



Activity 5 **Species hunt**

Discover the variety of living things using simple classification. Information gathered can be used to compare species and make connections between them. Identify species and map their locations using close observation.

Curriculum area(s)	Resources needed	Preparatory activity
<p>Literacy and English Listening and talking; reading; writing.</p> <p>Science Planet Earth – biodiversity and interdependence.</p> <p>Social Studies People, past events & societies; people, place & environment.</p>	<p>Collecting pots For mini-beasts and natural finds.</p> <p>Species identification keys & checklist</p> <p>Small flags made with card taped on cocktail sticks.</p> <p>Materials Ball of wool, chalk; digital cameras; letters of the alphabet – laminated or chunky plastic versions.</p>	<p>Explore what BIODIVERSITY means See 'Biodiversity begins here' activity.</p> <p>Create a simple checklist of types of species; e.g. bugs, trees, flowers, birds.</p> <p>Explore the Victorian naturalists/collectors They described and recorded species.</p>

Main activity description

Species hunt

Tell your pupils the game is to 'collect' as many species as possible, by ticking them off against the pre-prepared checklist. This provides an opportunity to discuss different types of species. Pupils can be split into groups and each group given a particular category to survey. They can be given different types of habitat to explore outside. They may find some sites support few species while others have a greater variety. Gather together again to discuss the reasons why this might be. Pupils can discover that different species have different needs.

Connections

Ask your pupils to stand in a circle, in their bug/tree/flowers/bird groups. Use the ball of wool to make connections between species. For example – were any bugs found (eating) a plant? The plant group pupils pass on the wool to the bug group, holding on to the free end. Would a bird eat a bug? Pass on the wool. As they join up the wool, they can discover that species are interconnected. You could play throwing a beanbag instead, to show energy passed between species, or write the names of the species found on the ground, and draw connections with chalk.

Chains and webs

Researching individual species found can provide information to begin to construct food chains and food webs. A more sophisticated variation on this could include the use of keys to identify species found. Laminated keys that you can use outdoors can be very useful. Share out the alphabet letters. Working in pairs or independently, give pupils 5–10 minutes and a marker flag, to find a living thing in the outdoor area that begins with the letter they have. Each person/pair can write on their flag the name of their living thing. Go on a guided tour, where each person or team introduces their bit of the biodiversity alphabet.

Extension activities

Develop a small plan model of your school grounds

Pin the biodiversity marker flags to it. This helps to show what is there already and can be used as a discussion point for improving your school grounds for wildlife. For example, if you find it hard to find something beginning with every letter, perhaps you need to encourage a greater variety of life in your school grounds! This work can help to support the Biodiversity element of your Eco-Schools work.

Sources & further inspiration

Natural Leaders Environmental Games and Activities folder available from the National Trust for Scotland. E-mail: education@nts.org.uk

Field Study Council identification keys
www.field-studies-council.org/publications

Explore diversity within species with the schoolgrounds activity '**Spot the difference**' available through the LTS outdoor learning website. www.ltsotland.org.uk/outdoorlearning via 'school/centre grounds – resources' subsections.

