

The Countryside Code



An activity guide for teachers

SECONDARY 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

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, can support specific areas of curriculum study or just be used to stimulate thought and debate.

You may choose to use them 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 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

Activity and subject map

	Page No.	English	Maths	Science	Geography	History	Art	Music	ICT	Citizenship	PSHE	ESD	Thinking Skills
Out and About													
1 Signs	6			x	x				x				
2 Evaluations	7	x							x			x	
3 Litter Count	7		x		x				x		x	x	
4 Species Hunt	8			x	x							x	
5 Litter-Bug	8			x								x	
6 Birds of a Feather	8			x								x	
7 Questionnaire	9				x				x	x	x	x	
8 Built to Last	9				x	x						x	
9 Mapping the Facilities	9				x					x			
10 Worn Away	10		x		x				x			x	
11 Living Graph	10		x		x				x	x	x		
12 Golden Rules	11	x			x					x	x		
13 Diamond Nines for Changing Places	12									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	16									x	x	x	x
5 Stand Your Ground	16	x								x	x	x	x
6 Video Opinion Line	17	x								x		x	

Creativity													
1 Digital Designs	18						x		x				
2 Gateway	18	x											x
3 Turning Words to Pictures	19	x					x						
4 Poster Points	19	x					x						
5 Posters for the Present	19	x					x		x				
6 Trip Timeline	20			x	x	x	x						
7 Natural Music	20							x	x				
8 Express Yourself	21						x		x				
9 Performance in the Park	21							x	x				
10 Recording Times	21								x				
11 Total Recall	21	x											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	

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 the teaching programmes in many schools. Students investigate biodiversity, land use and geographical features, visit heritage sites and participate in a wide range of outdoor and adventure activities. How often do they really look at the environment they are visiting or consider the impact of that visit?

Activities based around aspects of the Countryside Code can add value to planned field trips. The activities in this section provide opportunities for the inclusion of new and updated material during preparation for the trip, to 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 selectively to complement the purpose of the trip, or be combined to create a study or focus on environmental issues, eg a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of human activity on the natural environment.

Activities 12 'Golden Rules' and 13 '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 leave pupils with all sorts of memories, emotions and new ideas. Sometimes children have no experience of the countryside and need to appreciate the new experience at their own level. To really get the best out of their visit, and to fully enjoy the environment, they need to understand the landscape around them. A five minute walk will present them with a mass of information, from the familiar to things that are unrecognisable at first. The more information they can gather by recording, counting and measuring, the better their understanding of the countryside will be.

Before the pupils begin their five minute walk prompt them to discuss what kinds of data collection are going to suit their visit. Help them choose a selection that you think will give you a broad range of information to analyse later. Pupils can identify specific data collection tasks which they can then delegate to individuals or pairs of pupils to be carried out during their visit.

Listed below are 13 activities pupils can choose from to develop their own analysis of the countryside.

Signs

Record every sign seen along the route of the walk by photographing it or recording the details.

On return to the classroom, classify the signs under one of the following five headings and discuss the decisions:

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

1

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils,
digital camera
(optional)

2

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

3

Equipment you will need:
digital camera (optional), pens, tape measures, record sheets*, rubber gloves, heavy duty polythene bags

Litter Count

Ask pupils to record every piece of litter seen along a footpath. Measure how far it is from the car park and how far from the path itself. Record this information in tabular form on your record sheet. Ask pupils to consider and record how long they estimate it will take for each object to decay. List the source of the litter, eg where did it come from - the local café, farm, student/visitor lunch box, factory, etc?

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

Ask pupils if this problem of litter distribution can be best solved by:

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

Using the Internet, research how long it takes different types of products to decay. Find out how the Republic of Ireland tackled the problem of litter caused by supermarket plastic bags.

4

Equipment you will need:

quadrat, digital camera (optional), pens/pencils, tape measures, record sheets*

Species Hunt

Using a 50cm² quadrat, ask the pupils to count the number of species (different types) of plants they can see in five random locations along the edge of a field. They don't need to recognise all of them, just call them A, B, C, etc.

Using the quadrats placed end to end across a path, record the number of different types of plant species found here. This shows the species variation created by people walking along or near the path. Where are there fewer species? Which ones survive in the trampled areas and which don't? If the pupils can't identify the plants they can take photos or make sketches to take back to school for identification – but don't let them pick the plants!

