Outdoor Fun

for Older Children

This pack is designed to help older children engage with, and learn about, the natural world around them. The activities are organised into four sections: art, survival, conservation and science. They are packed with hands-on active learning activities that encourage children to experiment and explore the world around them. A family group can use this pack or a group of children can complete the activities together. There's a detailed description of each activity, plus a planning sheet to encourage children to take ownership of the tasks.

You do not need to print this page.

Disclaimers
Some ingredients and/or materials used might cause allergic reactions or health problems. You should ensure that you are fully aware of the allergies and health conditions of those taking part. If you have any concerns about your own or somebody else's health or wellbeing, always speak to a qualified health professional. Activities listed within the resource should always be supervised by an appropriate adult. Children should be supervised when using sharp items such as scissors or other tools. Craft items may be hazardous if consumed or ingested. Care should be taken to ensure that adequate cleaning and hygiene procedures are in place when carrying out this activity. By using this resource, you acknowledge that it is the responsibility of supervising adults to ensure the safety of children in their care and that we will accept no liability as a result of the activity.

We hope the information in this resource is useful. This resource is provided for informational and educational purposes only.
As this resource refers to outdoor activities, use of sharp equipment, working near water, outdoor learning and using matches, tea lights, fire, and a hot tin can, you must ensure that an adequate risk assessment is carried out prior to using this resource. Deep water may present a risk of drowning. Participants must be suitably supervised when completing any activity near water. Outdoor areas provide great opportunities for playing and learning, but you should always check any environmental risks before taking part in outdoor activities, and only proceed if it is safe to do so. Please take note of warnings given on some of the activities. You should ensure that children wash their hands after being outside, and are respectful of nature, taking care of animals and plants. You must contact a suitably qualified professional if you are unsure. Twinkl is not responsible for the health and safety of your group or environment. It is your responsibility to ensure the resource and the information/activity it contains are safe and applicable to use in your situation.

Outdoor Fun

for Older Children



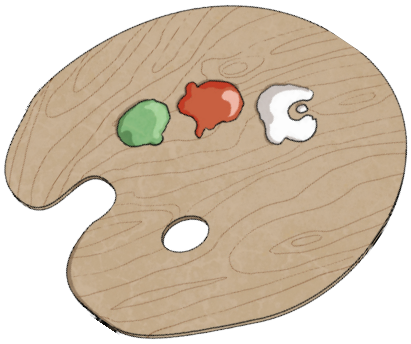
Clay Leaf Bowl

Have fun on a walk seeing who can find the largest leaf to make their clay bowl from.

Equipment

- air drying clay
- large leaf
- bowl
- cling film
- rolling pin
- knife
- acrylic paint.





Instructions

1. Take the bowl and cover the inside with cling film. Place to one side.
2. Soften your clay by rolling and kneading it with your hands.
3. Using the rolling pin, roll out the clay until you can fit the whole leaf on top of it.
4. Put your leaf on top of the air drying clay and press it in by rolling the rolling pin over the top.
5. Following the shape of the leaf, cut the clay with the knife.
6. Once you've cut out the shape of the leaf, peel the leaf away from the clay.
7. Place the leaf shape inside the plastic covered bowl, gently moulding the clay to the shape of the bowl.
8. Leave to dry according to the instructions on the air drying clay packet.
9. Remove the clay leaf from the bowl and paint.



