

The Countryside Code



An activity guide for teachers

PRIMARY SCHOOLS



The Countryside Code



There are country parks, beaches, woodlands, rivers and forests, as well as thousands of miles of public rights of way and other signposted routes you can explore on foot, on a bicycle or on a horse.

You can now also walk freely across areas of mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land (known as 'access land') without keeping to a path.

Countryside Code - advice for the public

- **Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs**
- **Leave gates and property as you find them**
- **Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home**
- **Keep dogs under close control**
- **Consider other people**



The Countryside Code now also has advice for land managers. See www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk for further information.

Foreword

The countryside is our biggest and best natural resource. These days, most people in Britain live in towns and cities but have their lives enriched by visits to the countryside. These visits to the outdoors may be for leisure, sport or relaxation. The countryside is also an important first hand resource for many aspects of education and offers opportunities for those with specialist interests, eg in natural history, geology, history, etc. The countryside isn't just a playground, though; it is a living, changing environment where people work, live and manage the land. This environment is composed of every living thing and non-living components like the rocks, water and air. Together, this creates a rich tapestry of landscapes from the wild to the carefully managed. The Countryside Code helps us all to respect, protect and enjoy the countryside.

Introduction

At primary school age, children have a willingness to try new experiences and explore new environments. The earlier children experience the pleasures of the countryside the greater their chance of developing a life long enjoyment and respect for the environment around them.

The demands of the curriculum and safety issues are often cited as reasons not to undertake educational visits to the countryside during school time. However, such visits offer the chance to explore aspects of learning that are rarely available within the confines of the school playing field. The Primary National Strategy – Learning and Teaching in the Primary Years (DfES 0526-2004 G) – stresses the need to develop children's abilities in areas such as enquiry, creative thinking, problem solving, reasoning, empathy and communication. Visits to the countryside enhance these learning experiences making them more immediate and ultimately more enjoyable.

In particular, visits provide excellent opportunities to make complex and abstract ideas more concrete and manageable for the learner. An experience-led approach to teaching issues, as diverse as habitats and rights & responsibilities, provides a more tangible and understandable learning method for a wider range of learners. A vast array of visual, auditory and physical approaches are made possible which helps to include pupils with specific preferred learning styles and at the same time helps to develop ability in all learners through all learning styles.

The Countryside Code offers a series of guidelines to encourage pupils to find out more about the environment and to do so safely and with due care and respect for others.

The Countryside Code Education Pack, of which this booklet forms a part, has been produced to help you introduce a new dimension to any field trips you are planning. The activities in this quick reference guide have been designed to encourage young people to think more carefully about the environment they are visiting, the community and biodiversity it supports and their own impact upon it. The activities can be used before, during or after a visit and can support specific areas of curriculum study or just be used to stimulate thought and debate.

You may choose to use the activities exactly as they are included here, or to adapt them to better suit the needs of your class and the visits in which they are engaged. For example, if your school is in an urban area you can adapt some of the activities to suit a visit to a park.

Teachers looking for further support, curriculum cross-referencing, and sample record sheets and templates annotated (*) are directed to the website www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk or the pack CD-ROM as referred to in this activity booklet.

All of the activities are designed to reflect aspects of the Countryside Code. We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the Code and have a copy available for pupils' reference as appropriate. A copy of the Countryside Code leaflet is included in the education pack and is also available on the website www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk or on the pack CD-ROM.

The booklet is divided into six sections:

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Activity and subject map

	Page No.	English	Maths	Science	Geography	History	Art	Music	ICT	Citizenship	PSHE	ESD	Thinking Skills
Out and About													
1 Trip Timeline	6			x	x	x	x						
2 Signs	7			x	x				x				
3 Evaluations	7	x							x			x	
4 Litter Count	7		x		x				x		x	x	
5 Living Space	8			x	x				x			x	
6 Species Hunt	8			x	x							x	
7 Birds of a Feather	8			x								x	
8 Questionnaire	8				x				x	x	x	x	
9 Built to Last	9				x	x						x	
10 Video	9	x			x					x		x	
11 Mapping the Facilities	9				x					x			
12 Worn Away	10		x		x				x			x	
13 Golden Rules	10	x								x	x	x	x
14 Diamond Nines for Changing Places	11		x		x				x	x	x	x	

Rights and Responsibilities													
1 Classification	14	x								x	x	x	x
2 Five Sets of Eyes	14	x								x	x	x	
3 Sort it Out	15	x								x	x	x	
4 Top Three	15									x	x	x	x
5 Stand Your Ground	15	x								x	x	x	x
6 Video Opinion Line	16	x								x		x	

Creativity													
1 Digital Designs	18						x		x				
2 Bark Rubbing	18	x		x			x						
3 Questions	19	x											x
4 Video	19	x					x						
5 Poster Points	19	x					x						
6 Posters for the Present	19	x					x		x				
7 Living Graph	20				x					x	x		x
8 Natural Music	20							x	x				
9 First Impressions	20						x		x				
10 Performance in the Park	20							x	x				
11 Recording Times	21								x				
12 Total Recall	21	x											x
13 Sculptural Sights	21						x						

Access													
1 A Question of Balance	23	x								x	x	x	
2 Roam or Moan?	24				x					x	x	x	
3 Speaking Your Mind	24	x			x						x	x	
4 Rights or Responsibilities?	25				x					x	x	x	

A curriculum map can be found on the Countryside Code section of the website www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Introduction

Field trips to countryside locations are a common feature of many school programmes. Pupils investigate land use and geographical features, visit heritage sites and participate in a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities. How often do they really look at the environment they are visiting or consider the impact of their visit? Do they consider what the effects will be of the total number of visits that site will receive in a year? Are they aware of the role they could play in helping others find out more about the countryside and how to gain access safely and enjoyably?

