

Activity: Minibeast hunting

Science
Years 2 - 6

ABOUT THE ACTIVITY

As with all of our activities, this is designed to complement the work done in school – it is not meant to be a complete science unit. Depending on the structure of the visit, this might be broken into several sessions on different days.

The group visits the woods in the grounds of Beaumanor, including:

- Learning different strategies for catching animals (depending on their location and habitat)
- Using recognition worksheets and keys to identify and classify the caught animals

WHERE THE ACTIVITY FITS IN

to a visit to Beaumanor

minibeast hunting in the woods at Beaumanor is a major and very popular parts of a nature or environmental theme. Along with pond/stream dipping and a study of plants (tree trail and flower trail), it forms one of the core activities of a visit to Beaumanor. Other sessions can then be fitted in around these, in order to tailor the visit to the individual requirements of the visiting group.

to the QCA scheme

Science unit 2a Plants and animals in the local environment

Science unit 4b Habitats

Science unit 5b Life cycles

Science unit 6a Interdependence and adaptation

ADAPTING THE ACTIVITY FOR A DIFFERENT AGE GROUP

Children of other ages could do the same basic activities at a level appropriate to their abilities.

Younger children could spend more time working on recognition and classification

Older children could explore the physical, quantitative and evolutionary aspects of the habitats.

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if the children have learned:

- Some basic recognition of organisms as plants or animals, vertebrates or invertebrates, etc.
- Some understanding of the interdependence of animals as predators and prey, etc.
- About the trees which make up the woods and the effects they have on the animals.

VOCABULARY

In this activity, children will have opportunities to use:

- words associated with habitats, *eg. wood, hedge, evergreen, dark, etc.*
- words associated with classification, *eg. insect, spider, species.*
- Words associated with feeding, *eg. predator, herbivore, food chain.*

RESOURCES

- Woods, capture bottles, insect nets, pooters, quadrats, recognition guides and keys, magnifying glasses, binocular microscopes, worksheets, books.

EXPECTATIONS

At the end of this activity, due to age or ability

most children will:

Recognise common invertebrates, have an idea of major classification groups and start to understand some of the relationships between the animals.

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

Recognise some common animals and groups of animals and have an idea of how to catch them safely and care for them while in temporary captivity..

some children will have progressed further and will:

Be familiar with most of the common woodland animals and start to understand the environmental impact of the habitat on the individual and how, through evolution, a species adapts to its habitat.

ICT POSSIBILITIES

In our computer suite at Beaumanor during a residential visit, or back at school after the visit

- We have an 'Internet Treasure Hunt'. Children need to search the web to find answers to various questions about aquatic habitats.
- We also have a CD available to visiting groups. It contains previously recorded data for use with spreadsheets and databases.
- As with all visits to Beaumanor, we have several digital cameras available for use by groups. These could be used by staff and children during a residential visit and the pictures produced could be incorporated into multi media presentation packages such as 'Illuminatus', 'MS Publisher' and 'MS Powerpoint', initially at Beaumanor, then back at school after the visit.

WORK BACK IN SCHOOL

We have various worksheets, crosswords, word searches, etc., which are available, on disc, for later use in school. We also have copies of all the recognition pictures and keys which we use - available for use in displays in school.

RISK ASSESSMENT

In addition to the 'Group Visits - General Risk Assessment', the following specific risks have been identified

Hazard	Risk control
Reaching the woods	The group is kept together and moved carefully around the car park on the way to and from the woods.
Woking in the woods in high winds	The activity is either cancelled or transferred out of the woods in windy weather.
Poisonous plants	In most cases, poisonous herbaceous plants have been removed and children are warned not to put any berries, etc., in their mouths.
General security	Children are instructed to work in teams and to stay within sight of a central point and the instructor. A clearly defined and agreed area of the woods is used for the activity. The group is recalled by whistle after about 15 minutes.
Moving around the woods	Children are instructed to walk at all times and to avoid very overgrown parts of the woods.
Washing hands afterwards	Children are told about the potential hazards of the woodland soil and animals and soap is squirted into their cupped hands so that no-one can avoid or forget to wash their hands at the end of the activity.