What can this tell us about how fragile plants and ecosystems are? Ask pupils to write a short paragraph about how, when and where this information can be used by gardeners, school grounds staff, town planners and farmers.

5

Equipment you will need:

digital microscope, pens/pencils, record sheets*, large empty sweet container or tin, torch, identification books and charts on insects and leaf litter animals

Litter-Bug

Please seek permission from the landowner before removing any materials and return all creatures to a similar habitat at the end of the lesson.

Carefully collect a variety of fallen leaves and a shallow scraping of litter/humus from 50cm² of the very top of the soil profile: be careful not to disturb too wide an area or damage nearby plants. Back in the classroom/lab, place a piece of glass or translucent plastic over a bulb/torch and empty some of the litter over it. As the heat warms the litter, small insects will become more active and can be collected, counted and identified.

6

Equipment you will need:

pens/pencils, record sheets*, identification books and charts on birds, binoculars

Birds of a Feather

At various points during their journey pupils should quietly observe and record the birds in the vicinity, using a common birds ID chart to try to identify the birds encountered. For each bird, record whether it was in a tree, hedge, field, verge or wood, or on a path, road or on water. Which birds appear to flock together and which seem more solitary?

Back at school, compare the records from various locations, and consider the factors that might have influenced the findings: habitat? food? noise?

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

7

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils,
record sheets*, risk
assessment

Questionnaire

Please refer to your school policy on risk assessment.

Before visiting the countryside, 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.

Conduct 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.

8

Equipment you will need:

map of the area to
be studied,
pens/pencils,
rubbers, record
sheets*, plain paper,
clip boards, rulers

Built to Last

On a visit to an ancient building or an English Heritage/National Trust site, make a simple sketch of the building and the land around it. Annotate the sketch to show what the building materials are, and any characteristic features that can be identified. Try to work out what the land around the building is used for now and what it was used for in the past. Is it an important building? How has its status changed over the years?

9

Equipment you will need:

map of the area to
be studied,
pens/pencils,
rubbers, record
sheets*, plain paper,
clip boards, rulers

Mapping the Facilities

Activity One

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.

Activity Two

During the visit pupils should confirm the presence or absence of the facilities listed on page 9. 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.**

10

Equipment you will need:

map of area, string, tape measures, rulers, plain paper, graph paper, pencils, record sheets*

Worn Away

Footpath erosion survey – are we wearing the countryside away?

Find a soil-based path (not stone, slate or tarmac covered) and select three places along its length. Pick one near the busiest part, (eg the area of the path that leads out from the visitor centre/car park) and the other two at an increasing distance away from that site.

Mark 5cm divisions along a piece of string and fix this taut to either side of the path using two pencils driven into the earth. Use a ruler or tape measure to measure the depth from the string to the deepest part of the path every 5cms.

This can be drawn as a graph back in class and the three locations compared.

Consider possible causes for the erosion and discuss ways the path could be managed to minimise erosion in the future.

11

Equipment you will need:

pencils, rulers, pencil sharpeners, pens, rubbers, plain paper, graph paper

Living Graph

Activity One

A different way of recording your journey is by plotting a graph. Explain to the pupils that they are going to rate each stop that they make on their visit. Discuss and agree the criteria (perhaps for the view, flora, accessibility, etc) they will all use to rate the different locations you stop at. This list will then be taken with you on the visit for reference. If possible, use a laminator to protect your list against repeated use and the possible effects of weather during the visit.

Activity Two

This activity requires individual work and pupils must at this point try to keep their opinions and scores to themselves, as this will affect their results in follow-up work. (Discussion follows later in Activity Three.)

