

10 Outdoor Lessons from



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Love Outdoor Learning offer a range of support for curriculum based outdoor learning within the schools, both in primary and secondary. Our membership resource (created for schools, teachers and parents) offers training and lesson ideas throughout the curriculum and we regularly share blogs with new activity ideas and thoughts on outdoor learning. We can also offer on-site training and support.

Our aim is to help support as many educators as possible. We offer free support calls to help schools understand how we can support them in their learning journey. If you wish to book one just jump over to our diary.

Bird Spotting

5th January to 22nd February is the RSPB Big School Birdwatch. Whilst the citizen science project is great for conservation, you can watch them any time of year. A little time bird watching also lends itself very nicely to maths, as you need to record the information!

If you would like the full information about the event then jump over to the RSPB site. But we also have our bird spotting sheet.

Activity

Take the children outside and ask what birds they notice, can they identify them? What features do birds have? Do the birds in the garden or playground change depending on time of day?

Provide the children with a spotter sheet and explain you will be recording how many of each bird is spotted.

Can you record with a tally chart? What about birds they cannot identify? (It can be handy to have a bird book or or the RSPB site to hand!)

You can then upload your data to the RSPB.

Happy twitching!



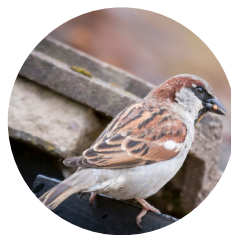
Bird Spotting



Robin



Magpie



Robin



Blackbird



Crow



Chaffinch



Pigeon



Great tit



Nightingale



Wren



Jay



Jackdaw



Blue tit



Dove



Robin

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Magpie

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Robin

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Blackbird

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Crow

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Chaffinch

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Pigeon

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Great tit

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Nightingale

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Wren

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Jay

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Jackdaw

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Blue tit

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Dove

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Repeating Patterns

Our world is filled with patterns! From the bricks on the building to the slates on the roof, the slabs in a pavement or the diamonds created on fencing.

Repeating patterns are everywhere!

Activity

This is a really simple activity that can be enjoyed during a walk!

Simply go pattern hunting! Are there patterns with windows? Doors? Numbers on a street? What about small patterns on drain covers or with door numbers? Do streets always have odd numbers on one side and even on the other? Do they always run consecutively? (a wee hint – they don't on my street!!)

Younger Children

Can they simply identify the patterns in their environment? Can they recreate them? You might use chinks or natural materials.

Older Children

Encourage them to find the more complex patterns in their environment. Can they describe them and continue them? Can they identify the patterns for door numbers in a street where they do not run consecutively?



Repeating Patterns



Numbers Outdoors

We often talk about environmental print, but then forget we are surrounded by numbers. So, in this activity, we challenge you to explore your local environment and start discovering what maths can be found.

Activity

Much as you would head out on a walk looking for environmental print, we do the same but with numbers and maths at the forefront of our mind. Have a think about what numbers tell us.

Are all streets odds and evens (cul-de-sacs and dead end streets sometimes aren't, certainly the way the numbers work on my dead end street are a mystery to me!). Why do some buildings have 4 digits on them? What does that tell us? (often the year of construction, but how does that link to how the community has changed over time) The number on a post-box often changes throughout the day (so you know how many collections have been made) Are your streetlights or signs numbered? Why (Often so faults can be easily reported) What other mathematical concepts can be found? Shape, ratio, angles – road signs, buildings, nature)

Older Children

Try and extend the discussions as to what that tells the children about their town or village. Do the numbers share a history? Do they serve a purpose?

Can they explore other maths concepts, shape, pattern, etc

Younger Children

Can they add up the numbers on car licence plates? Can they correctly name bigger numbers



Senses Poem

Using senses outside is a great way to really help children tune in to nature. It opens up their creativity and aids their prose. A wonderful activity I enjoyed with all ages is the senses poem. It is simple. It encourages description and good use of adjectives.