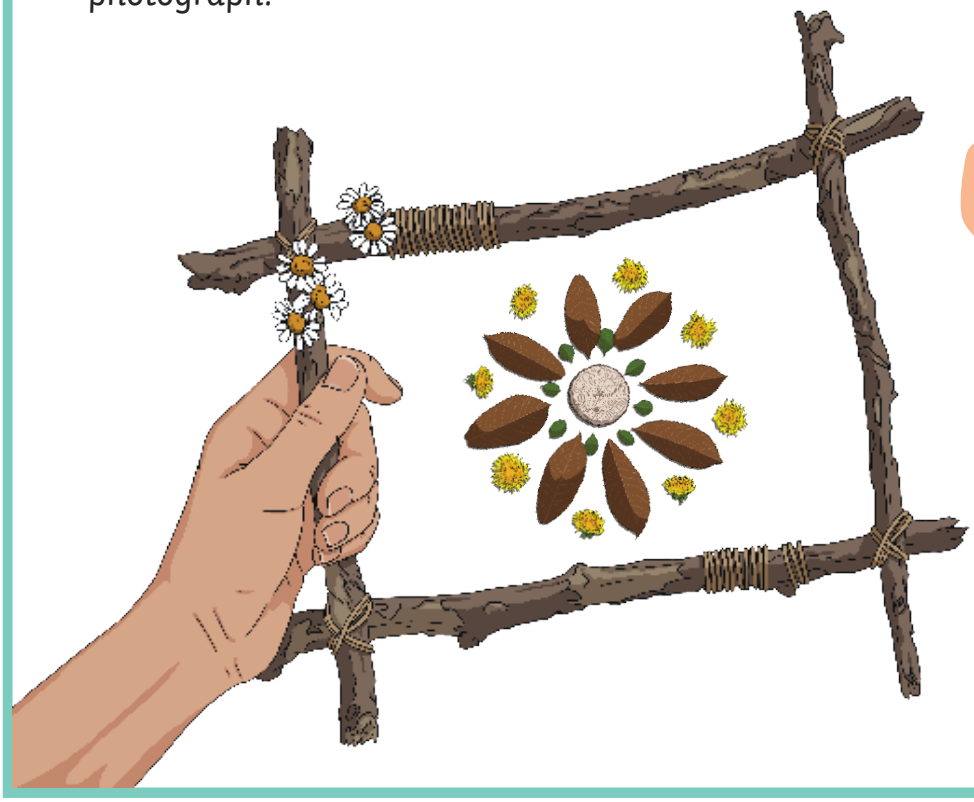
visit twinkl.com

Create Outdoor Art

Outdoor art is a fun way to spend time outside. In an urban setting, you could use chalk to decorate the pavement or walls. In a rural setting, you can look for objects in the environment to make designs with. When doing outdoor art, be mindful of nature. Don't pull up plants or take branches from trees. Larger stones and logs could be homes to insects and amphibians, so don't move them. Look for things like fallen leaves, smaller stones and seeds such as conkers and acorns. When you've finished, take a photograph of your artwork home and leave the natural objects behind. They are a source of food for animals.

Here are some ideas for artwork you could create.

- A mandala. These circular designs are easy to create and look impressive.
- An animal. Can you make an animal shape out of what you find around you?
- Faces. Faces are a fun project. Bring a tree to life by using clay to create a face on a tree and adding in natural objects for the details.
- Paint making. Make paint from natural materials and decorate the trunk of a tree.
- Frame it. Using string tie the corners of four sticks together to make a frame. On your walk, find interesting objects or views and hold the frame up to them while taking a photograph.



visit twinkl.com

Hapa Zome

This ancient Japanese craft is a great introduction to dying with natural materials. Flowers and leaves are arranged on a piece of pale cloth or paper which are then covered with another piece to form a 'sandwich'. The 'sandwich' is then tapped all over with a hammer or other heavy object, releasing the colours from the plants and leaves and making a beautiful print.

Equipment

- cotton cloth or paper.
- a rolling pin, heavy stick or hammer.
- a pair of scissors.
- leaves and flowers.
- a hard surface to work on.

Instructions

1. Lay your cotton cloth on the hard surface.
2. Place the flowers and leaves on one half of the cotton cloth.
3. Fold the other half over, creating a 'sandwich' with the flowers and leaves in the middle.
4. Gently bash the flowers and leaves with your heavy object. The colours in the leaves and flowers will transfer to the cloth.
5. Finally, scrape the squashed flowers and leaves off the cloth and reveal your artwork!



visit twinkl.com

Embroidery

This fun activity uses the techniques of embroidery with natural materials to create a modern form of embroidery. Natural objects are sewn to clear fabric to create interesting designs that will continue to change as time passes. If you want to create an embroidery that will last longer, try pressing the flowers first. You can do this by placing the cut flowers between two sheets of paper (choose a thick paper that can absorb moisture) and place them between the pages of a book. Close the book and put it at the bottom of a stack of books. Leave for a few weeks.

