

Suggested Nature Trail Activities...

Leaf Art Activity

Get pupils to gather different leaves and record their texture and shape by rubbing through a sheet of paper with a crayon.

Follow-on activities

The pupils could classify the leaves by their different shape and sizes or colour on a large chart in the classroom.

Create a large collage using the 'rubbings' from all the pupils.

Discuss the importance of leaves to the tree and how trees play a large part in the planet's ecosystem.

The Sounds of Nature

Get pupils to listen carefully to the sounds they hear at various locations on the trail. Record these sounds on the worksheet.

Follow-on activities

The pupils could classify the sounds as being natural or manmade on a large chart in the classroom.

Analyse which parts of the trail had more manmade or natural sounds and illustrate this on a large version of the nature trail map.

Discuss the importance of sound in nature and introduce the children to animals who use sound in an unusual way. eg: Bats.

Living and Non-living Activity

Get pupils to study natural and manmade areas of the trail (eg: School field and Car park) and note down natural items in the manmade area and vice versa.

Follow-on activities

Discuss how nature always finds a way of living, even in the most unusual and unnatural places; also discuss how manmade objects can start to 'pollute' natural environments

eg: Litter etc.

Record these findings on a large version of the nature trail map.

Discuss pollution and how this can be avoided eg: Recycling etc.

Your School Ecosystems

Examine the different Ecosystems of your school and its grounds by selecting 3 different areas of your nature trail and study each area in the following manner.

Create 6 teams of pupils to study and record a specific element of each of the nominated areas-

Team 1: soil

This team studies the texture and composition of the soil at the three study sites to determine whether it is wet, moist, or dry. They should also examine the soil for texture, color, smell, and any plant material or organisms in the soil.

Team 2 - sunlight

This team will determine how much sun penetrates to the ground at the three sites. They terms such as dark, shady, medium light, or bright; or they could develop a relative scale, such as "Site 2 is brighter than site 3."

Team 3 - wind

This team will use a small strip of paper to determine wind movement at each of the three sites. While one student holds the paper away from them, the other team members observe it to see if it hangs straight down or blows at an angle. Have the team determine the direction from which the wind is blowing using a small compass.

Team 4 - temperature

This team will take the temperature at each site at ground level, this can be done by putting the thermometer 2 cm deep into the soil for at least 4 minutes. The team should also take a temperature reading 1 meter above the ground.

Team 5 - plant life

This team observes the plant life growing at each site (trees, grasses, plants - they don't have to identify them). They should describe the most common types of plants found.

Team 6 - animal

This team observes animal activity at each site.

Follow-on activities

By recording and assessing the similarities and differences between the areas the pupils can see how the various 6 elements affect each other and can predict the effects of changing one of the elements. Illustrate the different ecosystems in your class room using pictures and samples found at the areas. Present the findings in a report for your school library that other classes can read.