

# **Get your daily dose of nature at school**



## **Teacher guide**

Simple activities to connect with nature  
inside and outside of the classroom

Connecting with nature has been proven time and time again to work wonders for our wellbeing. At school, nature connections can help boost children's moods, improve focus and help them to feel less stressed and anxious. But busy school lives mean that making time for nature can be tricky...

We think everyone deserves time in nature. So we've come up with a list of simple nature activity ideas you can use with your students inside and outside of the classroom.

Split into 5 minute, 10-15 minute and +15 minute activities, you'll find loads of different ways that you can get a bit more nature into school life.

Nature gives us so much. From the food we eat to the air we breathe, it keeps us healthy and thriving. But sometimes, we forget that nature needs a little help from us, too. So, while we let nature work wonders for our wellbeing, let's remember to support our amazing natural world in return.

Because when we restore nature, nature restores us.



# Activities to connect with nature outside the classroom



5,4,3,2,1 – in your school grounds or local green space ask your students to use their senses to come up with five things in nature they can see, four things they can hear, three things they can touch, two things they can smell, one thing they could (theoretically) taste. Do not allow any tasting unless you know this is completely safe.

Ask a few students or nominate a class monitor to refill any school birdfeeders and/or bird baths when they are running low.

Give your students five minutes to go and collect one thing from the playground or school field that shouldn't be there and recycle it or put it in the correct bin. For safety its recommended to use litter pickers if you have them and to make sure children don't touch anything dirty, sharp or otherwise harmful.

In the playground or school field, get students to lie on their backs, close their eyes and listen for nature sounds. How many different sounds can they hear? Can they identify any of the wildlife the sounds might be coming from?

Mindfulness exercises can be great for children's wellbeing, and even better if you can add in a connection with nature. Try some mindful breathing by asking your students to close their eyes, place their hands on their stomachs and focus on their breathing. Explain to your students that mindfulness means paying full attention to what you are doing or feeling in the present moment. Ask them to take some slow deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth. They should be able to feel their stomach rise as the fresh air comes in and fall as they breathe out. How does it make them feel?

Another example of a quick mindfulness nature activity is simply standing and stretching in the sun. Ask your students to pay attention to the feeling of the warmth of the sun's rays their backs.





5 mins  
outside

If you've got a sunny day with clouds in the sky, spend a few minutes looking up to the sky and seeing what animal shapes you can find. For safety make sure children don't look directly at the sun.

Come up with four different animals that each have a distinctive sound. Go around the group and assign children one of the animals. Play a grouping game where children have to get into different groups depending on their animals e.g. every group needs to contain one elephant, get into a group with other animals of the same type, get into a pair with a different animal. Children can only communicate using their animal noises.



10-15 mins  
outside

If it's not too cold or rainy, take your class reading outside for a change on scenery.

Take something you often demonstrate on a board and instead teach outdoors using chalk on the playground.

If part of your lesson involves students drawing mind maps, timelines, tables or flow charts – get them to do this outside with chalk and/or natural materials on the playground.

Have a wildlife scan. Set a 10 minute timer and tally up how many different animals (including minibeasts!) and plants your students can find in 10 minutes around the school grounds or local green space. Try to beat your class score each time you do this.

Have a yoga session in the playground or school field. Ask your students to try the tree, eagle and mountain poses to get that extra nature connection.

Try some grounding with nature. Ask your students to take off their shoes and socks and stand on the bare earth. Encourage them to spend some time feeling the actual soil, leaves, or grass beneath them.

Do some leaf or tree bark rubbing to explore different shapes and textures.





10-15 mins  
outside

Take things that generate a bit of noise e.g. class debates, role plays etc. outside instead.

Create a rainbow or wildlife creature in the playground with your class using fallen leaves or natural objects like acorns, twigs, pinecones and conkers.

If it's raining get your students to make some boats from scrap paper and race them in any long puddles in the playground. You can tie in some geography learning about rivers and the water cycle along the way!

Symmetry in nature – in 10 minutes try to find at least three natural objects that display symmetry in your school playground or field. You could also use natural objects to create your own symmetrical designs on the playground floor.



+15 mins  
outside

Build a giant bug hotel with your whole class. Find a shady hedge, fence or tree trunk around your school grounds and work together to build an incredible habitat for our important minibeasts. Find more instructions on how to build a giant bug hotel on page 8 of our Winter activity guide ([WWF Winter Resource](#)).

Set your students the task of finding something natural around the school grounds to take a picture of or draw from every colour of the rainbow.

If it's a nice day, take your whole lesson outside.

Go exploring! Get your students to use spotter guides or an identification app such as the Seek app by iNaturalist ([Discover your local nature](#)) to identify the trees, plants, bugs and birds in your school grounds or local green space.