Equipment

- see-through fabric such as chiffon or organza
- flowers, leaves and sticks
- needle
- thread
- Scissors
- embroidery hoop (optional)



Instructions

1. Collect a range of interesting leaves and flowers.
2. Fasten your material inside your embroidery hoop if you are using one.
3. Thread your needle, pass it through the fabric where you want to attach your first object. Make two tiny stitches next to each other in the fabric. This will anchor your thread.
4. Rest the first object on the material, covering the two anchor stitches. Use small stitches to attach the object to the fabric. When your thread starts to get short, fasten it off at the back of your embroidery. Pass the needle twice through the back of one of the stitches you've already made. On the third pass, before pulling the stitch tight, pass the needle through the loop. you've made. Pull tight and this will create a knot, securing your work.
5. Repeat the process with the other objects to create an attractive design.

visit twinkl.com



Build A Fire

The most important aspect of building a fire is safety. Always follow these essential rules to protect yourself, others and the environment.

- Never light a fire if the habitat you are in is dry. Fire can spread rapidly in dry conditions.
- Always supervise your fire; never leave it unattended.
- Check how strong the wind is. In strong winds, don't light a fire.
- Do not use chemicals to artificially assist your fire. These can quickly result in a fire growing out of control.
- Rocks from river beds and flint can explode when heated. Don't use them to surround your fire, use wood instead.
- When your fire is done, don't bury the hot ashes or coals. Doing this can cause fires to spread underground.
- Don't wear loose clothing near a fire. If you have long hair, tie it back.

Instructions

1. Clear the area where you are going to build your campfire of any debris such as leaves, sticks or stones.
2. Place a border of wood around the area where the campfire is going to be.
3. Do not build a campfire on grass. Dry grass is extremely flammable and your stones will not prevent the fire spreading beyond the boundary.
4. One of the simplest ways to create a fire is to drive a stick into the ground. Then lean other sticks up against the first one to create a cone shape. Leave one side open and fill in the base of the first stick with kindling (cotton wool, dry pine cones, dry grass and very small twigs).
5. Light the kindling. The fire should spread to the larger sticks around it. As the fire burns through these sticks, add more to the pile.
6. There are several different ways to start a fire - if you want to explore them take a look at The Campfire Cookbook. The Campfire Cookbook also includes lots of delicious recipes to try cooking over your fire.

visit twinkl.com

Cooking On A Tin Can

Cooking pancakes on a tin can can be great fun and is quick and easy enough to do as part of a walk or other activity.

Do not use a tin can that has a lining. Only use a plain tin can.

Equipment

- a clean tin can - all labels removed
- tea lights
- matches.
- pancake ingredients. The pancake batter can be prepared in advance and transported in a bottle.
- spray oil.
- heatproof spatula.
- three flat stones or pieces of wood.

Instructions

1. The tea light will need air to burn. To ensure air can reach the flame, set up your flat stones or pieces of wood so that the tin can rests on them, leaving gaps around the base between the tin and the ground.
2. Lightly spray the outer base of the tin with oil.
3. Light the tealight and carefully place the tin on top.
4. Pour a small amount of pancake batter onto the top of the tin.
5. When the surface of the mix starts to look solid and bubbles appear, flip the pancake over using the spatula.
6. Once both sides are lightly browned the pancake is ready to eat!



Be careful not to touch the tin can with bare hands after it has been placed over the tea light as this will become hot. Always wear non-flammable gloves or ask an adult to do this activity.

visit twinkl.com

Construct a Shelter

Building a den can be great fun. Use large sticks that you find in the woods to create a shelter where you can sit quietly and observe nature. Make sure you don't pull any branches from living trees. Also, leave any rotting wood alone as it is a precious and increasingly rare habitat for many types of insect.

Resources

- Find a tree with a fork in its branches.
- Gather straight, long branches.
- Gather thin, bendy branches.
- Use a tarpaulin (optional).

Instructions

1. Lay the long branches against the forked tree.
2. Weave the thinner branches in and out of the thicker branches to fill in any holes.
3. You can cover the branches with a tarpaulin. This will make the shelter waterproof.



visit twinkl.com

Rubbish Plant Pots

Growing your own food is a great way of reducing your impact on the environment, especially if you avoid buying lots of additional plastic pots to grow it in! Take a look through your recycling for any containers that you can use as plant pots.