It can also be completed throughout each season, creating a changing wall display and a real understanding of how seasons, and our feelings with them, change. The poem itself is simple, it can be adapted, but there is beauty in simplicity

.Activity

Encourage children to consider their senses in turn. Talk about each and how we experience them. Then ask children to take their time to compose their poem. The last section, I feel, may consider touch but may also consider feelings. Either is ok.

Finish by sharing.

Poem I see...I hear...I smell...I taste...I feel...

Younger Children

Younger children can draw a picture for each section. If they cannot write, they can still express themselves.

Older Children

Older children can be encouraged to use increasingly complex vocabulary and each start can be a verse rather than a line.

Follow Up

This can be followed up each season, to build upon the poem, create a picture of a year and help children see how they progress.



Make a Movie or Comic

Most children will have watched the Lego movie or Toy Story and will love the opportunity to create their own. This lesson has strong literacy and technology links, is outdoors and encourages the children to look at their playground or local area in a totally different way!

Activity

Allow the children to decide which characters to use. It may be soft toys, lego or squishes, whatever works for them! Then set the challenge.

Can they create an adventure for their character. It needs to have a beginning, middle and end. It could be as simple as running across the garden, or scaling the wall to get back to the bedroom they love.

Let the children's imaginations run free.

If the children have iPads, phones or cameras they can spend time creating a scene and taking a picture. They then move the character a little and take another pic. Once all these pics run together they have a movie!

If they do not have the technology can they draw each step of the story, creating a comic strip.

Remind children to think about scale. Blades of grass are tiny to us but might actually be taller than your character. Allow time to create a film. This may take more than one session outside.



The Green Man

Once upon a time, there lived a rich and vain young prince. Servants prepared his favourite foods each day. His every wish was granted. He cared not for people nor animals.

One hot day, the young prince decided to ride his horse through the woods that were part of his kingdom, hunting small animals for fun. He thought that the woods and all its creatures belonged to him and he could do as he pleased with them. He raced over the woods and fields scaring many creatures as he went.

It was a hot day and he needed to cool down. He came to a loch – a beautiful, clear, cool loch.

The young man began to remove all of his fine clothing. He laid his clothes neatly folded on an old log by the edge of the loch and tied his horse to a tree before jumping into the cool water.

While he was swimming and splashing away, a hand reached out from behind a tree, took his clothing and led his horse away. When the prince got out of the water, he discovered that he had nothing left to wear save a piece of rope. He took the rope and fastened some leaves to it to make a cover up. He was a proud and vain prince. He could not go back to his home dressed like this, so instead he hid.

At night, the prince went looking for some shelter and he stumbled into a cave. He didn't sleep much that night. It was dark and he was frightened. He kept hearing animal noises all night. In the morning, when the daylight came, it was clear that someone had been living in that cave! He found some food bedding and a container for water.



The Green Man

Over time, the prince settled into life in the cave. He fashioned a whole garment out of leaves. He ate from the land. He covered his hand with mud to prevent stings and reached into a beehive for honey to eat. He became acquainted with all the small woodland creatures, and he cared for them, helping them over swollen streams when heavy rains fell, making sure they had food and water, and sheltering them in the cave on the chilly nights.

One day, whilst out walking he heard the screams of some scared children. He raced towards the screams and discovered two small children trapped by a wild pig threatening to charge. When he had chased the pig off, they looked at him. There he was, covered head to toe with leaves and mud, with a wild-looking beard and hair.“

Are you the Green Man?” they asked.

“I guess I am,” said the man, who no longer looked anything like a prince.

The children went back to the village and told their adults of the Green Man. As time passed, the villagers told their children a story about a Green Man who lived in the woods and cared for all the small creatures. They said he even watched out for children in the woods. The villagers faithfully left out food on winter nights for the Green Man to eat.



The Green Man

Many years passed, until one warm day when a hunting party came into the woods. The Green Man hid behind a tree to watch. A rich young man, a prince perhaps, became separated from his hunting group and decided to take a swim in the clear, cool loch. He took off his clothes, folded them, and left them under a tree. The Green Man reached out a hand and took the clothes and the horse, leaving behind his garment of leaves and a coil of rope. He used a sharp stick to trim his hair and beard, and rode into town, back to his parents' castle.