Plan a nature treasure hunt for your students around the school or as part of a trip to a local green space. You'll need to visit the space beforehand to make a list of natural things that students can find there and give them a map to plot where they find them.





Plant a tree in your school grounds – winter is a great time to do this as this is when tree roots are dormant. You can often get free tree saplings from environmental charities like the Woodland Trust or the Tree Council. You might also be able to get some support from local community gardens or allotments. Find instructions on how to plant tree saplings on page 4 of our Winter activity guide ([WWF Winter Resource](#)).

Plant daffodil, crocus, allium or tulip bulbs with your class in the autumn ready for spring. Find instructions on how to plant bulbs on page 4 of our Autumn activity guide ([WWF Autumn Resource](#)).

Establish a vegetable patch or planting area with your students and grow different seasonal fruits and vegetables throughout the year. Old welly boots and milk cartons can make great upcycled plant pots. If you don't have much space you could explore making a vertical planter using an old pallet or alternative.

Create a spring nature diary as a class. Observing nature around us can help us to feel more connected to it, and regularly recording details of seasonal changes can help us to identify any longer-term patterns of change. Go and take a closer look at what nature is up to around your local area this spring. When can you spot frogspawn in local ponds? When do cherry and hawthorn trees start to blossom? When do crocuses or daffodils start to emerge in local parks? When do the first goslings or cygnets start to appear?

Organise a sponsored wild walk around your local green space and consider raising money for charity whilst you do. Take along some spotter guides and see if you can do any nature spotting along the way.



# Activities to connect with nature inside the classroom



Get your daily dose of nature by watching one of our 3 minute mindful nature videos with your students. Explore buzzing wildflower meadows, dappled woodlands, and peaceful underwater habitats through our beautiful WWF video footage. Find the 'Your daily dose of nature' videos on our schools webpage ([Prescription for nature at schools](#)).

From the jungles of Borneo to the to the woodlands of the UK, find a variety of different nature soundtracks on our YouTube channel. ([Meditation / Natural sounds](#)). Great to listen to whilst doing some calm working.

Consider having some plants in the classroom that students can water and look after throughout the year.

How many UK wildlife animals can your class name in 5 minutes. Can you improve on your score next time?

Change your smart board display to an image of nature. We have some great wildlife images available to download on our schools webpage. ([Prescription for nature at schools](#)).

During a class conversation or debate use a natural object like a pinecone as a 'talking token'.

Use a quiz app like Kahoot to run a 5 minute nature quiz in the classroom. You could choose a different animal or habitat each week to learn about.

Use a natural object as a 'story stick' and create a short silly story together. One student holding the stick starts off the story with the first sentence. The stick is then passed around the class and everyone adds a new sentence to the story – the sillier the better!





10-15 mins  
inside

Play human nature bingo as a class. Come up with different statements e.g. has a birthday in spring, enjoys birdwatching, favourite animal is a mammal etc. to fill up a bingo sheet. Students then need to ask each other questions to find someone who fits each statement and write the names in the corresponding box. First to complete their sheet wins.

Enjoys birdwatching <b>Aisha</b>	Favourite animal is a mammal <b>Theo</b>	Has watched a nature documentary <b>Alex</b>
Has a favourite flower	Is scared of spiders <b>Ezra</b>	Autumn is their favourite season <b>Isabelle</b>
Can name a bird found in the UK	Knows what animal is in the WWF logo <b>Sophie</b>	Has ever grown a plant

Encourage your students to create posters for a world animal or environmental day. For example World Habitat Day on 7th October, International Polar Bear Day on 27th February, World Wildlife Day on 3rd March or World Rainforest Day on 22nd June.

Take one of our WWF wildlife quizzes with your class to learn incredible facts about our planet and some of its most amazing species. We have lots to choose from available on our website ([Quiz for your world](#)).

Get some wildlife into your PE warm up exercises (stretch up like a tree, out wide like an orangutan, stand on one leg like a flamingo etc.)

Ask students to find a leaf, bring inside and try to draw it as carefully as they can. Use an identification guide or online research to look up what type of tree it came from and label the drawing.

For some early morning work, and to help increase awareness of some of our amazing UK species, ask your students to copy a basic scientific diagram of a native wildflower or tree and a sentence or two about that plant into their early morning books. To support literacy, the sentences you've written could be missing punctuation which students can correct as they copy them down.





10-15 mins  
inside

Ask students to close their eyes and use their sense of touch to feel an object from nature – get them to try to draw the object without opening their eyes. Compare the drawing to the actual object. Have any parts been exaggerated or missed out? Why might this be?

Give your class a nature name and get everyone to vote for their favourite. What about an endangered animal e.g. snow leopard, orangutan, green turtle or something from our beautiful UK wildlife e.g. otter, kingfisher, oak?