Activities based around the Countryside Code can add value to an existing field trip providing opportunities for planning and preparation in advance of the trip, stimulate more considered awareness while out and about and provide evidence for follow-up work in a wide range of subject areas. The following activities can be used singly to complement the purpose of the trip, or combined to create a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of human activity on the natural environment.

Activities 13 'Golden Rules' and 14 'Diamond Nines for Changing Places' have strong Citizenship characteristics and can be used to develop negotiated codes of conduct in advance of a field trip or visit.

Project

Visits to the countryside will provoke emotions and leave us with all sorts of memories and new ideas. Sometimes, children have no experience of the countryside and need to appreciate the new experience at their own level. To get the best out of the visit and to fully enjoy the environment, pupils need to understand the landscape around them. Even a five minute walk will present them with a mass of information, from the familiar to things that are new to them! The more information they can gather by recording, counting and measuring, the better their understanding of the countryside will be.

Your class should try to gather information to suit the purpose of their trip. This means you need to discuss the objectives with them and help them work out what kind of survey activities are going to suit the visit.

There are several ways of collecting information about the countryside, some of which are explained below.

1

Equipment you will need:
paper, pencils

Trip Timeline

For each location or stop on their visit to the countryside encourage pupils to record the most memorable sights/images, smells, sounds and feelings and the time they recorded them. Back at school they can plot their memories onto a timeline to create a multi-sensory diary of their journey.

2

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils,
digital camera
(optional)

Signs

During a walk, record every sign seen by drawing or photographing it and recording the details. Classify the signs under the following headings:

- a) **Information**
- b) **Warning**
- c) **Permission, eg private, no entry, etc**
- d) **Direction**
- e) **Bilingual, single language, pictorial or symbolic.**

Working in pairs, ask pupils to rank the five types of sign in order of importance, compare the decisions and discuss any different points of view.

3

Equipment you will need:

paper, pens, word
bank, record sheets*

Evaluations

Ask the pupils to sort the word bank into pairs of opposites and decide which words in each pair they consider to be positive or negative. Can they think of any other pairs of words that describe the environment they are visiting?

Word bank

Closed, Dark, Managed, Noisy, Littered, No paths, Open, Light, Quiet, Natural, Wild, Good paths, Signs of erosion, Clear.

Devise a table like the one below to record their impressions of the various sites they visit on their trip. Explain how they can grade their values on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest.

BAD	1	2	3	4	5	GOOD

4

Equipment you will need:

paper, pens, digital
camera (optional),
record sheets*,
rubber gloves, heavy
duty polythene bags

Litter Count

Ask pupils to record every piece of litter seen along a footpath. Estimate how far it is from the car park and how far from the path itself. Where did pupils find most litter? Could this problem be best solved by:

- a) **More bins**
- b) **More information about the problems of litter**
- c) **More warnings of prosecution and fines?**

(Collect up the litter as you proceed along the path and place in the nearest bin, or dispose of on your return to school.)

5

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils, digital camera (optional), species identification charts, access to library/internet

Living Space

Ask each pupil to choose one animal/bird they saw or heard about on their visit to the countryside. Back at school, help them to find out some of the following factors about its life:

- a) **What kind of food does it eat and where would it normally find it?**
- b) **When does it breed and how long does it look after its young?**
- c) **Which part of the environment (eg tree, hedge and grass) does it live in and how does it get about?**
- d) **Is it more active during the day (which part?) or night?**
- e) **Estimate how much room each one needs to survive**
- f) **Estimate how many examples you might expect to see on a three hour visit**
- g) **Is it wary of humans or easily approached?**
- h) **How and when might humans upset or disturb the life cycle of this creature?**

6

Equipment you will need:

quadrat, paper, pencils, record sheets*

Species Hunt

Using a 50cm² quadrat, pupils should count the number of species (different types) of plants they can see in five random locations along the edge of a field. They may not recognise all of them, in which case just call them A, B, C, etc.

Now use the quadrats placed end to end across a path and record the species variation created by people walking along or near the path. Try to guess the approximate percentages of ground cover, eg 50% grass, 20% moss, 30% bare earth.

Are there fewer species nearer the path? Which ones survive in the trampled areas and which don't? What can this tell us about how fragile the plants are?

7

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils, bird species identification chart, record sheets*

Birds of a Feather

Count the birds you encounter at various points along your trip. For each bird, record whether it was in a tree, hedge, field, verge, wood, path, or on water. Which birds appear to flock together and which seem to appear on their own?

A-Z of British Birds www.rspb.org.uk/birds/guide/index.asp

8

Equipment you will need:

pens/pencils, record sheets*, risk assessment

Questionnaire

Please refer to your school policy on risk assessment.

Before the visit, discuss the questions to be asked, and devise a questionnaire. Explain how the words chosen can affect the answers you will get. Agree how pupils will respond to different types of people, eg those in a hurry, rude people, etc. Explain to pupils how they are going to use the information collected after the exercise.

Assist pupils in conducting a survey of people's attitude to litter and congestion at different sites around a local park. For instance:

- a) Car park
- b) Outside a shop/visitor centre
- c) At a popular location
- d) On a footpath.

Compare and contrast the responses given by the various contributors and their location/purpose for being there.

Use the findings from the survey to create a strategy to reduce litter/congestion in problem areas.

9

Equipment you will need:
map of area to be studied, paper, pencils, record sheets*

Built to Last

On a visit to an ancient building or an English Heritage/National Trust site in your local countryside, make a simple sketch of the building and the land around it. Label the sketch to show what the building materials are, and any typical features pupils can identify. Try to work out what the land around the building is used for now and what it was used for in the past. How has land use changed? Why might the change have happened?