Activity

Read the children the story. Ask them to use clay or loose materials to create a Green Man.

Younger Children

Can they make a simple Green Man? Can they recall the description in the story?

Older Children

Can they develop the story after making the green man? Can they explore the concept of the Green Man in other countries?
(it is in many)



Musical Sticks

Making instruments can be simple and only use natural materials. This lesson can be entirely outdoors, or you can take the children inside to paint – though there is nothing to stop you painting outdoors

Activity

First, collect some sticks, finger width works really well and one a little longer and thicker for the main beam.

Then decide how you want to decorate them, you may leave them plain or you can paint patterns on them.

Once they are decorated and dried you can use a little wool/string/ yarn to tie onto the end. I wrapped it around 4 or 5 times before tying it.

Then, tie your individual sticks onto the main beam. You want them 2cm or so apart, so when the wind blows they chime.

Tie a final piece of string on to hang your chimes up with.

Younger Children

They may find this very fiddly

Older Children

Encourage the use of knots



Keeping it Chilly

This is a simple experiment which is easy to set up. The aim is to discover which material is best for insulating an ice cube to prevent it from melting.

Activity

Simply set children a time to work together to decide how to insulate the ice cube. They can use a range of materials, whatever you have handy. It might be cotton wool, paper, card, a scarf etc

Once insulated, place their insulated cubes in a set location and do not move it.

Decide how regularly you will check your cubes (this will be determined by your weather, temperature etc).

Which materials keep the cube from melting the longest?

Alternative

If it is really cold where you are you could do the opposite and keep some water warm instead but be mindful of scalds and burns

Older Children

Can they use a wider range of materials? Can they explain why some work better than others? What additional factors may impact?

Younger Children

Exploring the terms temperature, weather, and using time accurately may be enough of a challenge for younger children.



Old Kids Games

So often these days children spend their time on screens or indoors and the games we played outdoors as children are fast becoming a dim and distant memory, a thing of folklore. Yet these same games taught us about turn taking, teamwork and cooperation. They taught us how to win with grace and lose with it as well.

Activity

Tig

There are so many types of tig, but good old fashioned tig, with one or two chasers that swap every time someone new is caught, is a fun one.

Hide and seek! Love playing this with little ones as it really develops their body awareness, as they hide behind a pole, in full view of everyone! Remind older children about safety

.Team Catch

Set up a field, the children aim to get from one side to the other without being caught. Start off with one or two catchers and as each person is caught, they too become a catcher until there is a winner. Remind children how to safely tag and no pulling allowed.

Catch the flag

Split the children into 2 teams. They each get a different coloured flag. They then decide where in the playground to hide their flag. The aim is to then get the other teams flag. But if they are tagged by the opposite team, they are out of the game. This is a great one for strategy and teamwork.



Old Kids Games

Catcher in the middle

Have the catcher stand in the middle of an area and close their eyes. The rest of the class is then to try and tag the catcher, the person who does it first is the winner. But, the catcher can open their eyes at any time and whilst staying on the spot, turn 360 degrees, if they spot anyone, that person is out of the game. This goes on until someone catches the catcher or everyone is out. Set clear guidelines on how far children can go at the start of the game.

What other games did you play as a child? Can you introduce these?

Younger Children They should be able to play most games but support by playing for shorter periods of time and ensuring instructions are simple.

Older Children Encourage older children to devise their own games once they are familiar with these.



Stickman



Thanks to the wonderful and highly successful book, we often think of Stickmen as being something for the younger years. But creating a stickman can be beneficial for any age!

Activity

In this simple lesson children are to create stickmen. Our usual rule of thumb for a stickman is that they should be no taller than the distance between middle finger tip and elbow and no thicker than my thumb.

Simply use string or yarn to leash them together in a cross shape. This can be tricky for younger learners but develops great fine motor skills.

You can then use material or natural resources to decorate your stickman.

Once your stickmen are complete, it is time to take them on an adventure. What mischief can they get up to in the playground or garden? Where can they roam? What do they get up to?

Give the children time to explore and to play. Even older children and adults have been known to enjoy this!

