

Reception - Understanding the World Lesson	
The Natural World	Duration: 1 Hour
National Curriculum Objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (The Natural World) Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants. • (People, Culture and Communities) Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps. 	
Lesson Objectives	Success Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the knowledge to explore and make observations about animals and plants in their local environment. • Develop the knowledge to describe and discuss their immediate environment using observations and information from stories or discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can work with my group to find and talk about different animals and plants outdoors. • I can draw or describe some animals and plants we found in our habitat area. • I can explain what our habitat looks like and what natural materials we used to build it. • I can listen to others' ideas about the environment and share my own observations during our group work.
Links to Previous Learning	
<p>The previous lesson laid the foundation for the current objectives by allowing children to collaborate in creating a den, which fostered teamwork and communication skills essential for the group work required in constructing animal habitats. Through their hands-on experience with natural materials, children developed observational skills and an understanding of their local environment, which prepared them to explore and describe the specific needs of animals and plants. This prior engagement not only deepened their sensory awareness but also encouraged them to draw connections between their earlier activities and the more focused exploration of habitats, thus building readiness for the current learning goals.</p>	
Main Teaching (25 Minutes)	
Starter Activity (5 Minutes)	Resources
<p>Gather children in a circle on logs. Hold up a mystery bag filled with pine cones, feathers, moss, and a smooth stone. Say, 'Let's become Nature Detectives! Close your eyes, reach into the bag, and feel one thing. What do you think it is? Where might we find it in our Forest School?' Invite children to share guesses, then reveal each object and briefly discuss where animals might use them for shelter or food.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mystery bag • Pine cones, feathers, moss, smooth stones (one of each per group) • Logs or stumps for seating
Main Input (10 Minutes)	Resources
<p>Introduce the learning objectives and success criteria to the class. Hold up an animal picture card and ask, 'Who might live in our Forest School?' Show a simple laminated map of the area and point to trees, bushes, and logs. Say, 'We will work in groups to find and talk about animals and plants. Watch as I look under this log—see the wriggly worm? Let's name the plants and creatures we see.' Use your fingers to count how many habitats you find together. Model drawing a quick picture of a minibeast and describe its home. Say, 'We can use sticks, leaves, and stones to build animal homes, then talk about what makes a good habitat.' Encourage children to listen to each other's ideas and share what they notice, linking back to the success criteria throughout.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal picture cards (one per group) • Small baskets for collecting materials • Clipboards with paper and chunky pencils



Guided Practice (10 Minutes)	
<p>Split children into small groups, each with an adult. Give every group a simple animal picture card and a basket. Say, 'Let's find places where your animal might live. Carefully look under logs, around trees, and in the grass. Use your basket to collect safe, natural materials.' Encourage children to discuss what they find and how it could help their animal. Ask, 'What does your animal need to stay safe and warm? Can you build a little home together?' Support children to draw or describe their discoveries on a clipboard. Give immediate praise for teamwork and listening. Prompt them to explain their choices, e.g., 'Why did you use moss?' Check understanding by asking children to describe their habitat and share what they learned with the group.</p>	
Independent Practice (25 Minutes)	
Working Towards Activity	Resources
<p>Gather the group in a quiet spot. Pre-teach key words: 'animal,' 'plant,' 'habitat,' using picture cards. Adult models picking up a leaf, saying, 'This is a plant. Can you find a plant?' Give children a picture card and help them find matching items outdoors. Use sentence starters: 'I found a...'. Encourage children to draw their animal or plant on a clipboard, then prompt them to say, 'We used leaves for the home.' Praise every observation and support turn-taking in sharing ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal and plant picture cards • Clipboards with paper • Chunky pencils
Age Related Expectations Activity	Resources
<p>In small groups, ask children to choose an animal card and hunt for places in the Forest School where it might live. Encourage them to find natural materials like sticks and moss, discussing what the animal needs. Children work together to build a simple habitat, then draw or describe the animal and plant life nearby. Prompt them to explain, 'We used sticks for the roof because it keeps the rain out.' Guide children to listen and respond to each other's ideas during the task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal picture cards • Baskets for collecting materials • Clipboards with paper
Greater Depth Activity	Resources
<p>Challenge groups to select an animal card and explore the area, making careful observations about plants and animals they find. Ask children to design a habitat using a variety of natural materials, explaining their choices with reasons, such as, 'We used dry leaves because they're soft for bedding.' Encourage them to include at least two types of plants and describe how each helps the animal. Facilitate group discussion so children can present their habitat and answer peers' questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal picture cards • Clipboards with paper • Natural materials from the environment
Extension / Challenge Activity	Resources
<p>Invite children to become 'Habitat Detectives.' Ask them to create a new animal, combining features from two they observed (e.g., 'a bird with a worm's body'). Challenge them to design and build an imaginative habitat using found materials, explaining how each feature supports their invented creature's needs. They must share their design with the group, describing the animal, its home, and how local plants and materials help it survive. Encourage creative, detailed explanations and peer questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clipboards with paper • Chunky pencils • Natural materials from the environment



Inclusivity Adaptations	
SEN - Neurodiversity	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat the pupil on the front left log near the teacher and place a laminated visual schedule of lesson steps on their lap. Verbally say: 'First, feel one item, then guess, then share.' Repeat each instruction exactly twice with 5-second pauses. • Provide the pupil with noise-cancelling headphones to wear during group listening activities. Before starting, explain: 'Wear these to help you focus. Take them off when we look at the map.' Allow pupil to remove headphones for 2 minutes after each 10-minute activity segment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laminated visual schedule card • Noise-cancelling headphones • Adjustable lap desk • Clipboard with thick marker
SEN – Limited Mobility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position the pupil on a stable, flat tarp area adjacent to the logs, with an adjustable lap desk for drawing. Give a clipboard and a thick marker to draw their observations without needing to stand or bend. Say: 'Draw where your animal might live using this marker.' • Assign the pupil a verbal leadership role in their group: instruct them to describe animal homes and direct peers' building with sticks and stones. Seat them so they face the group within arm's reach of the adult assistant for support and clear communication. 	
EAL	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-teach 5 key vocabulary words (pine cone, feather, moss, worm, log) using picture cards. Show each card, say the word slowly three times, and ask the pupil to repeat. Use these cards during the mystery bag activity for reference. • Provide sentence frames on a small card: 'My animal lives _____. It uses _____ for shelter.' Seat the pupil at front right log, holding the card, and prompt: 'Say your sentence using the card after you find an item.' Repeat prompts up to 3 times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture vocabulary cards • Sentence frame cards
Plenary (10 Minutes)	
<p>Gather children in a circle and invite each group to show their drawings or describe animals and plants found outdoors. Ask pupils to explain their habitat and the natural materials used to build it. Encourage them to listen carefully and respond to peers' observations about the environment. Prompt groups to discuss how they worked together to find and talk about living things. Review by asking questions like, 'What did your habitat look like?' and 'Why did you choose those materials?' Celebrate teamwork and attentive listening. Use verbal answers, peer feedback, and visual drawings to confirm understanding and progress.</p>	
Safety Assessment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the guided practice, ensure adults supervise children handling natural materials to avoid splinters or sharp edges, providing assistance when needed. • In the starter activity, prevent children from ingesting any items from the mystery bag by reinforcing the 'no eating' rule and closely monitoring. • Manage risks of tripping or falling by clearing the habitat building area of hazards and establishing clear boundaries for movement in the Forest School. • Monitor weather conditions throughout the lesson to avoid cold or wet exposure; ensure children wear appropriate clothing and have access to warming areas. 	





Cut & Stick – Book Inserts

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