



Activity 7 Biodiversity big and small

This activity experiments with scale and perspective as a way of discovering important details, where variety of life is explored close up and in a wider context. Individual art work can be used to contribute to a collective picture of a whole subject.

Curriculum area(s)	Resources needed	Preparatory activity
<p>Expressive arts Art & design.</p> <p>Technologies ICT to enhance learning.</p> <p>Science Planet Earth – biodiversity and interdependence.</p>	<p>Outdoor setting With small natural elements, and classroom/outdoor shelter.</p> <p>Materials Clip board, paper, card, drawing materials, magnifying lens, cardboard tubes, cardboard frames or frames made from sticks</p> <p>Digital cameras</p>	<p>Scale Look at images taken at different scales, from close up to distant e.g. see images in the Biodiversity toolkit available at www.snh.gov.uk</p> <p>For younger pupils Read a story with a 'bug's eye' view that encourages children to see the world at different scales, e.g. <i>The Snail House</i> by Allan Ahlberg (Walker Books). Can older pupils think of other stories where people change size and see the world from a new perspective? E.g. <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>, <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> etc.</p>

Main activity description

Biodiversity big and small

Biodiversity means natural variation that occurs between individuals of the same species as well as between species. Often small animals and plants can be overlooked. Equally, the fine detail of large objects can be missed. Pupils can be encouraged to recognise the importance of detail by producing a large picture of a small object or drawing a very detailed picture of a very small piece of a big object. Close-up pictures can also be taken with digital cameras and transferred to the computer for viewing.

Zoom in

Go outside to collect small natural objects such as a leaf, pebble or feather, avoiding damage to living things. Ask the children to look carefully at their object, using a magnifying lens if possible, and try to draw it. Or, take a digital photograph. Alternatively display your found object in a small card frame. Next, pupils can focus on the tiny detail of a much larger object. For example, they can place their frame over a wide uniform looking area such as a grass lawn and concentrate on the small area where it falls.

They can look at a section of a big tree through a cardboard tube or frame.

Pupils can work on detailed pictures showing separate sections of a very large object. In this way the results can be put together to make one large composite picture.



Extension activities

Comparisons

If an area of short mown grass is studied, the pupils will discover that even this includes a variety of species. They can compare it with the biodiversity of other grassy areas, perhaps less closely mown. Which has most biodiversity?

Can this be illustrated?

Sources & further inspiration

Based on the **Grounds for Learning** project, *The Sky Above, The Earth Below*.

For further information on school grounds based resources, ideas and activities visit www.gfl.org.uk

Farming and countryside education (FACE) provide a downloadable Environmental Arts booklet www.face-online.org.uk
See the *Framing nature* activity.