Good seeds to try that will grow well all year round on a windowsill or outdoors in the summer include, cress, pea shoots, baby beetroot and radishes. Planting fruit seeds, such as apple or lemon, is also a fun way to experiment.

Resources

- various items of recycling: plastic trays, tubs, milk bottles with the tops cut off and tetra packs. These will all make excellent planters.
- sharp scissors or a metal skewer
- kitchen roll (for cress)
- gravel
- compost
- trowel or large spoon
- seeds - see suggestions above



Instructions

1. Wash out all the recycling and pierce holes in the bottom with scissors or a metal skewer.
2. For cress, place damp kitchen roll in the bottom of a plastic tray and sprinkle the seeds on top. Your cress should start to grow within a week.
3. For other seeds, add some gravel to the bottom of your containers. This will help the water drain. Then, using a trowel or large spoon, place compost on top of the gravel.
4. Plant the seeds according to the instructions on the packet.
5. Don't forget to water your plants regularly while you wait for your harvest!

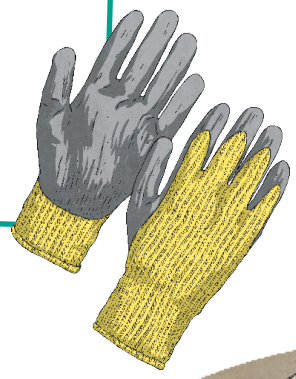
visit twinkl.com

Litter Pick

Litter picking is an easy activity to organise that has a direct positive impact on the environment and wildlife. If you have the space to sort what you collect into rubbish and recycling then it is even better. Litter picking can also be a communal activity. Get a group of teenagers to go litter picking together or see what groups are organised already in your local community and join them.

Equipment

- litter picker
- bin bags
- gloves



! Always be aware of your surroundings when litter picking to keep yourself safe from traffic and falls and wear thick gloves even if using a litter picker.

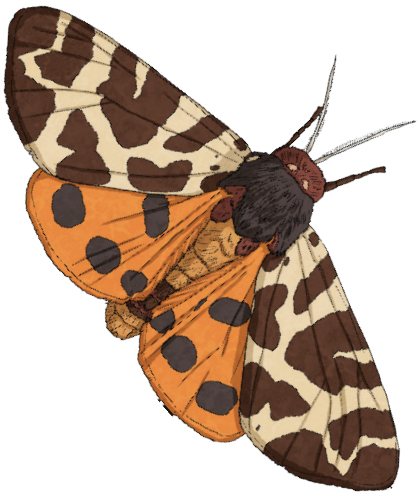
visit twinkl.com

Microhabitat

Ecologists are scientists who study the relationships between plants, animals and the environment. You can get a small taste of an ecologist's work by conducting your very own survey of a small area. You can take ID guides outside with you or take photographs to enable you to research your findings further at home.

Equipment

- 4 pieces of string, each measuring 1m long
- camera
- ID guides
- magnifying glass
- small clean glass jars with the labels removed
- soft-bristled paintbrush
- notebook
- pen or pencil



Instructions

1. Find an area outside and lay the pieces of string on the ground to form a square.
2. Start by writing down or photographing all the different types of plant or fungi in the area.
3. Next, record any wildlife in the area. Some of these are likely to be quite small, so use your magnifying glass to help you investigate.
4. If you want to get a closer look at any insects, you can place them in a jar for a short period of time. Don't touch any insects, you may accidentally harm them. Use the soft-bristled brush to transfer them to the jar. Once there you will be able to examine them more closely and take clearer photographs.
5. You may like to do this with more than one type of habitat. Contrast a square metre of lawn with a square metre of wild plants. What differences do you notice if the square metre is near water compared to if it is high on a hill?
6. When you return home, try to ID the plants and wildlife that you have found. There are many websites that can help you with this.