10

Equipment you will need:
CD-ROM from Countryside Code Education Pack, CD-ROM player, paper, pens

Video

Find the sections of the Countryside Views video 'And it's not all pretty flowers and butterflies' and 'What would make it better?' Help the pupils to conduct a similar survey to collect views from people in a range of different age groups. Compare their findings with those from the video. How do they vary? Why might this be?

11

Equipment you will need:
map of area to be studied, pens/pencils, rubbers, record sheets*, plain paper, clip boards, rulers

Mapping the Facilities

On a map of the visit area, ask pupils to mark all the places where the following are located:

- a) Visitor information
- b) Facilities
- c) Paths
- d) Parking.

Discuss why these facilities have been sited in particular places.

During the visit, pupils should confirm the presence or absence of these facilities. Evaluate them on a scale of one to five (five being the best/highest quality) and suggest how they could be improved, giving reasons for their point(s) of view. Suggest they develop an 'ideal plan' for the site.

Older pupils could investigate the cost implications of:

- a) Providing these facilities
- b) Upkeep/maintenance costs.

12

Equipment you will need:

record sheets*, map of the area, tape measures, plain and graph paper, pencils

Worn Away

Footpath erosion survey – are we wearing the countryside away?

Find a naturally worn path on your field trip and ask pupils to identify three places along its length, one near the busiest part, perhaps near a car park or visitor centre, one not so busy and one along a little used part of the path.

Measure how wide the path is at each point.

Once they have completed the measurements ask the pupils to record their findings on a graph. As a class, discuss the results:

- a) **Where is the path at its widest and where is it at its narrowest?**
- b) **Why does the width differ?**
- c) **How could the path be protected and wear made more even?**

13

Equipment you will need:

paper, pens

Golden Rules

Before setting out on a trip, ask pupils what rules they would expect a visitor to their home to obey, for example, places that are out of bounds or 'access all areas'. Consider:

- a) **What they would be allowed to do or say**
- b) **What would cause an offence against the rules in their family home. What would happen if they left the front door open or dropped sweet wrappers on the kitchen floor?**

Ask groups of two to think of five golden rules on how to behave when they are in the countryside; for example, meeting people, closing gates, encountering animals, walking across unspoilt landscapes.

Get the twos to join into fours and with their total of 10 rules decide which are the best five (avoiding repetition).

Let the fours join into eights to agree the best five rules before feeding back to the rest of the class. They must give a reason for each rule.

Whilst on their trip, or after returning from their trip, pupils should mark out of five how important each rule turned out to be in reality and suggest what other rules they would now introduce.

14

Equipment you will need:
paper, pens, blank
postcards or similar,
record sheets*

Diamond Nines for Changing Places

Using a set of class-derived rules about how to behave in the countryside, decide on the nine most important ones and write them on cards.

Arrange the cards into a diamond shape with one in the top row, followed by subsequent rows of two, three, two, and one. Then rank the cards within this diamond shape to show the most important at the top and the least (relatively) important at the bottom.

Ask the class to rearrange these rules in order of importance for the following scenarios:

- a) 500 metre walk and a picnic
- b) Five mile hike
- c) 500 person biking event
- d) Five day camping trip
- e) A daily 50 minute dog walk.

Pupils can select the diamond agreed for one scenario to stick down on display paper and then annotate the arrangement of rules with explanatory notes.

Case Studies

How on earth do we manage?

In 2004, The National Trust ran a pilot project at the Dunham Massey Estate, Manchester called 'How on earth do we manage?' The purpose of the programme was to create an understanding of how the estate was managed when it was privately owned and how it is managed today by an environmental charity. It also looked at the impact visitors have on the site, with many of the issues directly reflecting the Countryside Code. The project's main focus was on education for Sustainable Development and Citizenship; however, it also incorporated aspects of History, Science and Geography.

In groups accompanied by group leaders, the children used map-reading skills to navigate their way around the park, meeting several characters along the way. The characters included Lord Stamford, the former owner of Dunham Massey, who wanted to give local people the freedom to enjoy the park; a dog walker who resented being told to keep his dog on a lead; and a picnicker who hadn't appreciated the dangers of bringing food into a park with a resident deer population.

Guided by the group leader, the children were encouraged to discuss the best ways to resolve the problems that can arise in managing an estate in a sustainable way, in particular trying to balance the needs of wildlife and the expectations of visitors.

North Wales Wildlife Trust

Ben Stammers, People and Wildlife Officer for the North Wales Wildlife Trust, talks about the variety of topics covered in a school visit to the Cemlyn nature reserve, and the relevance of such a visit to classroom teaching:

'20 pupils from Llanddeusant Primary School from Anglesey visited the nature reserve on 15 June 2004. I went into the school in the morning, and with the help of two field teacher colleagues gave the pupils some background on the reserve – its history and geography, and its conservation importance. This involved explaining the ecology of the three species of tern that breed at Cemlyn, and why it's necessary to protect and monitor them. We also introduced the idea of habitats, and asked the children to try and imagine the survival difficulties faced by various creatures in different environments; for example, how sea-kale survives the dry and exposed conditions on Cemlyn's shingle ridge. To general amusement we also acted out a habitat survey in the classroom, complete with the tape measure and hula-hoop used in transect samples, asking the children to guess what we were up to.'

'On arrival at Cemlyn in the afternoon, the pupils were issued with binoculars, with which they observed the tern colony on the islands in the lagoon. One of the reserve wardens was present and answered questions about the terns, as well as giving everyone a chance to watch tern chicks through the telescope. We then moved down to the beach, where the children carried out their own habitat surveys, spotting, identifying (with our help) and recording the different species of plant, bug and shore life encountered. We worked down from the sea-kale to the water's edge, where they enjoyed hunting for rock pool specimens using nets.'

