



Marvellous Minibeasts

Foundation Stage

Summary of Activity

This activity is a fun introduction to the different ways in which human activity can affect the earth. This activity enables pupils to explore their own ecological footprint on earth and ways of reducing this footprint in the future.

Learning Objectives

1. To describe how day to day actions impact the earth.
2. To identify ways in which we can reduce our impact on the earth.

Preparation

- Enlarge the cut-out sheets to create one set of footprints and to create a set of earths (3 or 4) for every pupil.
- Photocopy Eco-footprint Score Sheet (one for each pupil).
- Ask pupils to collect and bring in old envelopes and cereal packets.
- You may wish to order a whole set of Best Foot Forward cards (£30 for 10 packs from www.bestfootforward.com)

Resources

- Pack of Best Foot Forward Cards
- Eco-footprint Score Sheet
- Set of earths
- Set of footprints
- Clipboards and pencils
- Old branch displayed in a bucket of sand

Health and Safety Consideration

1. Refer to your risk assessment for your school grounds.
2. Complete a risk assessment if you leave the school grounds. Refer to Norfolk guidance at www.norfolkesinet.org.uk
3. Consider pupil specific risks.
4. Consider activity specific risks such as bee and wasp stings.



Common Green Grasshopper



Saving Norfolk's Wildlife for the Future

Activity



Introduction – Where Do Minibeasts Live?

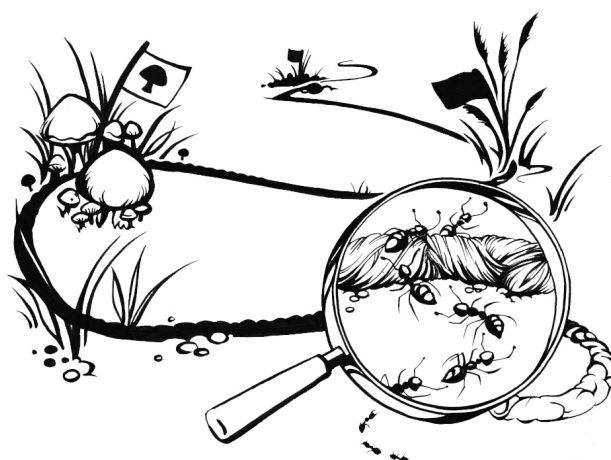
1. Use picture books, photographs or ideally plastic models and soft toys to familiarise pupils with common minibeasts.
2. Read the minibeast poem, ask pupils to join in with the actions. If you are using minibeast models these can be given to the pupils to hold up at the appropriate time.

Main Activity – Minibeast Hunt

1. Outside in the school grounds ask pupils where they think minibeasts might be living; in the grass, on trees, in the earth?
2. Demonstrate how to use the minibeast equipment. The nets are for sweeping through long grass. The flat mirrors are for looking under leaves or up at trees. The dental mirrors are for exploring nooks and crannies in bark or dead wood. Any creatures caught can then be transferred to a bug pot using a paint brush. Most bug pots have a magnifier lid to get a better view of the creature.
3. Emphasise to the pupils that minibeasts are fragile, living creatures and that they do very important jobs and so pupils must be very gentle and look after them. That is why they are using brushes to touch them and not their fingers, which could accidentally squash them!
4. Distribute the equipment among the class and let the hunt begin! You may wish to set a limited area for the class to explore.
5. At the end of the hunt, ask the pupils to share with the class what they found. As a class, you may wish to record your results on the board in a simple table. Ask the pupils to release their minibeasts back where they found them.

Plenary – Magic Eyes

1. Ask the pupils to imagine that they are the size of a minibeast: imagine that the grass is like towering trees, rocks are as big as houses and twigs are the size of benches. Explain that they are going to go on a mini-adventure to see what it is like to be a minibeast.
2. Outside in a grassy area, give each pupil a metre length of string, a magnifying glass ('a magic eye') and 5 mini flags.
3. Explain that they are to throw the string onto the ground and the string becomes the path of their mini-adventure. To shrink down to size they must use their 'magic eye'. They must follow their path very closely and find 5 special things on their adventure which they mark with their flags.
4. After they have travelled their path, they can visit other people's adventures. This could be used as an opportunity to draw out a range of interesting descriptive vocabulary.