Plant Wildlife Friendly Plants

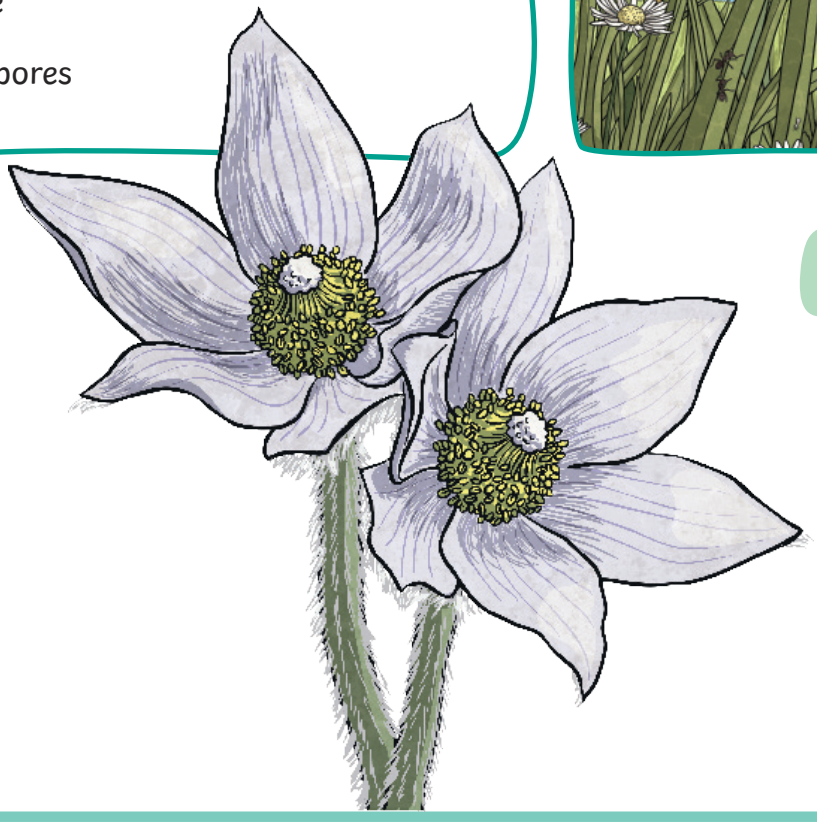
Your garden, if you have one, is a space where you can make a great difference to the local wildlife. Even if you don't see many larger animals in your garden, you will probably be visited by some birds and pollinators, such as bees, butterflies, wasps and hoverflies.

Plant a variety of pollen-rich flowers, including native wildflowers, to encourage and help pollinators find food. It's especially important for them to have pollen early in the year when they first emerge as it can often be difficult for them to find food at the beginning of spring.

Some good examples of plants that flower early in the year and are good sources of pollen, include:

- wallflowers
- primroses
- crocus
- bugle
- hellebores





visit twinkl.com

Make a Pond

There are several species of amphibians in the UK that will live in a garden pond, alongside insects such as dragonflies, mayflies and various aquatic beetles. These creatures will find new ponds once they are established, as long as they are in good condition and have a variety of suitable plant life nearby. If you are going to create a pond, consider the following:

- The pond can be any size, even small ponds can provide a valuable habitat.
- Don't fill your pond with water from another pond; you may spread disease.
- It's not just the aquatic creatures that will be attracted to your pond. Animals that feed on water insects and amphibians will also be attracted to the water.
- Include at least one long, shallow slope. This will make it easier for any creatures, such as hedgehogs or mice that fall in your pond, to escape.
- Partial shade is the best location for a pond. Some of the water needs to be in full sun to allow it to warm up in spring. Warm water is more attractive to frogs and newts. Be careful as too much sun will cause algae to spread too quickly.