'On the success of this half-day visit, a second visit took place in September. We looked at the way the habitat changed as we moved over the ridge, and while we identified different creatures, talked about food chains, a key science topic. We also showed how the ridge is created through the action of wind and tide. A walk in the afternoon allowed us to give some on-site history, and a couple of late terns which flew past gave the perfect chance to talk about migration.'

'As a follow-up to these visits, I sent the school a feedback questionnaire, together with a copy of our Suggestion Grid – a comprehensive list of follow-up activities that can be conducted in the classroom. I received individual letters from some of the pupils saying how much they'd enjoyed the visit, what they'd remembered – tern chicks being fed, catching things in nets – and in some cases how they intend to visit the reserve again with their parents. The head teacher said the Cemlyn visits proved very useful as a point of reference when tackling science topics such as habitat in the classroom, and expressed an interest in arranging further visits in the future.'

RSPB Bowland community project

The Bowland community project in Lancashire was a three-year initiative funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The RSPB's community education officer in Bowland worked with rural schools and community organisations to raise awareness and encourage people to recognise and value the importance of the area's bird species and their habitats.

The work linked closely to the National Curriculum and aimed to build a sense of pride in the area's birds, and support for their conservation.

The Bowland schools were involved in Big Schools Birdwatch, a nationwide survey of garden birds, which involved the children watching and recording details of the birds seen around their school. In another project, a company provided schools in the area with nest box kits, to give children the opportunity to learn about and look after the birds around them.

Other projects in the community included children counting lapwings for a Lancashire-wide survey contributing towards the county's Biodiversity Action Plan. Pupils at Bleasdale School designed a leaflet about all the birds in Bowland, and created an impressive mosaic featuring birds to be found in the area. Children from other schools designed a set of four Christmas cards, which were printed and sold to benefit conservation and education in the Forest of Bowland.

Four seasons at Castle Eden Dene

English Nature has a full-time Education Officer, Steve Metcalfe, at Castle Eden Dene National Nature Reserve in Northumbria. The Reserve borders Peterlee and many primary schools are fortunate enough to be within walking distance. Steve has access to a classroom facility and has developed an interesting programme of activities for the children based on the four seasons. Some schools cover all four seasons with four visits throughout the year, while others split the activities over two years.

These are some of the topics covered in the programme:

Spring

Activities focus on plant life on the Reserve, with the children using light meters to study plant growth in relation to sunlight. Steve is fond of using models as props during his sessions, and has made pipe cleaner 'flowers' to explain the process of cross-pollination.

Summer

This season concentrates on the water cycle, and pond dipping is a firm favourite amongst the children. Water safety issues are discussed, and other activities touch on basic geology and erosion.

Autumn

Leaves are central to the autumn activities, which include studies on leaf fall, leaf decay and composting. The children also use hand lenses to study leaf litter, which leads on to the topic of food chains. Steve has more models to illustrate the process of photosynthesis.

Winter

A bird feeding centre has been set up behind the classroom, and children use the room as a convenient 'hide' to study bird life, collecting data about the various bird types and their feeding habits along the way. A willing volunteer even has the chance to be dressed up as bird, to illustrate what goes where!

Introduction

The new Countryside Code has been developed to help people understand the rights and interests of everybody that lives in, works in, or visits the countryside. It addresses potential areas of conflict and indicates appropriate conduct to ensure a positive experience for all. However, pupils could ask themselves what other situations might the Code have dealt with? Are the attitudes and values expressed ones that we all share? What would they like to see included in the Code and what would they take out?

The activities in this section offer pupils opportunities to explore and express their own values and to consider other people's points of view. They also encourage pupils to question and debate topical issues and promote negotiation and constructive compromise. The Countryside Views video provided on the CD-ROM in the Countryside Code Education Pack contains the views of a range of individuals and can be used to support or introduce many of these activities.

1

Equipment you will need:

copy of bullet-pointed list from inside the Countryside Code leaflet* (one set per pair), scissors

Classification

Ask pupils to:

- a) **Cut up the individual bullet pointed lists from the Countryside Code and arrange them without the headings provided on the Countryside Code leaflet**
- b) **Read the cards to each other to become familiar with the content**
- c) **Sort them into four to six groups of cards that display similarities**
- d) **Try to assign a heading to each group of cards**
- e) **Compare group headings and identify the main areas of concern before introducing the correct headings. Identify any differences, or similarities between the group and official versions. Ask if the different groups of concerns are in anyway linked or dependent upon each other.**

2

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils, photocopies of the five key messages from the Countryside Code leaflet*, (one per group)

Five Sets of Eyes

Organise pupils into groups of five, with each person taking a colour from the list below and assuming the role of that character. Throughout the activity each pupil should try to see all issues through the eyes of their character.

Yellow lens: activity man/woman – keen mountain biker, climber.

Orange lens: motor man/woman – 4x4 off-road drivers, motorbike trail riders.

Red lens: farmers and landowners in the countryside.

Green lens: ecology-conscious people, birdwatchers and botanists.

Blue lens: walkers and ramblers.

Ask each group to consider one of the Countryside Code messages in turn and discuss the rights, responsibilities and restrictions it imposes and how they would affect each character in the group. Pupils should record the reactions and opinions of each character.

Lead a discussion to summarise the views of each of the five groups; compare and contrast views of 'like-minded' people with those that have different interests and perspectives; discuss whether it is ever possible to balance every different point of view.

