

Promoting literacy in outdoor learning

A resource pack from the Field Studies Council

We have gathered these ideas, resources, and sources of best practice to help you develop your outdoor learning practice and support your school's progress.

Ideas to promote literacy skills in outdoor learning

Reading outside: as simple as it sounds, reading time spent outdoors can relax and improve learners' concentration and allow them to feel more confident in their reading.

Eye spy or Bingo:

Using simple games such as Eye Spy or bingo cards learners can practice naming things and reading or recognizing words in nature

Sit spots - sounds and senses:

Spending time silently in nature will increase awareness of the environment and allow pupils to experience sounds that they might otherwise not hear. This activity will focus pupils on their senses and encourage a wider use of vocabulary. Learners can be encouraged to use descriptive language to discuss the sounds they can hear both natural and man-made.

Natural Characters:

This activity allows learners to use natural objects to create a character from a favourite story, a fairy or even themselves that can be used to stimulate story making. After collecting natural materials to make their character learners can work together to make up stories about a day in their life or an adventure they have been on.

Scrap book poems:

Learners complete a scavenger hunt to collect at least 6 different natural items, these are stuck into a scrap book or could be collected in a tray or bag if bulkier. Using language tools such as alliteration and imagery the pupils write snippets of sentences to describe sounds, textures, colours etc., in relation to their items, either in between the stuck in material or on scraps of paper words or descriptions of the items. For example, a Conker, could be described as "smooth, shiny skin" or a dead leaf might represent "the skeleton of a dinosaur". Once complete these snippets can be organised into a poem.

Nature Journals: Provide children with recycled paper notebooks and encourage them to record their observations, draw what they see, or write descriptive sentences about their outdoor experiences. For every occasion or experience they can document how they feel in nature, their interests and learnt facts. Sketches and doodles are encouraged, with descriptions and explanations of their findings. Any organisms spotted can be drawn, identified with Field Studies Council ID guides: <https://www.field-studies-council.org/fold-out-guides> with annotations added to explain habitat and adaptations.