Follow-up Ideas



Research information about a minibeast from another country. Pupils can create 'minibeast passports' to display their information



Create a class wormery. A small short-term wormery can be made from a plastic drinks bottle. Arrange the soil in layers and you will be able to watch how the worms mix the soil and recycle dead leaves.



Consider the diversity of minibeasts in other countries by looking at pictures of the African land snail, praying mantis and tarantula.



Use the 'woodland name trail' fold-out key from the Field Studies Council to identify which minibeasts are caught (www.field-studies-council.org) or create your own based on the features of the minibeasts you catch.



Create fingerprint caterpillars, collages of minibeasts from natural materials or investigate ladybird patterns.



Compare minibeasts occurring in different areas or habitats. For example, compare a woodland habitat to a grassland habitat, or compare what can be found in the different layers of a woodland.



Consider adaptations by creating 'minibeast passports' to display information about one of the minibeasts caught. This could include information about size, number of legs, method of locomotion, pattern, habitat, food etc.



Burying Beetle

Follow-up Ideas



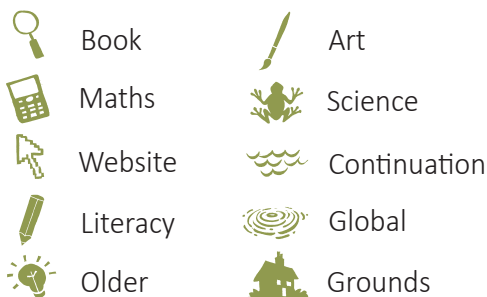
After reading ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle** (ISBN 0-1404-6932-4) why not keep one as a class pet and watch it pupate to become a butterfly? Containers and native caterpillars can be bought from Insect Lore (www.insectlore.com). Remember that some species of caterpillar are very fussy when it comes to food-plants, so it is important you know the species you have and what to feed it on. After it has become a butterfly, your class can set it free in your school grounds.



There are many small scale things that you could do to encourage minibeasts into your ground such as making minibeast hotels, butterfly feeders or logpiles. For a larger scale project, planting a butterfly garden would make a colourful addition to any school grounds.



Use palettes to separate bugs of the same sort, one woodlouse per space for example and count the number of different bugs the class caught. These results could be written on the board, 'we caught 3 woodlice', or in a simple pictogram. Pupils could use this exercise to practise using mathematical language such as more/less and greater/smaller.



Seven-spot Ladybird



Encourage pupils to think about what their minibeast needs in its home by thinking about what they have in their own homes. Each pupil is given a length of string to arrange on the ground as the boundary of their home and they create a variety of features within it from natural materials collected from the school grounds. If their imaginations get going you could end up with minibeast gardens, mountains and lakes!

The Minibeast Hunt Poem



We're searching for some minibeasts,
There must be some or one at least!
We've seen their pictures in a book,
Now I wonder where we should look...?

It's cool and dark under the turf.
We might find a worm having a wriggle,
It's dived into the soil going wiggle, wiggle,
wiggle!

Let's look on a leaf...
Remember to look underneath.
We might find a caterpillar having it's
lunch,
There it is, going munch, munch, munch!

(Action- wiggle one finger)

(Action - hands opening and closing like
mouths)

Let's look on the ground...
Can we see any mounds?
We might find some ants who are in a
hurry,
They walk in a line going scurry, scurry,
scurry!

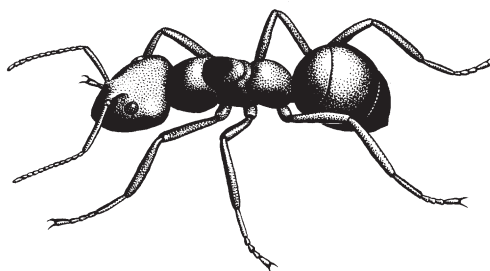
Let's look under a log pile...
It looks like it's been there a long while.
We might find some woodlice in the wood
all holey,
They've rolled into a ball, rolley polley,
rolley!

(Action- wiggle all fingers like legs)

(Action- circular motion with hands)
Let's look in the soil and earth...

Let's look in the long grass...
It tickles as we brush past.
We might find a spider at home in its web,
Dingling and dangling on a long thread!

(Action - 2 hands joined by thumbs,
wiggling all find to make a spider)



Saving Norfolk's Wildlife for the Future