3

Equipment you will need:
copy of bullet-pointed list from The Countryside Code leaflet*; cut out and stuck on cards, scissors, glue or Sellotape

Sort it Out

Give every pupil in the class a card with one of the 26 bulleted points from the Countryside Code leaflet on it.

Ask them to form a line at random and read the card assigned to them. Tell them that the right end of the line equals **most important** and the left of the line equals **least important**.

They are only allowed to talk to a person on their immediate left or right, one at a time. They must decide which has the most important card and shift their position in the line **one place at a time**. Allow the activity to run until pupils feel they are standing in the right place in the line.

Ask pupils to explain why some cards were seen as important and others not. Which were the most difficult to decide on? Why are some rules easy to agree with and others controversial?

4

Equipment you will need:
copies of the five key messages from the Countryside Code leaflet*; cut out and stuck on card (one per pair)

Top Three

Provide the five Countryside Code messages on cards and ask the pupils in pairs to rank them in the order they consider to be most important.

Ask pairs to join into groups of four and try to compromise to reach a revised decision as to which messages the larger group consider to be most important.

Repeat this with groups of eight. Identify the top three from each group and ask them to justify and explain their choices.

5

Equipment you will need:
paper, pencils, record sheets*, labels for opinion corners

Stand Your Ground

Set up a room or open space with four clearly defined areas labelled:

1 – **strict rules**

2 – **no rules** (opposing corner)

3 – **some rules**

4 – **no view** (or do not understand) and provide pupil record sheets and pencils.

Explain to the group that they are going to have to decide for themselves what their personal view is about ten different activities, one at a time. They will need to decide, in turn, if the activity you call out needs:

- a) **Strict rules**
- b) **No rules, or**
- c) **Some rules in order that people can take part in this activity without conflict and in safety in the countryside.**

Ask the pupils to stand together in the middle of the room or allocated space. Call out each of the activities (listed below) in order. Ask all the pupils to **walk** to the area that best reflects their view of the need for regulation for that countryside activity. If they have no view or do not understand they need to walk to area number 4. Then record your results by:

- a) **Counting the number of pupils in each area and recording the numbers against the activities on a prepared list**
- b) **Asking the pupils to make a note of the activity, the area they went to and the reason for their decision.**

Example record sheet

Activity number 1-10	Activity	Area chosen 1-4	Reason for choice
1	Tipping	1	a) The country would be knee-deep in litter b) It would cause an increase in disease

Activities:

- 1) Tipping
- 2) Fishing
- 3) Picnicking
- 4) Camping
- 5) Walking
- 6) Mushrooming
- 7) Running
- 8) Dog walking
- 9) Shooting
- 10) Horse riding

Return to the classroom and discuss your results as a class, particularly the reasons for making each choice.

6

Equipment you will need:

CD-ROM from Countryside Views video that deals with your responsibilities in the countryside

Video Opinion Line

Find the section of the Countryside Views video 'And what are your responsibilities?'

Listen to the comments from the young people and write down their key words or phrases on the board.

Place each phrase along an opinion line with **totally agree** at the right-hand end and **totally disagree** at the left-hand end.

Ask pupils to try to add three more comments of their own.

Case Study

Taking responsibility for the environment

A Staffordshire primary school has used a range of ideas and initiatives to encourage children to take responsibility for their surroundings and the environment. Working within the National Curriculum non-statutory guidelines, the Oakridge Primary School in Stafford involves KS1 and KS2 children in a variety of activities appropriate to their age and level of ability. Much of the work is carried out within the school grounds, showing that children do not have to be in a rural setting to appreciate the value of the outdoors.

The school purchased a range of gardening tools including spades and trowels and has involved the children in rejuvenating environmental areas within the school grounds. One of these areas was the school pond. Six year 6 pupils aptly known as 'ground force' were given the responsibility of supervising the younger pupils during playtime visits to the pond. The children have also been involved in planting trees around the school grounds. Participation in the local council's 'Stafford in Bloom' competition provided another opportunity to encourage the children to respect and care for their surroundings. Care areas were assigned to each class, allocating responsibility for tasks such as planting up tubs and weeding.

The school is also involved in the 'Eco Schools' project. Designed to fit into the curriculum, this is an award scheme that involves everyone in the school community (pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff and governors, together with parents, the local authority, the media and local businesses) in improving the school environment. The scheme aims to encourage teamwork and helps to create a shared understanding of what it takes to run a school in a way that respects and enhances the environment.

RSPB code of conduct for birdwatchers

Whether children are drawing, photographing, sound recording, studying or just watching birds, it is important to remind them that the welfare of the bird must always come first. The following pointers are taken from the RSPB's code of conduct for birdwatchers information leaflet:

Habitat protection: its habitat is vital to a bird, and therefore we must ensure that our activities do not cause damage.

Keep disturbance to a minimum: no birds should be disturbed from their nests, in case opportunities for predators to take eggs or young are increased. In very cold weather, disturbance to birds may cause them to use vital energy at a time when food is difficult to find.

Respect the rights of landowners: do not enter land without permission unless open access is clearly permitted. If you are leading a group give advance notice of a visit, even if a formal permit scheme is not in operation. Always obey the Countryside Code.

Respect the rights of other people: have proper consideration for other birdwatchers. Try not to disrupt their activities or scare the birds they are watching.

Rare birds and the law: never visit known sites of rare breeding birds unless they are adequately protected.

Keeping records: much of today's knowledge about birds is the result of meticulous record-keeping by our predecessors. Make sure you add to tomorrow's knowledge by sending records of what you see to your local or county bird recorder.

Introduction

Creative arts projects using the countryside as a stimulus provide pupils with opportunities to express their own experiences and emotions in a direct way. Visits to the countryside or to urban green spaces are multi-sensory experiences that can be used to help pupils make sense of the world around them and their own place in it.