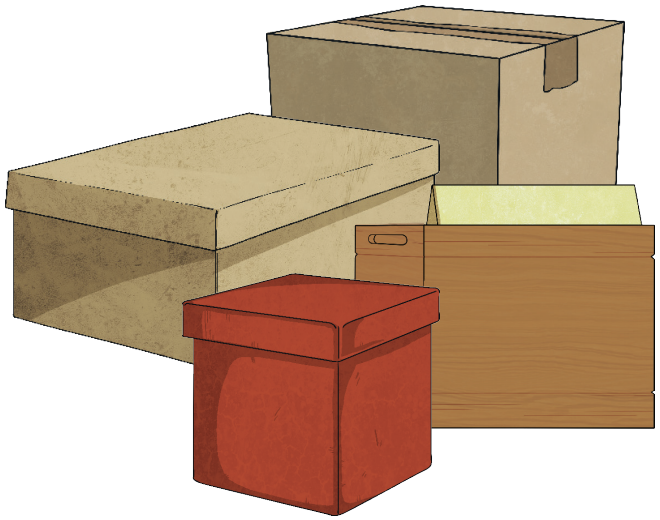
visit twinkl.com

Create a Watershed

Have you ever been curious about how the landscape is shaped by water or wondered how pollution is spread by rainfall? This hands-on outdoor activity recreates a watershed and shows how pollution in water can spread throughout an area.

Equipment

- Boxes of various sizes. Five boxes would work well but if you have fewer than five, you can still make it work.
- A large plastic sheet such as a light-coloured tarpaulin, light-coloured bin bag or shower curtain. The pale colour allows the food colouring to show up.
- A spray bottle filled with water.
- A selection of food colouring.



Instructions

1. Lay the boxes out in any arrangement. These represent mountains and hills.
2. Spread your plastic sheet over the boxes, pushing it down between them to recreate valleys and canyons.
3. Take your bottle and spray water over the landscape you have created. This represents the rain. You can see how the rain will form rivulets (small streams of water) going down the hills and will join up with other rivulets at the bottom to create larger bodies of water.
4. Now, take your food colouring and place small amounts at various places on the plastic sheet. Just a few drops will be enough.
5. Respray the sheet. Observe what happens when the water touches the food colouring. This will show you how pollution can be spread by rainfall.

visit twinkl.com

Make a Water Filter

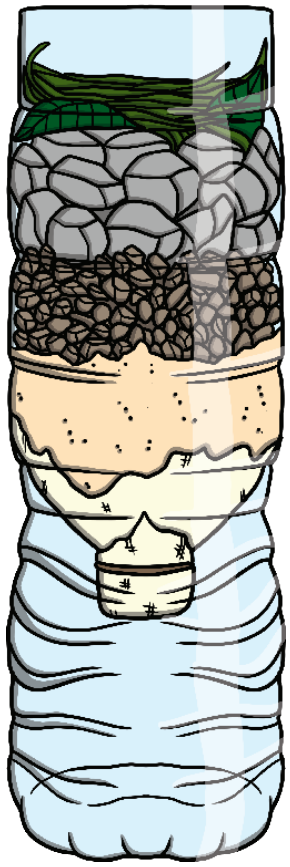
Surviving in the wild depends on clean water, but this particular piece of science has application in our everyday lives as well as playing in the woods. Clean drinking water is essential to our civilisation. Without a reliable source of clean water, we would all struggle to survive. This experiment shows how water filters work on a small scale but it could be followed up with a trip to a water treatment plant to see how the process works on an industrial scale.

Resources

- 2 litre plastic bottle with the flat end cut off to create a funnel
- handful of grass
- 2 cups of fine sand
- 2 cups of charcoal
- 2 cups of gravel
- a clean piece of undyed cloth, e.g. muslin.
- some water that has been 'polluted' with soil and leaf debris
- a container to collect your 'clean' water

Instructions

1. Take your cut-down plastic bottle, turn it upside down and place the piece of cloth in the bottom near the pouring end. Remove the lid.
2. First add the sand then the charcoal, gravel and grass, in that order, so that the grass is on top.
3. Holding your filter steady, with a container beneath it, pour the dirty water gently into the top. As it makes its way down through the layers, debris will be removed and cleaner water will trickle from the bottom of the bottle into your container.



! It is not recommended that you drink this water! While it is effective at filtering out larger pieces of debris, it will not remove microorganisms from the water so it is not safe to drink.

visit twinkl.com

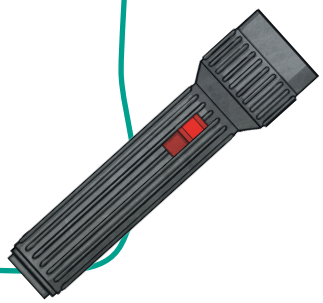
Stargazing

Long before online maps, apps and paper maps, ancient navigators would plot their routes using their knowledge of the stars. Many ancient beliefs and traditions were also influenced by the patterns that we can see in the night sky. Take a walk on a cloudless night, or drive to a viewpoint away from bright lights, to see what constellations you can spot.