At each site you stop at on your visit, ask each pupil to:

- a) **Number or name the site for reference later and note the order in which the sites were visited, if possible marking the site on a map**
- b) **Consider each of the criteria in turn. Select and allocate the appropriate score for that site from plus five for the best to minus five for the worst**
- c) **Record the name and scores for the site on their record sheet**
- d) **Add a comment to record a key high or low point for each site.**

Equipment you will need:

your prepared location rating list, pens/pencils, rubbers, record sheets*/plain paper, clipboards, rulers

Equipment you will need:

A4 graph paper,
pens, pencils,
rulers, pencil
sharpeners, rubbers

Activity Three (post visit, in the classroom)

a) Individual activity

Draw a graph with a timeline along the X axis from plus five to minus five and the same on the Y axis. Mark the scores for each site above or below the line. Join up these points with a freehand curve. Add a comment recorded on the trip to each key high or low point.

b) Whole class activity

Briefly discuss the individual scores for each site in turn then add the scores for each individual site together to obtain a class total score. Divide this number by the number of pupils in the class who carried out the survey to obtain the average class or group score for each site. Plot this on the graph on the board. Repeat for each site and annotate with agreed class comments. Join up the points. Discuss the results.

12

Equipment you will need:

pens/pencils,
rubbers, plain paper,
scissors

Golden Rules

Ask pupils to suggest what rules they would expect a visitor to their home to obey, eg 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 pupils to work in pairs to think of five 'golden rules' on how to behave when they are in the countryside.

Join the pairs into fours and ask them to pick the five most important rules from the ten rules they have thought of, avoiding repetition.

Let these groups double up into larger groups and repeat the exercise, listing their top five rules in order of importance after discussion. Ask one person from each group to report back to the class and list their conclusions. They must give the reason behind each choice.

On returning from their trip, ask the students to mark their 'golden rules' on a score of one to five (five being the highest). How important did each rule turn out to be in reality? Which other rules would they now introduce?

Compare the pupils' 'golden rules' with the Countryside Code, discussing any similarities and differences.

Equipment you will need:

pens/coloured pencils, rubbers, record sheets*, plain paper, postcards

Diamond Nines for Changing Places

From a set of class-derived rules about how to behave in the countryside (Activity 12) decide on the nine most important rules, writing each one onto a postcard.

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 each of the following scenarios and give explanations why they were placed in their respective positions before moving on to the next scenario/listed activity set out below.

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

Case Study

How on earth do we manage?

In 2004 The National Trust ran a pilot project at the Dunham Massey Estate, Manchester with children from Trinity High School 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 looks 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.

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

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:

copies of the bullet-pointed lists from inside the Countryside Code leaflet with the headings removed*, scissors

Classification

Ask pupils to:

- a) Cut the lists up into separate bullet points, then in pairs to read the points to each other to get familiar with the content
- b) Sort the points into four to six groups of cards that display similarities
- c) Try to assign a heading to each group of cards
- d) Discuss the group headings and identify the main areas of concern before introducing the correct headings. Identify any differences and similarities between the class and official versions. Ask if the groups of concerns are in any way linked/dependent upon each other.

2

Equipment you will need:

photocopies of the Countryside Code five key messages (one per group), pens/pencils, rubbers, record sheets*, plain paper, rulers

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.

Activity One

Consider each of the Countryside Code messages in turn. In groups, discuss the rights, responsibilities and restrictions and how they would affect each group of characters.

Activity Two

All pupils representing the same point of view sit together and write a set of views on behalf of the people they represent. Ask them to make a note of any differences of opinion that may occur within their group; for example, not all farmers or drivers think alike.

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 the bullet-pointed lists from inside the Countryside Code leaflet*, scissors

Sort it Out

Give every pupil in the class one of the 26 bulleted points from the Countryside Code leaflet.

Ask them to form a line at random and read silently the card assigned to them. Then 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 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**.

When the group is happy with their respective positions give each student a number, one (start of line) to 26. Any 'spare' pupils must then make a list of the pupils' order on a prepared form/whiteboard table and write the bullet point held by each student opposite their name (respectively) to obtain a permanent record.

The teacher then leads a class discussion and asks 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?

After discussion and teacher input, note if there is any alteration in the order of the bullet points.

4

Equipment you will need:

copies of main headings from the Countryside Code*, scissors

Top Three

Ask pupils:

- a) **In pairs to rank the five Countryside Code points in the order they consider to be most important**
- b) **In pairs to join into groups of four and try to compromise to reach a revised decision as to which points 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.

Record the groups' results using a record sheet or interactive whiteboard.

