



Activity 16 Wild Tribes & Totems

Totems reflect the significance of particular species to particular groups of people. This activity illustrates how the natural world has been an important part of the art and culture of people both past and present.

The artwork can be used to demonstrate and review the learning that has taken place and share with the wider community.

Curriculum area(s)	Resources needed	Preparatory activity
<p>Expressive Arts Art & design; drama</p> <p>Science: Planet Earth biodiversity and interdependence</p> <p>Social Studies people, place & environment</p> <p>Technologies craft, design, engineering and graphics</p>	<p>Work areas Outdoor area Indoor construction/art space</p> <p>Information Past tribes in Scotland</p> <p>Materials Either large carpet tubes (available from carpet shops), paper mache materials, OR modelling clay, metal rod, modelling knife, bowl of water; paints, adhesive</p>	<p>Scotland's early tribes Explore the world of Scotland's early tribes. Many tribes have a totem (animal or bird) that is very important to them. For example the salmon is the totem animal of the Celts, believed to have magical powers.</p> <p>You can introduce the idea of totem animals by telling a story about a tribe, or research tribes online, see the Education Scotland website (http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scotlandshistory/cal-edonianspictsromans/index.asp)</p>

Main activity description

Totem Creatures

Survey the wildlife, big or small, of your school grounds or surrounding area. Divide your group into Tribes and give them a 'totem' creature to research, ideally found in their school grounds or local area so they can observe its special features and habitat. What 'special powers' does it have? (For example – spiders can weave a powerful web; woodlice are armoured like tanks). Let them choose their tribe name to reflect their totem creature – the more fantastical the better! Can each tribe weave a story about their totem?

Totem Pole

Each pupil can carve their own totem pole creature from modelling clay. Each ball of clay needs to be rolled into a thick cylinder, and a hole made carefully down the centre with the rod. The shape of the animal can be carved out with a modelling knife, making sure the base is kept flat. When the model animals are dry, they can be painted then threaded over the metal rod and held in place with adhesive. The figures can be mounted one on top of each other using a length of metal rod.

Alternatively, large totem poles can be created using inner rolls of carpets, divided into sections for individual pupils to paint. Paper mache can give a more authentic effect.

Celebrate and photograph your totem poles outside. Use them to generate more story telling or drama activities to review the learning.



Extension activities

Link with other activities in this pack

2 *Journey stick stories* and 13 *Mapping new arrivals*.

Sources & further inspiration

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

For further ideas and activities visit the [Grounds for Learning website](http://www.gfl.org.uk)

(<http://www.gfl.org.uk/scotland/>)