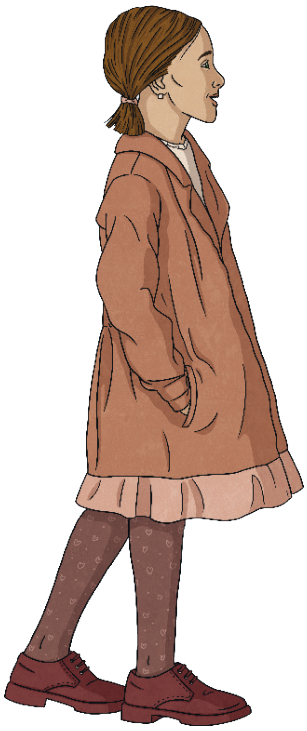
Use this handy **Constellation Spotting Checklist** on Twinkl to help you in your observations.

When planning your trip, take into consideration:

- the weather - clouds will hide the constellations from you;
- suitable clothing - even in summer it can be cool at night;
- take a torch so you can walk around safely.







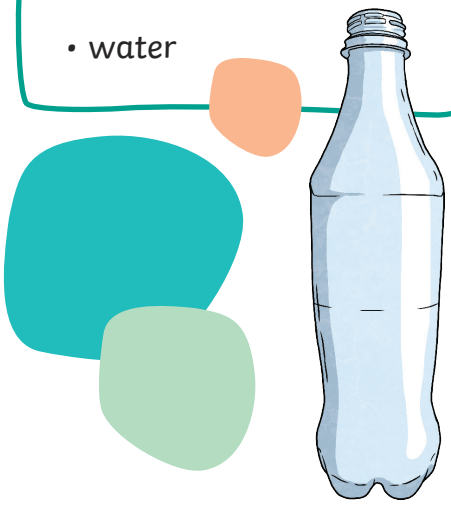
DIY Weather Station

Collecting data about the weather serves many purposes. Different industries, such as agriculture and fishing, are affected by the weather and need reliable data. Collecting data over time allows meteorologists (scientists who study the weather) to make more accurate predictions. You can collect and record data about the weather in this fun project by making a rain gauge, wind vane and thermometer.

Rain Gauge

Equipment

- plastic bottle
- permanent marker pen
- pebbles
- sticky tape
- ruler
- water



Note:

The pebbles and water in the bottom of the bottle are in case the bottom of your bottle is not flat.

Instructions

1. Cut the plastic bottle about two thirds of the way up, keeping both parts.
2. Fill the bottom half of the bottle with pebbles.
3. Take the top half of the bottle, turn it upside down so that it looks like a funnel and sit it inside the bottom half of the bottle. Use sticky tape to secure it in place.
4. With the marker pen, draw a straight line vertically up the side of the bottle.
5. Mark a point on the line just above where the pebbles finish.
6. Label this point zero.
7. Now, using your ruler, mark the line in centimetres starting from the zero mark.
8. Fill the bottle with water to the zero line.
9. Place outside in an area that has no shelter from the rain, but also no nearby roofs or trees that may channel water into it.
10. Place extra rocks around the outside of the bottle to stop it falling over.
11. You will need to check that the water level is at zero in periods of dry weather as it may evaporate.

visit twinkl.com

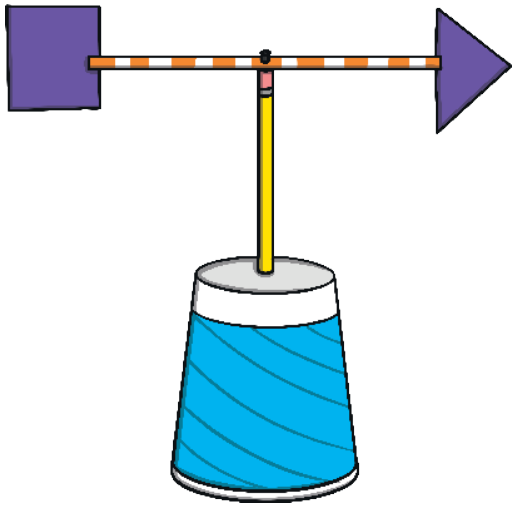
Wind Vane

Equipment

- drinking straw (straight or with the bendy bit cut off)
- scissors
- card
- glue
- plastic coffee cup with lid
- pencil with rubber on the top
- pin
- sticky tape
- compass
- small pebbles
- compass (if you don't know which way is north).