5

Equipment you will need:

a room or open space with four clearly defined areas labelled
 1 - **Strict Rules**,
 2 - **No Rules**
 (opposing corner),
 3 - **Some Rules**, and
 4 - **No View** (or do not understand),
 pupil record sheets*, pencils

Stand Your Ground

Explain to the group that they are going to have to decide for themselves what their personal view is about 10 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**
- 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 corner 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

Ask the pupils to return to the centre after each activity is called and you have checked why, if any, pupils have opted to walk to area number 4.

Activities

1) tipping, 2) fishing, 3) picnicking, 4) camping, 5) walking, 6) mushrooming, 7) running, 8) dog walking, 9) shooting, and 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 player, a copy of the Countryside Views video - in particular the section of the video 'And what are your responsibilities?', prepared timeline drawn on a board/interactive whiteboard or in pupil's lesson book, pens/pencils, rubbers, paper, rulers

Video Opinion Line

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

Working individually, ask pupils to place each phrase along an opinion line with **totally agree** at the right-hand end and **totally disagree** at the left-hand end.

Repeat the exercise as a whole class (drag and drop activity with interactive whiteboard).

Ask pupils to add three more comments of their own.

Discuss the similarities and differences between the group/class opinion line and the pupils' own lines.

Case Studies

'Whose land is it anyway?'

This is an online interactive game based on a theatre in education production created by the National Trust in partnership with the University of Derby. The game presents a range of characters and scenarios which can help stimulate a range of National Curriculum targeted learning, particularly in KS2–KS4 Geography, Citizenship and Education for Sustainable Development.

Based in an attractive, animated cartoon countryside setting, the game introduces students to a range of issues from land use to food production. Characters to be found in the village of Haventhorpe include Caroline Green the conservationist, Henry Digby the archaeologist, Willow the tree lover, and Mrs Walker the rambler. Students select a character and are presented with a scenario. For example, James Plenty the property developer has offered farmer Jack Crackit a lot of money for his farm because he wants to build a housing estate on it. Students have to listen to the varying and often conflicting points of view of the other characters and study fact sheets before deciding whom they agree with and casting their vote. But it doesn't end there: to discover the outcome students can enter their email address to receive the news as it breaks. The game would make an excellent activity for use before or after a field trip, to help children think more carefully about the various interests in the countryside community. A comprehensive guide for teachers is provided on the site, together with a series of downloadable worksheets to further extend the activity.

The website can be found at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/learninganddiscovery

Green getaway

This is a decision-making activity for KS3 children run by the North York Moors National Park. Based around planning a hypothetical weekend break for a family in the Park, the half-day session demonstrates the concept of sustainable tourism and highlights the importance of planning ahead when visiting the countryside.

Pupils discover how the choices people make can influence the impact of their visit on an environment and its local community. Topics of discussion include the options available for transport, eating, accommodation and recreational activities.

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,
colour printer,
graphics software
package

Digital Designs

Ask pupils to:

- a) **Take digital photographs of one feature in the countryside, eg a tree in a field or a 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.

2

Equipment you will need:
pens/pencils, paper,
rulers

Gateway

In the centre of a page draw a gate to a footpath with a pentagon shape surrounding it. Divide the shape up by drawing five faint lines from the points of the pentagon to the centre and extend these to the edge of the paper. On each of the five faces of the original pentagon write one of these words: **who, where, why, what, when** so they are arranged around the shape.

Imagine a person who may have travelled through that gate at another point in time (yesterday, 50 years ago, 100 years ago, tonight when we are in bed or some time in the future). Inside each segment formed by the extended points of the pentagon answer the questions and write down any words or phrases that describe that person and the reason for their journey.

3

Equipment you will need:

Countryside Views video, CD-ROM player, pens/pencils, drawing paper, rulers

Turning Words to Pictures

Find the section of the Countryside Views video 'And it makes you feel...?' Ask pupils to listen to the comments from the young people and write down the words or phrases they use as a spidergram. For each phrase pupils should create a diagram, cartoon or sketch that they think illustrates that feeling.

4

Equipment you will need:

early Country Code posters illustrated by Norman Thelwell, photocopier

Poster Points

Choose one of the early Country Code posters illustrated by Norman Thelwell. Photocopy the image in the middle of a sheet of A3 paper. Annotate the poster to show how the artist has:

- a) **Illustrated an issue**
- b) **Involved humour**
- c) **Accurately represented some aspects of the natural world**
- d) **Made the image appealing to young people.**

5

Equipment you will need:

posters of early Country Code illustrated by Norman Thelwell and Creature Comforts™ characters for comparison, A3 and A4 paper, rulers, paints, coloured pencils or felt pens

Posters for the Present

Consider the early Country Code posters illustrated by Norman Thelwell and the new versions using Creature Comforts™ characters. Decide what the common features and the main differences of these posters are.