The activities in this section are designed to help pupils think about the natural environment, its impact on their own lives and the lives of others, and the continuity of nature and rural communities. By recording, interpreting and representing their thoughts and experiences, pupils will begin to gain a better understanding of the importance of the landscape and environment. These activities can be combined with activities in sections two and three to enrich field trips and visits.

1

Equipment you will need:

digital camera,
graphics software,
colour printer

Digital Designs

Ask pupils to:

- a) Take digital photographs of one feature in the countryside, eg a tree in a field or hedgerow
- b) Take pictures at long range, medium range and close up
- c) Supplement with pictures, from below, and all around, of a single leaf, branch, twig, trunk, bark, leaf litter, etc.

The images can be sorted and selected and then printed out to make a classroom poster, or, using a computer graphics programme, a digital montage. Add captions or comments highlighting links to locations, wildlife or feelings and explaining why the images were chosen.

Mount an exhibition of the posters and montages.

2

Equipment you will need:

tracing paper,
crayons, pencils,
paper

Bark Rubbing

Please seek permission from the landowner before removing any materials.

Use a crayon and an A4 piece of paper to create a bark rubbing for at least five different types of trees. Collect fallen twigs and leaves for each type of tree and either trace or create rubbings of these.

For each type of tree arrange the bark, twig and leaf shapes to produce a simple design that could also be used to identify different trees.

Choose five words that you think best describe the look and feel of that tree and place these around the design.

3

Equipment you will need:
paper, pencils

Questions

Draw a gate to a footpath in the centre of a page and remind them of a particular path they walked along during a school visit. Ask each pupil to imagine a person who walked the path in the past or who might walk there in the future.

- a) **Ask them to answer five questions about that person; the questions should each start with who, where, why, what or when. For example why were they in a hurry, where were they going?**
- b) **Write down any words or phrases that describe the person and the reason for their journey.**

Pupils could take this activity a step further by turning their answers into a story.

4

Equipment you will need:
CD-ROM from
Countryside Code
Education Pack,
whiteboard, paper,
pens

Video

Find the section of the Countryside Views video 'How the countryside makes people feel'. Listen to the comments from the young people and write down the words or phrases they use as a spidergram. For each phrase create a diagram/cartoon or sketch that you think best illustrates that feeling.

5

Equipment you will need:
Thelwell posters
from the
Countryside Code
Education Pack,
paper, pencils

Poster Points

Choose one of the early Country Code posters illustrated by Norman Thelwell. Photocopy the image in the middle of a page of A3. Label the poster to show:

- a) **What message the artist was trying to get across**
- b) **How humour has been used**
- c) **How the image has been made to appeal to young people.**

6

Equipment you will need:
Thelwell posters and
Creature Comforts™
posters from the
Countryside Code
Education Pack,
paper, pencils, art
materials for
designing posters

Posters for the Present

Ask pupils to:

- a) **Consider the early Country Code posters illustrated by Norman Thelwell and the new Countryside Code posters featuring the Creature Comforts™ characters**
- b) **Decide what the common features and the main differences of these posters are**
- c) **Think what a poster designed for children in the year below them in school should look like to get them interested in the Countryside Code**
- d) **Design their own poster to highlight the key points of the Code.**

7

Equipment you will need:
plain and graph paper, pencils, rulers, record sheets*

Living Graph

A different way of recording your journey is by plotting a graph. Before the visit ask pupils to consider positive and negative aspects of the proposed trip. Agree a short list of good and bad criteria. During the visit pupils should rate each stop according to the agreed criteria based on a score of plus five to minus five. Make a note of the reasons for the score.

Back at school draw a graph with a time line along the X axis and up to plus five on the vertical Y axis above the line and down to minus five on the negative Y axis below the line.

Mark on the scores for each key stop or time above or below the line. Join up these points with a free hand curve. To each key high or low point add a comment recorded on the trip.

8

Equipment you will need:
musical instruments, simple sound effect instruments

Natural Music

Please consider and apply Health and Safety regulations here.

Use any instruments (real or 'home made') or sound effects to create a three-piece composition. Each part must depict a different experience of a place in the countryside at different times, eg a) wind in the trees, b) a sultry summer's day, c) owls and foxes at night in the woods.

9

Equipment you will need:
art materials to create collage/sculpture etc, digital camera (optional)

First Impressions

Please seek permission from the landowner before removing any materials.

During the visit, encourage pupils to collect items that catch their eye. These could be anything from fallen leaves, twigs, stones, or souvenirs such as tickets, postcards or items that recall a particular place or experience. Remind them not to take anything that might disturb the local environment.

Arrange these materials to create an art installation (a pattern, picture or sculpture). The design should represent the ideas they associate with the recent trip to the country, eg feelings, freedom, nature, space, calm or humans versus nature.

Take a photograph of your collage/art installation.

10

Equipment you will need:
tape recorder (optional)

Performance in the Park

Use drama to explore the possibilities of what could happen in a National Park, along a footpath or in a Country Park. Imagine the conversations and sounds that you might hear if you could listen in as people passed by, the weather changed and the day wore on.

Use your voices to produce a soundscape – a collage of overlapping snatches of speech and sound effects.

11

Equipment you will need:

tape recorder/
Dictaphone/digital
video camera,
editing software

Recording Times

Working in groups, turn a tape recorder on at key times during your visit to the countryside to record the different sounds of people and places. A Dictaphone could be used to record snatches of conversation (having asked permission first). A digital video camera will help you record images as well.

