

Wales Outdoor Learning Week

22 to 28 April 2024

Since 2019, every spring, **Natural Resources Wales** and **the Wales Council for Outdoor Learning** join forces to organise #WalesOutdoorLearningWeek, a great opportunity to showcase and celebrate how we can all benefit from learning in, learning about and learning for our natural environment.

This year, we're joining in with the week-long celebration of the great outdoors and have created a range of activity ideas based on the children's book **Tidy** by Emily Gravett. **Tidy** is also available as a Welsh language version, **Taclus**, adapted by Mari George.

If you haven't read the book here's a little more information about the story...

Pete the badger likes everything to be neat and tidy: the flowers, the leaves, even the other animals. But, when autumn comes, he gets a little bit carried away with cleaning up the forest and accidentally destroys his own home!

In 2025, Polka Theatre and Theatr Iolo will be touring **Tidy**, along with a Welsh version **Taclus**, to theatre venues throughout Wales and England. To find out more about the tour, visit theatriolo.com

We've created these activities with 3-7 year olds in mind, but many can be adapted for older or younger children too. We hope you have fun outdoors together!

Our top tips for outdoor learning...

1. **There's no such thing as bad weather!** But you'll have the most fun outdoors if everyone has the right clothing. For this time of year that often means wellies, waterproof coats and trousers, and lots of layers.
2. **Take your time.** Being outside provides children a chance to explore and not all days will be the same. Take your time exploring and try to take a child led approach whenever possible.
3. **Start small.** If your class has not done much outdoor learning before, it may take them (and you) a little time to get used to a different environment. Start with short activities that last 10-15 minutes, and build up to longer periods of time as you get more comfortable being outside together.

Getting muddy!

Pete the badger isn't that keen on mud or leaves. He wants to tidy up and keep everything clean. But clearing the forest of these things leaves him without a home, and he quickly realises that a little bit of mud isn't so bad after all!

Mud is great creative tool when learning outside and can be used for lots of different activities. These are a few of our favourites...

ACTIVITY: Painting with Mud

Have you ever tried painting with mud? Why not collect a small amount of mud from different places and make your own mud paint?* Just mix your mud with a little water!

Things you'll need...

- Mud!
- Pots for mixing
- Water
- Paint brushed
- Paper
- Clipboards or easels for leaning on outside

Things to notice...

- What colour is your mud? And does the colour change if it's from a different place?
- Is there anything else in the mud? (e.g. sand, gravel, leaves)
- Could you apply the 'paint' differently for different effects (e.g. flicking your brush or with a sponge or even a leaf!)

*Make sure your mud is from a place where it won't have been used as a toilet by dogs or cats. It's also important you have permission from the landowner.

Follow up activities:

- Take your activity to the next level and try making a natural paint brush from a twig and leaves or grass
- Research cave paintings and see how these are different or similar to the paintings you have created.
- Learn about how paints were made throughout the ages. What different materials were used to create colours 500, 200 or 50 years ago? How have things changed? Are the methods we use today better or worse?

Area of Learning and Experience	Statements of what matters
Expressive Arts	Exploring the expressive arts is essential to developing artistic skills and knowledge and it enables learners to become curious and creative individuals.

	<p>Responding and reflecting, both as artist and audience, is a fundamental part of learning in the expressive arts.</p> <p>Creating combines skills and knowledge, drawing on the senses, inspiration and imagination.</p>
Humanities	<p>Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future.</p> <p>Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.</p>

ACTIVITY: Squidge, squelch!

Mud can look and behave differently depending on the weather. Here's a quick experiment you can do outside to find out what happens

- Put a small amount of mud in two different containers
- Find a spot outside to leave one container (without a lid)
- Put a lid on the other pot and keep in inside, in a cool and dark place.
- Talk about or write down what you think will happen to the mud that's outside if it rains or if there is lots of sunshine. Do the same for the mud that's inside.
- Check on the mud every day for a week to see how it has changed
- **DIGITAL COMPETANCY BONUS!** You could take photos of your mud and keep a photo diary of how the mud changes and compare

Things to explore further...

- Thinking about the outcome of the experiment, explore and discuss how climate change might change the landscape and world in which we live

Follow up for teachers...

Here's an article about why mud, dirt and water are children's best play tools:

<https://www.family.co/blog/mud-play-early-childhood-education>

Area of Learning and Experience	Statements of what matters
Science and Technology	<p>Being curious and searching for answers is essential to understanding and predicting phenomena.</p> <p>Matter and the way it behaves defines our universe and shapes our lives.</p>
Humanities	<p>Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.</p>

Where do animals live?