Instructions

1. Cut a slit in each end of the drinking straw
2. Cut a triangle and square out of the card. The triangle needs to be smaller than the square.
3. Slide the triangle into the slit at one end of the straw and the square into the other.
4. Fill the plastic cup with the pebbles.
5. Tape the lid onto the cup
6. Turn the cup upside down and push the pencil into the bottom of the cup.
7. Push the pin through the middle of the straw into the rubber on the top of the pencil.
8. Mark north, south, east and west on the plastic cup.
9. Remember to cover your wind vane or move it inside in heavy rain, as water will damage the cardboard.



visit twinkl.com

Make a Mini Raft

Designing a mini raft that can float is a great engineering challenge and can be performed by yourself or with a group. You can experiment with different sizes, different materials and on different types of water sources (ponds, rivers, streams) to see how your craft manages.

Equipment

This is up to you! You could decide to see what is in your recycling bin or anything that is ready to be thrown away. You may like to challenge yourself to only use what you can find in the natural environment near the water you are going to test the raft on. You may like to limit yourself to one type of material, such as paper or wood to make the activity harder.

Make sure you attach a line to your raft. This will allow you to pull it back if it is caught in a current.

Extension Idea

Increase your understanding of the science at work here with this **Forces and Their Effects Independent Learning Worksheet**.



Activities around water should be closely supervised by a responsible adult.

visit twinkl.com

Build a Sundial

Sundials are an ancient way of telling the time that also offer opportunities for learning about the properties of light and the movement of the Earth. As the Earth rotates, the position of the Sun in the sky changes, causing shadows to change and move. The central part of the sundial, known as the gnomon, casts a shadow onto the dial plate. As time passes, this shadow moves around the dial.

Equipment

- a hard surface in a sunny spot
  If you don't have a hard surface then you will need another way to mark the ground. Try making a sundial next time you visit the beach, marking the points with stones or shells. On soft ground, you could pierce leaves with sticks placed in the ground to mark the hours. For these options, you won't need the playdough as you'll be able to insert your gnomon directly into the ground.
- a lump of playdough
- a straight stick or garden cane to use as the gnomon
- chalk.



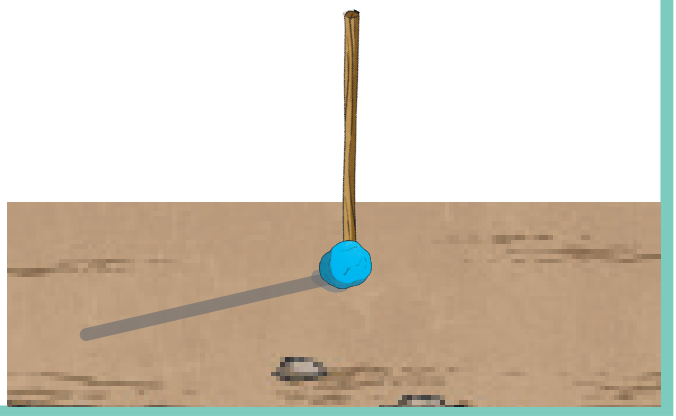
Instructions

1. Use the playdough to stand the gnomon up in the centre of where you want your sundial to be.
2. Every hour, mark where the shadow falls. Obviously, sundials don't work at night!



Extension Idea

Learn about the properties of light with this Recognise that Light Appears to Travel in Straight Lines Activity Pack.



visit twinkl.com

Outdoor Planning Sheet

Use this sheet to plan your activity.

Always make sure a responsible adult is aware of your plan.

Activity:	
Location:	
What equipment will you need?	
How long will the activity take?	
What risks can you identify with the activity?	
How will you reduce the risks?	
What will you need to prepare in advance?	

Evaluation (fill this in after the activity).

What went well?

_____

_____

_____

What would you do differently next time?

_____

_____

visit twinkl.com