Create some colourful nature bunting or garlands for your classroom using autumn fallen leaves and threading onto string or yarn. Just make sure the leaves are dried out beforehand.

Students can write an acrostic poem using a nature word as their starting point e.g. a season, favourite wild animal, or a habitat.

Students can use a map of the school grounds to design their ideal school nature area. What would they include? Which wildlife creatures would this benefit?

Use finger paints to create the leaves on a template of a tree trunk and branches. In autumn you can use browns, golds, reds and yellows to create your leaves and in spring you can use greens for the new leaves and pinks and purples for blossom.

Collect some fallen leaves and bring them inside. Try some leaf rubbing by laying a leaf on a flat surface with the leaf veins facing upwards and put a piece of scrap paper on top. While holding the paper still, rub a crayon sideways over the leaf to create beautiful leaf patterns. How many different types of leaves can you get on one piece of paper?





15+ mins  
inside

Choose a book about nature to be your class reading book. This could be a story book, a book of poems or a biography about a naturalist or conservationist. Check out our daily dose of nature reading list developed with The Reading Agency for some inspiration. ([Prescription for nature at schools](#)).

Create a class nature table or display using natural objects from your local area e.g. fallen leaves from different trees, conkers, acorns, sycamore seeds, pinecones etc. Make sure children know not to pick any flowers without permission.

Create nature noughts and crosses! Get students to paint animals, flowers, etc onto small wooden discs to make noughts and crosses. They can then make a grid from sticks. You could keep these in the classroom for wet play or children could take them home to play again with their families.

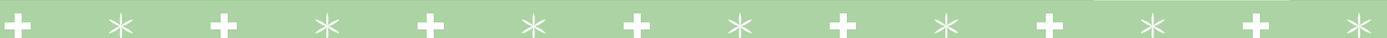
Watch a nature documentary to get some nature into the classroom on a rainy day. We'd recommend an episode of Wild Isles (BBC iPlayer), Our Planet ([Our Planet full episodes on YouTube](#) or Netflix), the documentary film David Attenborough: A Life On Our Planet (Netflix) or Our Beautiful Wild a film entirely written, directed and edited by young people. ([Our Beautiful Wild – Young Voices for Nature Film](#)).

Hold a school assembly on a nature topic – this could be for a world animal or environment day or an initiative like Earth Hour, Recycle Week or the Climate Action Countdown.

Hold a WWF 'Wear it Wild' ([Wear it Wild](#)) event at your school to help raise money for WWF conservation projects.

Create an fallen leaf collage inspired by autumn's incredible colour palate. Find more arty autumn activities on page 3 of our Autumn activity guide ([WWF Autumn Resource](#)).

Make birdfeeders from recycled plastic bottles and hang them up around your school group. Find instructions on how to make recycled bottle bird feeders on page 7 of our Spring activity guide ([WWF Spring Resource](#)).





15+ mins  
inside

Alternatively make birdfeeders from natural materials like pinecones. Find instructions on how to do this on page 7 of our Winter activity guide ([WWF Winter Resource](#)).

Plant cress seeds on cotton wool and encourage students to water and care for their plants throughout the term.

Create bee hotels from recycled tin cans and bamboo sticks to help out our pollinator friends. Put them up around your school, ideally on sunny, south-facing walls in quiet areas. Find more instructions on page 9 of our Spring activity guide. ([WWF Spring Resource](#))

Make your own wildflower meadow seed balls from compost, clay and native wildflower seeds to give insects a helping hand. Autumn and spring are the best times to plant these seed balls around your school grounds. Find more instructions on page 13 of our Spring activity guide. ([WWF Spring Resource](#)).

Join one of our WWF live lessons for primary schools or watch one of our recorded lessons. You can find out which live lessons are coming up on our events webpage.

Broad beans are one of the earliest Spring vegetables you can sow. The large seeds are easy for children to handle, and as they are fast growing, they make an ideal plant for observing the stages of germination. Place the seed in a jar in your classroom and after a few days you will see the roots and first leaves emerge from the seed. Find full instructions on page 4 of our Spring activity guide. ([WWF Spring Resource](#)).

Make a bird nest buffet with plant material, straw, grass, green leaves, moss and feathers. You can assemble this inside and then put outside in a hanging basket or a cage type bird feeder that birds can easily access. Find full instructions on page 5 of our Spring activity guide. ([WWF Spring Resource](#)).





Grow sunflowers as a class this year – you can start these in pots or planters indoors and then move to outside after 2-3 weeks. Whilst they are inside, make sure to keep your sunflowers in a warm place, out of direct sunlight and keep the compost moist. Label your plants so you can work out whose sunflower grows the tallest!

Let us know how you get your daily dose of nature at school by emailing us at [education@wwf.org.uk](mailto:education@wwf.org.uk).



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