

Encourage the children to think about what the object looks like, how big it is, its shape, colour and texture.

Their partners have to guess what it is. Reveal the object at the end of each turn.



Acrostic poems

Forests are important for wildlife. They provide a range of different habitats (places where animals and minibeasts can make their homes), as well as supplying the food that they need to eat.

Can the children name any woodland animals, birds or minibeasts that they might find in a UK forest?

Show the animal pictures that you have brought as a visual reminder.

The children are now going to select one of these animals as inspiration for an acrostic poem.





Acrostic

Explain to the children that an acrostic poem is where the first letter of each line spells out the name of a forest animal, bird or minibeast. Read aloud the example below and discuss the use of simile ('running like the wind') and metaphor ('eyes are brown conkers') if appropriate for your group.

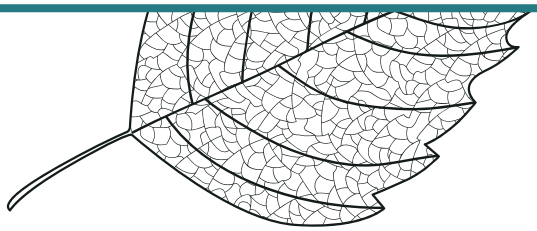
Darting through the woodland
Ears that twitch at every sound
Eyes are brown conkers
Running like the wind

In small groups, choose an animal and write an acrostic poem for it.

Once the acrostic poems are complete, ask each group to make a ground picture of their animal with its name written next to it in sticks, stones or cones.

Each group can perform their acrostic poem while the rest of the class admire the artwork.

Haiku



Explain to the children that every type of tree has its own special name and features, and that we can identify a tree by looking at the shape, colour and arrangement of its leaves, as well as its twigs, bark and seeds.

Spend some time noticing the differences between the trees in the forest, and identifying some of them.

Next, read aloud a haiku inspired by a particular tree species:



Haiku the oak tree,
by Dorothy Holmes

Black against pale sky
Shadow in the pouring rain
Barren silhouette

Beech wood haiku,
by Res John Burman

These old beech woods wait
For the joyful sound of pigs
Autumn's mast rights feast



Sycamore haiku,
by forest ranger

Helicopter seeds
Amid golden autumn leaves
Sycamore beauty



Pine tree haiku,
by unknown

Dark, spiky needles
Green throughout cold winter months
Cones woody and brown



Ask the children what 'syllables' are, and then read the haiku again, asking them to count how many syllables it consists of.

Traditional haiku should have three lines and a total of 17 syllables - 5 in the first line, then 7, then 5 (but you can allow some deviation from this if you want to!)

The children can then work in pairs, groups, or individually, to come up with a haiku for a tree in the forest.

Again, the activity can finish with a performance.

Whole class story telling



Forwarder – stacking logs at roadside

30 forest words (print and cut out)

The children will need to have some prior knowledge of how trees are grown for timber - have a look at the 'forest cycle' spotter sheet on www.forestryengland.uk/spotter-guides-and-activity-sheets.

Randomly hand out the forest word cards. These are numbered so that your story follows a logical sequence and will dictate the order in which the children participate.

The children are now going to collectively tell the story of the forest as it is cared for today. The child with card number one starts the story (thereafter the children take turns in card number order). Each child has to weave their word into their part of the story, with each child following on from the previous child. Everyone participates until all the words have been used and the forest cycle story is complete.

Encourage the children to maintain the interest of their listeners by speaking as imaginatively as they can, i.e. really setting the scene through the use of descriptive language. For example, describing the movement, sounds or smells of the forest associated with their words.



Timber lorry – taking logs to sawmill



Harvester – felling trees

Additional 'fill-in' activities



Use these activity suggestions as 'fillers' for those who have completed their work first.

Wands and rhymes - encourage the children to find a short stick to be a wand, and magically turn ordinary forest finds into something fantastical!

For example, a piece of a pine cone becomes a single scale from the tail of a baby dragon, or an acorn cup the soup bowl belonging to a forest fairy.

The children could even create their own magical rhyme to recite when turning objects into something else, for example;

"Close your eyes for your delight
fairy dust gives magic sight
wiggle your wings, waggle your toes
open your eyes, now what do you suppose..... it could be?"

Fantasy adventure story settings - ask the children to use natural materials to create a small scale model of a scene from an amazing fantasy adventure story. What sort of landscape, structures and mythical creatures can they create?

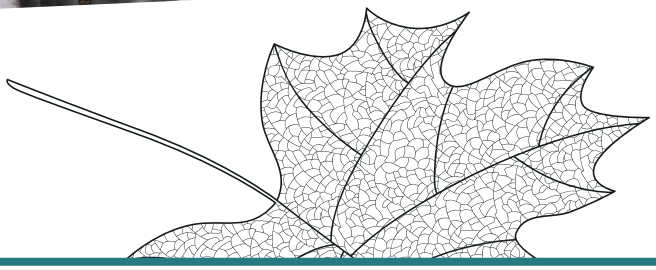


Alliterate while you walk - explain to the children what we mean by alliteration (the repetition of the same sound or letter at the beginning of each or most of the words in a sentence, phrase or description) and offer some examples (see box).

As you walk through the forest, ask the children to throw as many alliterations inspired by their environment into their conversation as they can.

The beautiful birch bends in the breeze
Sycamore sways in the sunshine

An adult could note them down to share later in the classroom, or you could record them on a voice recorder.



Back at school

Forest folklore and fairy tales

There are plenty of examples of well known stories set in forests, e.g. Hansel and Gretel, Robin Hood, Baba Yaga and Shakespeare's, 'A Mid-summer Night's Dream'.