Back at school, edit and sequence the outcomes to provide aural clues of the key events on the trip. The clips could be as diverse as tapping tree trunks, a creaking field gate, the rumble of a cattle grid or rattling sticks along railings.

12

Equipment you will need:

paper, coloured
pencils

Total Recall

Ask pupils to:

- a) **Think about the most memorable time they have spent in the countryside, or a specific moment from a recent trip, and try to recreate five minutes of events from that trip as a series of symbols. They do not have to be great art - cartoons and simplifications are fine - but there should be no words**
- b) **Colour code the symbols to represent aspects such as busy/quiet, relaxing/stressful, solitary/communal, natural or managed**
- c) **Ask peers to see if they can reconstruct the experience just by looking at the sequence of symbols.**

13

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils, tape
recorder/digital
camera/video
camera (optional)

Sculptural Sights

Find a park, cycleway or walk where sculpture has been installed to enhance the experience of the visitor. Study each sculpture using any of the following methods:

- a) **Sketch the sculpture**
- b) **Record your thoughts on how it feels (texture)**
- c) **Describe the materials used and their effect**
- d) **Describe the colours used and whether they complement or contrast with the land around**
- e) **Describe the design including its size. Does it depict or represent an actual thing or is it symbolic of a feeling or spirit?**
- f) **Does it make you appreciate the setting more or less? Explain why**
- g) **If there are a series of sculptures, can you work out any theme or relationship between them?**

Case Studies

Forest Schools for Monmouthshire

Forest Schools for Monmouthshire is a three-year Lottery funded project being run by the Forestry Commission. An exciting opportunity for children and young people to participate in activities in a forest or woodland environment, Forest School sessions can be designed to cover most areas of the National Curriculum.

Many of the activities involve the children using their senses. As well as making smelly cocktails and playing blindfold games, they investigate woodland sounds and finish off the session with a campfire and toasted marshmallows. During one session children made picture frames from leaves and sticks to tie in with a design and technology topic, and then created a natural sculpture after studying the work of artist and sculptor Andy Goldsworthy. Sessions can also be based on poetry. For example, after reading a poem about a spider, one group practised knots and lashings to create their own spider web. In another session, a poem about a witch was followed by making traditional brooms from twigs and sticks.

The project can also provide schools with training for teaching staff and money for toolkits and other equipment for use in the Forest School.

The National Trust – Theatre production

'Whose land is it anyway?' is a theatre in education programme developed by the National Trust in partnership with the University of Derby. The exciting, interactive educational theatre and workshop programme encourages KS2 children to explore the issues of land use and citizens' rights, balancing needs, environmental concerns and individual responsibility.

The programme begins with pupils acting as journalists and receiving a press release inviting them to cover a cheque hand-over ceremony. Without warning the ceremony is interrupted by a noisy demonstration of people protesting about freedom of access, sustainable management and conservation issues. The young journalists have to work hard to capture the intensity of feelings at the demonstration and consider the conflicting views of the parties involved.

The performance is supported by a resource pack and teachers' briefing and preparation session.

Playing puppets

Adults and children alike were enthused by an autumnal puppet-making event at Stockwood Open Space Local Nature Reserve in Bristol. The project was funded by Wildspace!, English Nature's grant scheme for Local Nature Reserves, with funding from the Big Lottery Fund. The scheme involves local communities in the improvement, care and enjoyment of their local environment. Designed to teach children about autumn – for example, why trees lose their leaves and why plants produce fruit – the project also aimed to encourage children to take a closer look at the flora and fauna around them.

The Local Nature Reserves Officer at Bristol City Council worked with Avon Wildlife Trust to run the puppet-making event for children using natural materials gathered from the woods. 'Fruits of the autumn' puppets were made prior to the event, with twig bodies, hogweed seed head hands, clay heads, hawthorn berry eyes and faces made from fallen leaves, seeds, berries and grass. The staff performed a play for the children in the Reserve, and then encouraged the children to collect materials to make their own puppets. When their parents came to collect them the children then performed plays using their own stories.

The puppets and plays came as a surprise to the adults, who were a receptive audience. Many of the children who took part have since attended other events with their families – this has also proved to be a good way of reaching adults who might not otherwise be aware of their Local Nature Reserves.

Introduction

The launch of the new Countryside Code coincides with the introduction of new access rights in England and Wales. The Act creates new public rights of access to particular landscapes but also permits landowners to restrict access in carefully designed circumstances.

Where are we allowed to walk freely? How extensive should access be? Who stands to benefit or lose out if access is restricted? These activities explore some of these questions and develop further some of the issues raised in section three – Rights and Responsibilities.

Notes on new access rights

In 2000, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) provided new rights for the general public to walk more freely in England and Wales, without necessarily following public rights of way. The Act enables people to walk on mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land, (known as ‘access land’), that was previously off-limits. This new right of access ensures the public’s new right is in balance with nature conservation issues and land management needs.

September 19th 2004 is a historic date in England for all users of the countryside, when the new right of access was introduced in the first two of eight regions. More information can be obtained at www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Access land is depicted on 1:25 000 Ordnance Survey Explorer maps, where it is shown by use of a pale yellow tint with a shaded orange border.

The introduction of the new right of access has resulted in a number of changes to the map symbols that teachers need to be aware of when teaching or revising mapping skills. The 1:25 000 map specification will now vary, depending on whether you have a map with the new access land shown or not.

When you are out in the countryside you may see this access symbol which indicates that you are entering or leaving access land.



1

Equipment you will need:
paper, pencils,
whiteboard, board
pens

A Question of Balance

Draw a large set of scales on the board with **For** (left side) and **Against** (right side).

Ask the question ‘Should people have unlimited access to the countryside?’

For each reason, for or against, that the pupils devise, they should write it in the correct position on the diagram (or on their own copy).