Pete the badger lives in home called a sett. Wild animals in the UK live in all sorts of different habitats and all sorts of homes.

ACTIVITY PART ONE: A Wild Wander

Go for a walk together as a class and see what animal homes you can find? Be careful not to disturb any animals that might be inside!

Things you might want to take with you:

- Binoculars
- Magnifying glass
- Notebooks and pencils
- Cameras

Things to do or ask on your walk...

- Create a list of animals that live up high and ones that live on the ground.
- Draw pictures of the different animal homes you find on your walk.
- Look under rocks and logs to see what bugs you can find! (make sure you put the items back afterwards)
- Look out for items that don't belong in the wild and think about how these might be hazardous or beneficial to animals.

Tip: If you live in a very urban area, you may want to focus on animals such as birds, insects, bees and worms.

ACTIVITY PART TWO: Where do I live?

After your walk, here's an idea for an outdoor game you can play together as a class...

In your outdoor space, set up 'homes' around the space, by printing out photos of different animal homes.



Burrow

Once you have printed off your homes, print lots of copies of each of the animals.



Rabbit

Other examples:

- Badger (sett)
- Fox (den)
- Bird (nest)
- Rabbit (burrow)
- Otter (holt)
- Bee (hive)
- Spider (web)

Split your class into small groups and give them a selection of animals. Ask them to work together to find the right 'homes' for the animals. Depending on the age of the children, you may wish to discuss the names of the homes in advance of playing the game.

To make this game competitive, you can add a different coloured sticker to the animals for each group. After the game has ended, collect up the animals and see who got them right!

Tip: Don't forget to laminate your photos to protect them from the weather!

Area of Learning and Experience	Statements of what matters
Humanities	Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future. Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions. Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action.

Science and Technology	<p>Being curious and searching for answers is essential to understanding and predicting phenomena.</p> <p>The world around us is full of living things which depend on each other for survival.</p>
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Sett sweet sett!

In the story, Pete the badger gets a little bit carried away with tidying up and accidentally ends up destroying his own home.

Taking care of the natural environment is a big responsibility. Humans have a huge impact on the world, including the habitats of animals. But there is lots we can do to look after and improve the natural environment, making sure that animals have safe places to call home!

Activity: Urban living

Humans are getting better and incorporating wildlife friendly design into new buildings and urban landscapes. Here are a few example of this in Wales:

- Buildings that have 'bee bricks' (e.g. Grange Pavilion in Cardiff)
- Bus stops with green roofs (Cardiff and Swansea)
- Urban bee hives (The Senedd in Cardiff Bay, National Museum Wales and Swansea University)
- Hedgehog highways (bighedgehogmap.org)

Get out into your local community to see if you can find any examples of how humans have made buildings or structures better for local wildlife. This could be in an urban or rural setting.

If you can't get out and about, use Google maps to explore the examples above.

Activity: Litter Pick

Litter in natural areas causes lots of problems for wildlife. From hedgehogs getting stuck in cans or sea birds swallowing plastic in our oceans. The good news is we can all do our bit to make the world a better place.

Why not organise a community litter pick or make posters for your local area that discourage people from littering?

Activity: Make a bug hotel

Some animals move around and actively look for new places that will provide good homes! Insects, beetles, spiders and worms are just some of the creatures that are always on the lookout for a place to call home.

Why not make your own bug hotel in your school to provide a home for these tiny creatures!

Things you'll need...

- Wooden pallets (make sure there are no sharp nails / staples sticking out)
- Old sheets of wood
- Bricks (with holes in)
- Sticks
- Leaves
- Stones
- Pinecones
- Straw
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You can create your bug hotel however you want... the only limit is your imagination!

Here are a few ideas to get you started:



Area of Learning and Experience	Statements of what matters
Humanities	<p>Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.</p> <p>Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action.</p>
Science and Technology	<p>Being curious and searching for answers is essential to understanding and predicting phenomena.</p> <p>Design thinking and engineering offer technical and creative ways to meet society's needs and wants.</p>

	The world around us is full of living things which depend on each other for survival.
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Suggested books / further reading...

Tidy \ Taclus by Emily Gravett (adapted by Mari George)

The Lost Words \ Geiriau Diflanedig by Robert Macfarlane & Jackie Morris
(adapted by Mererid Hopwood)

Somebody Swallowed Stanley by Sarah Roberts

Clean Up! By Nathan Bryon

When the Bees Buzzed Off by Lula Bell

The Last Wolf by Mini Grey