Discuss what pupils think a poster designed for children in the year below them in school should look like to get them interested in the Countryside Code.

Ask pupils to design their own poster to highlight the key points of the Code for children in year one, their parents or their grandparents. Make sure they specify the target audience.

6

Equipment you will need:

roll of lining wallpaper for classroom timeline or cut into long strips for individual/group versions, rulers, paints, coloured paints or felt pens, scissors

Trip Timeline

Using a ruler, draw a long black line down the middle of the entire piece of paper lengthways to create a timeline. Mark out the beginning, end and each stop on their school visit and name it.

a) Individual or group timeline

For each location or stop on the visit to the countryside, record the most affecting sights/images, smells, sounds and feelings and back at school record them on the timeline.

b) Whole class timeline

Recreate these sensations on a whole class timeline across one wall or in the corridor with key words/phrases, writing, images, poems, textures linked to the precise times.

Option for a) and b)

After class discussion and agreement, colour code the timeline with a coloured paint wash according to how wild or managed each section was.

7

Equipment you will need:

musical instruments or sound effects, eg two wooden sticks, crisp packet, bottles filled with different amounts of water, stick with elastic band you can pluck attached to it, soft drink can(s) of different sizes to tap with a stick, all collected on your trip, sound recording equipment

Natural Music

Please consider and apply Health and Safety regulations here.

Use any instruments or sound effects to create a three-piece composition. Each part must depict a different experience of a place in the country at different times, eg:

a) Wind in the trees

b) A sultry summer's day

c) Owls and foxes at night in the woods.

If you have time, compose words to the song and sing them as a group or choose one or more pupils to sing them to the accompaniment from the rest of the group.

Record this composition after practice or present it to another class in your school.

8

Equipment you will need:
string, glue, paper,
etc to use for
constructing the art
installation,
a camera

Express Yourself

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 you 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.

9

Equipment you will need:
sound recording
equipment

Performance in the Park

Working in groups, use drama to explore things that might happen in a National Park, along a footpath or in a Country Park. Imagine the conversations and sounds that might be heard from passers-by, as the weather changed and the day wore on.

Use your voices to produce a soundscape – a presentation of overlapping snatches of speech and sound effects. Act out your mini play and record it.

10

Equipment you will need:
sound recording
equipment, eg tape
recorder/
microphone/
Dictaphone/digital
video camera,
editing software

Recording Times

Working in pairs or groups, pupils can record the sights/sounds at different times and locations during their trip. A tape recorder or Dictaphone could be used to record snatches of conversation (having asked permission first); a digital video camera could be used to capture images as well.

Back at school, edit and sequence these recordings to provide aural clues to 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. The recordings may be used during Activity 9 'Performance in the Park' to provide the required sound effects.

11

Equipment you will need:
pens, coloured
pencils or felt pens,
paper

Total Recall

Ask each class member to think about the most memorable time they have spent in the countryside, eg on holiday or a recent trip, and try to recreate five events on that trip as a series of symbols. They do not have to be great works of art (cartoons, line drawings, symbols or signs and simplifications are fine), but there should be no words.

When finished, ask them to colour-code the symbols to represent aspects such as busy/quiet, relaxing/stressful, solitary/communal, natural or managed.

Ask peers to see if they can reconstruct the experience just by looking at and 'reading' the sequence of symbols.

Case Studies

On our doorstep

During 2004, the North York Moors National Park, North Yorkshire Education Authority and North Ryedale Community Education Service ran a project called 'On our doorstep'.

Around 300 children from two local secondary schools and one special needs school visited the Park in groups to sample a range of inspirational and creative activities with various local artists. Activities included making music, sculpture, collage, poetry and writing. The children's work was kept and displayed in an exhibition at the end of the project.

Although the majority of the children lived just outside the Park, many were not aware of the value of living in such a beautiful area of countryside. Not only did 'On our doorstep' increase their awareness of the countryside around them, it also aimed to raise the children's self-esteem by giving them an exciting and practical opportunity for self-expression.