When they have completed this task, explain that some of these reasons are important and some less so. For each idea that is a ‘big idea’ (positive or negative) assign it a value of three. A ‘medium idea’ would be two; a ‘small idea’ would be one.

In pairs, pupils should assign their own values and calculate the total number of positive and negative values.

Is the balance of feeling about this issue what they would expect?

They should explain how their view differs from the class consensus.

2

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils,
whiteboard, board
pens

Roam or Moan?

Explain to pupils that most of the land in the countryside is privately owned but has access rights for the general public in certain areas.

Divide the class into pairs or groups, allocate each group one of the following locations and ask them to imagine there are no access restrictions for:

- a) **A field of wheat**
- b) **A field with sheep about to lamb**
- c) **A field with a bull in it**
- d) **A field ploughed for sowing, and**
- e) **A field of wild flowers.**

Identify three ways in which people visiting the countryside could cause a problem if they conducted their activity in that field. For example, think of damage, cost, and disruption. Pupils should record their findings.

Ask the groups to suggest what kind of controls on access could be introduced to reduce the problem. If pupils need some help thinking of strategies they could consider the following:

- a) **Clearer paths**
- b) **Changing access rights at key times of year**
- c) **Fenced-off areas**
- d) **Fines**
- e) **Warning signs.**

3

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils, the
Countryside Code
leaflet

Speaking Your Mind

Working in threes, pupils should compose a small play lasting no more than three minutes to present in front of the rest of the class. The play should demonstrate different perspectives on a countryside access issue. One person should play the landowner, one person should play the visitor on their land and the third should be the narrator, explaining to the audience what they are discussing, how it relates to the CROW Act and suggesting a possible solution.

Scene starters:

- a) **A farmer telling a walker that their favourite new moorland walk is closed for grouse shooting**
- b) **A walker telling a landowner why they have to cross the lambing field even in April**
- c) **A countryside warden explaining to a picnicking family why they should stick to the paths in a bluebell wood in spring.**

After each performance discuss as a class the arguments presented in the play.

Equipment you will need:
paper, pencils

Rights or Responsibilities?

Ask pupils to read through the following scenarios and decide if it is a right or a responsibility, or neither. They should be prepared to explain why they think their classification is correct.

- a) Walking along a public footpath
- b) Taking your dog for a walk on open access land
- c) Not starting fires in woodland
- d) Not dropping or picking up litter
- e) Riding a motorbike along a footpath
- f) Riding a horse along a footpath
- g) Closing gates after you walk through them
- h) Closing gates you find open
- i) Walking in a bluebell wood in spring
- j) Camping on common land
- k) Running along a bridleway.

Try to think up three more scenarios to add to those provided.

Case Studies

North York Moors National Park

Mapping activities can play an important part in educating children about access issues. The North York Moors National Park offers a range of curriculum-linked activities for KS2 children, such as a moorland walk – a 2.5km (standard route) or 4.5km (extended route) circular walk through woodland, pasture and moorland. The content of the walk can be varied, either by using maps and aerial photographs to focus on geographical skills, or by using sensory activities and focusing on literacy skills, or a combination of both.

In 'Cunning compass navigator' children learn about the points of a compass and how to set a compass to walk on a bearing. Working individually, they tick off marker posts as they navigate to them. 'Bird's eye view' involves the use of OS maps and aerial photographs to identify and compare features on the map and the photograph, using symbols, keys and grid references. Children identify land use and work out distance, direction and height.

Take a seat

The Fieldfare Trust works with people with disabilities and countryside managers to improve access to the countryside for all. One of their recommendations was to provide benches for visitors to Avon Valley Local Nature Reserve in Salisbury.

In response, Salisbury's Community Wildlife Officer worked with three local primary schools and a local artist in a project to design three new benches for the Reserve. The project was funded by Wildspace!, English Nature's grant scheme for Local Nature Reserves with funding from the Big Lottery Fund. The scheme involves local communities in the improvement, care and enjoyment of their local environment.

The project took the form of a competition, with the winning designs being turned into benches as part of an environmental arts day held at each of the schools. The benches were positioned on the Reserve, close to access points used by schools for their visits.

One of the many positive outcomes from the project is the children's increased sense of ownership and respect for the Reserve, as well as the enjoyment they experienced in designing, developing and constructing the benches.

Useful contacts and links

Access to farms	www.farmsforteachers.org.uk
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	www.aonb.org.uk
Association of National Park Authorities	www.anpa.gov.uk
Council for Environmental Education	www.cee.org.uk
Countryside Agency	www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk
Countryside Council for Wales	www.ccw.gov.uk
Countryside Foundation for Education	www.countrysidefoundation.org.uk
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	www.defra.gov.uk
English Heritage	www.english-heritage.org.uk
English Nature	www.english-nature.org.uk
Environment Agency	www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Farming and Countryside Education	www.face-online.org.uk
Farms for City Children	www.farmsforcitychildren.co.uk
Farms for Schools	www.farmsforschools.org.uk
Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens	www.farmgarden.org.uk
Field Studies Council	www.field-studies-council.org.uk
Forestry Commission	www.forestry.gov.uk
Learning through Landscapes	www.ltl.org.uk
National Trails	www.nationaltrail.co.uk
National Trust	www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Ordnance Survey	www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk
RSPB	www.rspb.org.uk
The Ramblers' Association	www.ramblers.org.uk
Wales Council for Voluntary Action	www.wcva.org.uk
Welsh Heritage (CADW)	www.cadw.wales.gov.uk
The Wildlife Trusts	www.wildlifetrusts.org.uk
Youth Hostel Association	www.yha.org.uk

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