Which fairy stories, myths and legends are the children already familiar with? Ask the children to write their own woodland fairy story or legend using their recent forest experience as inspiration.

Non-fiction reading and recording/writing

What information can the children find out about jobs in the forestry industry? Search for roles including tree surgeon, forest ranger, wildlife ranger, horse logger, timber haulage driver and green woodworker. Which aspect of multi-purpose forestry – people, timber or wildlife – would the children most like to work in and why?


Wildlife


People


Timber

5 Tree guards	10 Harvester	15 Picnic table	20 Dens	25 Care	30 Wildlife
4 Saplings	9 Chainsaw	14 Wood	19 Children playing	24 Squirrel	29 Timber
3 Nursery	8 Thinning	13 Sawmill	18 Cyclist	23 Woodlouse	28 People
2 Seeds	7 Evergreen	12 Timber lorry	17 Dog walker	22 Robin	27 Sustainable
1 Forest	6 Deciduous	11 Fowarder	16 Firewood	21 Habitats	26 Replace

‘Tribute to Trees’

by Elizabeth Barling

Said the tree to the man:

“I ask but little of you, light and space that I may grow to serve you.
In return, I give you winter shelter from wind and rain, and grateful summer shade.
I provide the door to your home and the beams and rafters that support the roof.
You tread my boards as you cross the floor to eat at my table.
Mine are the logs that blaze upon your hearth, mine the comfortable pipe and the matches with which you tend it.
And, when the time for sleep is come, my wooden bed awaits you.

At work, mine are the handles of your tools; at leisure, mine your wheelbarrow, your stick, your bat, your newspaper.

At life’s start I rocked you in my cradle and at your journey’s end, my coffin will take charge of your relinquished body.

There has always been music for you in my leaves, beauty in my changing colours, nourishment in my fruits. With trees around, no man is comfortless.”

Said the man to the tree:

“I will spare you the light and the space that you need. I will secure that, when you are old, another generation shall replace you. I will tend your offspring in their youth, knowing that my descendants will benefit by their maturity.

I will value you as you deserve - and, emulating your aspiring boughs, look up, in gratitude, towards the stars.”

In the late 1960’s Elizabeth Barling set out to create Ravenshill Woodland Reserve in Worcestershire. She published a book about this in 1982 called ‘Birth of a Nature Reserve.’

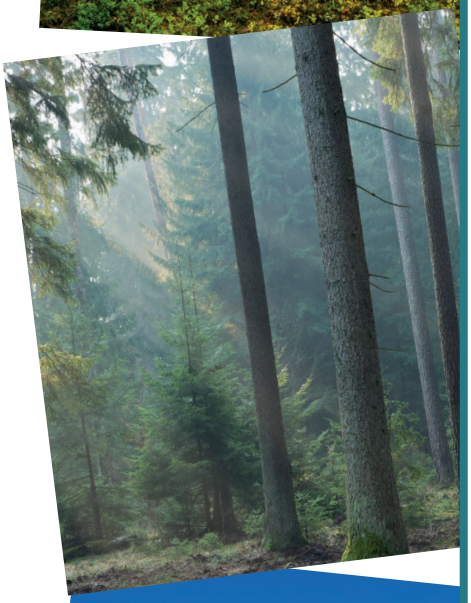




Wood you believe it?

There are 30 things mentioned in this story that come from trees. Can you find them?







I wake up as the sun peeps through the curtains at the window frame. It's going to be another hot day!

I jump out of my wooden bed, on to the floorboards, nearly falling over a pile of books on the floor and head to the bathroom.

I have a wash using the palm oil soap and find a new loo roll, taking the old cardboard tube away for recycling.

When I'm dressed I head down for breakfast, sliding down the wooden bannisters as usual!

"Hi Dad!" I call, and he puts down his newspaper and coffee and gets me a cup of tea. "You're noisy this morning" says Dad, reaching for the aspirins.

I look in the new oak kitchen cupboards but don't fancy the brazil nut muesli for breakfast, so I make some toast and spread it with olive oil margarine and marmalade.

I check inside my lunch box. Mum has made me a hazelnut and chocolate spread sandwich and there are some dried apricots and a coconut chocolate bar too.

She's forgotten the fresh fruit, so I grab a banana from the wooden fruit bowl. There's a carton of apple juice for my drink.

Time to go! I check my schoolbag and I've got my pencils, eraser, exercise books and reading book.

(I've got some chewing gum that my friend gave me too).

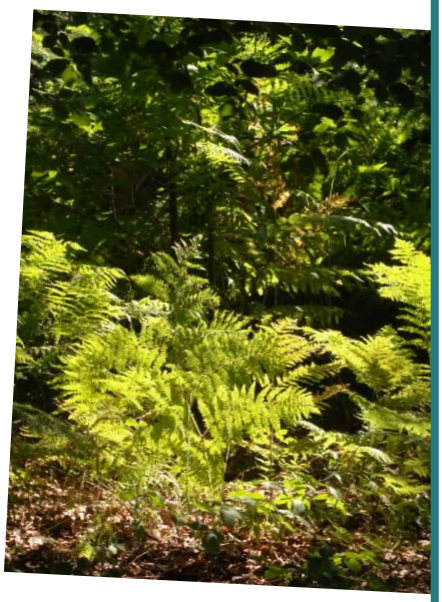
I say goodbye and then run next door to get a lift with my friend's mum and we wait under the sycamore tree while she gets the car out, enjoying the shade.

I'd better use some of Mum's shea butter sun cream so I don't get burnt today.

See you later!

See page 10 for the highlighted answers

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For more information about Forestry England's sustainable management of the nation's forests, please visit **forestryengland.uk**

We'd like to know what you thought of this Forestry England lesson plan.

You can get in touch via email **learning.england@forestryengland.uk**