Forest Schools for Monmouthshire

This 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.

60 resident pupils from Mounton House, a special needs school for boys in Chepstow, are taking part in 'Campcraft' sessions run by one of the Forest Schools. Weekly or fortnightly sessions are attended as part of an Open College Network qualification, and the school also arranges visits as an extra-curricular activity. Excluded from mainstream education, many of the boys find it difficult to perform well in a structured classroom environment. They find the Forest School an extremely rewarding experience as it gives them the opportunity to learn new skills such as working with tools, building things, camping and cooking on a campfire.

Monmouthshire Youth Service has also been working with Forest Schools in running a pilot project with five year 10 and year 11 pupils. These children had not been excluded from mainstream education, but for various reasons were following an alternative curriculum with the Youth Service, of which the Forest School was a part. Five sessions were attended, which included learning about health and safety issues, constructing shelters, building bridges and using tools.

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 two – 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:
pencils, paper,
whiteboard, board
pens

A Question of Balance

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

Working in pairs or groups, ask the pupils to consider the question ‘Should people have unlimited access to the countryside?’.

After a few minutes, bring the class together and collect responses ‘for’ and ‘against’ the statement, writing them on the appropriate side of the board.

When they have completed this task, explain that some of these ideas 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.

Back in their pairs or groups, ask the students to discuss if the balance of feeling about this issue is what they would expect.

Finally, summarise each point by inviting one pupil per group to explain their personal view and whether their view is the same as or differs from the class consensus.

2

Equipment you will need:

pencils, paper,
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 wildflowers.**

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.

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 the year**
- c) **Fenced-off areas**
- d) **Fines**
- e) **Warning signs.**

3

Equipment you will need:

pencils, paper, the
Countryside Code
leaflet, video
camera or tape
recorder

Speaking Your Mind

Organise pupils into groups of three, to compose a small play lasting no more than three minutes. The play should demonstrate different perspectives on a countryside access issue. Each of the pupils should take on a different role. 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 access, 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.**

Video each presentation as a record of the pupils' work.

Case Study

The Ordnance Survey map competition

Mapping activities can play an important part in educating children about access issues. Ordnance Survey (OS) provides 11 year-old pupils with free maps, and runs an annual competition giving pupils the opportunity to win an interactive whiteboard for their school. Entrants are asked to write a 600–800 word article, illustrated with three to five photographs on how they have used their free map. This could be based around the whole year group, a single class or an individual. Two runners-up receive laptop computers. A runner-up in the 2003 competition was the Harroddian School in Barnes, London. Although this activity was carried out in a city, it could be easily applied to a countryside setting or used to focus on urban green spaces. This is their story.

‘Ordnance Survey maps are considered a valued resource in all Geography departments. It was a fantastic opportunity therefore, to be able to provide every child in year seven with a copy of their local area map. Much fun was had as pupils eagerly identified the location of their house, the Harroddian School, and other local landmarks. The Explorer 161 London South map also covers a large area of central London, which includes well-known tourist sites such as the Houses of Parliament, Greenwich and the Millennium Wheel. To take advantage of this resource a number of classroom exercises were devised to enable pupils to locate these sites and thus develop map skills such as grid referencing, measuring distance, identifying direction, and recognising human and physical land use.

‘The real fun, however, came through our Ordnance Survey Map Treasure Trail. Amongst the children it was evident that, despite the world famous nature of London's sites, very few pupils have visited vast areas of our capital. The free OS map offer gave us an ideal opportunity to get the pupils out and about around London. A series of clues to various London locations were given to 80 year seven pupils. On solving these clues they were asked to identify and locate the places on their OS map by giving a six-figure grid reference. The next stage in the trail was to go out and visit these sites, using their maps as a navigational aid. To prove that all the sites had been visited, pupils had to be photographed at each location; in each photo the OS map had to be clearly seen. On completing the treasure trail, pupils were asked to produce a written report.’

‘The free maps scheme enabled us to run a competition which improved not only the pupils’ map reading skills but also their knowledge of London. More importantly, it proved to the pupils that OS maps are not simply a resource to be dusted off once a term and used in the classroom, but have a real life application that is both fun and informative.’

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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