

Wild Poetry

National Literacy Trust and
the RSPB: Working together,
supporting teachers and inspiring
learning through nature .

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The below activity is part of a larger series of resources developed by the [National Literacy Trust](#) and the RSPB.

The resources, [‘Writing from Nature’](#) are designed to widen access to, deepen knowledge of, and increase appreciation of the natural world just outside your door.

The activities and guidance take teachers and pupils through a process of observation, engagement and exploration of nature. The resources use poetry to encourage enjoyment of writing and an inquisitive approach to nature.



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Wild Writing (30-40 minutes)

Wild Writing | School Wild Challenge - The RSPB

Note this section is part of The RSPB's Wild Challenge award, a specially-developed suite of activities to support schools to engage children with nature and provide practical learning opportunities.

You will need: a method to collect (and order) natural items. Options include:

- Sticky journey sheet (a length of double-sided carpet tape stuck onto a strip of card)
- Journey sticks (enough sticks the right size for a child's hand (approx 30cm in length), 60 to 80 elastic bands or sections of coloured wool (approx 15cm in length) to fix found objects to the sticks)
- Deep trays (one per table group if you want the pupils to sort out their treasures later. This is a good wet weather option)



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In the first outdoor location, ask the pupils to spend at least five minutes silently listening and looking for birds and other animals and consider: Where are they? What are they doing? Which senses are they using? RSPB's Birds and Mammals [Spot it sheet](#) ([Welsh Bilingual resources available](#)) may help pupils to identify and name some of the creatures they observe. You may want to extend the time for this part of the activity by allowing the pupils to explore the site or a set area in pairs.

Gather the pupils together and ask how safe or powerful they think the animals they spotted might be feeling, and the reasons they think that. Answers may relate to their appearance (including their size), speed of movement, place in the food chain, availability of places to hide from predators and broader environmental factors such as noise and pollution.

Next, encourage the pupils to 'think like an animal on a journey' through the site. A good animal to consider is a snail, because it moves slowly (but you might have a different idea you could develop). Ask the pupils to imagine that their finger is the 'foot' of a snail and move it very slowly across different textures to complete a 2-4 metre journey, such as from grass, across soil and moss and up a tree trunk. What did it feel like in different parts of the journey? What risks would there be for an actual snail on that journey? Was there anywhere to hide or shelter?



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Complete this activity in an area where you are most likely to be able to collect interesting natural items. Ideally, they will have fallen on the ground, although you may decide to permit pupils to collect flowers growing in short grass (such as daisies) or an example leaf from certain trees or bushes. Give examples of good things they may collect and ensure that all pupils understand that they should not collect minibeasts. If you are using the 'sticky journey sheets', show how the pupils should slowly peel back the top layer so that they can affix their natural treasures. You may prefer to collect items in trays, or use a traditional [journey stick](#).

Lead the pupils on a 'journey through nature' – or allow them to explore independently or in pairs – to enable them to collect a range of interesting natural items. Find one natural Item and focus on the

beauty and detail of it. Can you hold it? What does it feel like? Does it remind you of anything? Can you describe it in an interesting and unusual way? Make sure pupils make a note of this description they will use it later.



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Poems

Set her free

by Daisy (Appleton Academy) [Young Poets 2022 participant](#)

Her hair was wood fallen from a tree,
Her eyes were waterdrops racing to the sea.
Her nose was a pebble, small and round,
Her lips like flowers, cursed never to make a sound.

Her skin was a petal, silky and smooth,
Her neck was a tree stump, some may muse.
Her arms were branches, reaching out for a hand,
Her hands were twigs but as coarse as sand.

Her fingers were daggers so no one would come near,
Her legs were boulders, tired from going there to here.
Her feet were bullets, shooting all around,
Her dreams were treasure, lost and never to be found.

Her thoughts were brambles, something nobody would touch,
Her voice was full of nettles, so she had no luck.
Her hopes were gone, so no one could see,
She was in someone else's body and needed to be set free.



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Poems

The Red Kite

By Holly (Green-meadow Primary)

[Young Poets 2022 participant](#)

I am the red kite,
A rare bird of prey,
Chestnut red, head pale grey,
I hunt all animals, big and small,
If you can hear shrieking, it's just my call,
Even though I am hunted for my verminous threat,
Many people treat me like a beloved pet,
My young are growing, I fear they will fall,
For I do hope, that my tree isn't tall,
I have a fork- shaped tail, that can't get wet,
If it does, I will crash down like a broken jet,
Although life is a mysterious journey,
You won't know if it will end too early.

More poems:

Chrissie Gittens – 'Wasp on the Tube'

<https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/poem/wasp-on-the-tube/>

Laura Mucha – 'Albatross'

<https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/poem/albatross/>

Aliyah Begum – 'Walking to the Train Station'

<https://poems.poetrysociety.org.uk/poets/aliyah-begum>



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Reading Activity (15-20 minutes)

Read one or more of the model poems.

Pass round copies of the selected poem.

Ask the pupils to pay attention to the words relating to the natural world. What words, images or phrases stand out to the pupils? What stands out about them? Is it the sound, the rhythm, the feeling behind them? Does the poem make the pupils think of anything they have seen or heard during the outdoor activities?

Ask them to write down their favourite words or lines from the poem in their workbook. They can use these in their own poetry.



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Writing Activity (25-30 minutes)

Pupils are going to write a poem in the voice of an animal character.

Ask the pupils to imagine they are one of the animals they saw outside.

Tell pupils that the last description of the natural object they found outside is going to be in the last stanza of their poem.

Prompt pupils to think about their poetry using the following questions.

1. What do you notice about being outside?
2. What is your habitat?
3. What do you eat?
4. What do you see?
5. What do you hear?
6. What do you think about where you live?
7. How do you move?
8. What words or sentences best express this?

Pupils should now write one or more new stanzas for their poems. Encourage students to write from the perspective of their animal and remind them to use their description of the natural object in their last stanza or line.

You can use this structure for pupils who may need it:

I saw__
I felt__
I smelt__
I tasted__
I heard__



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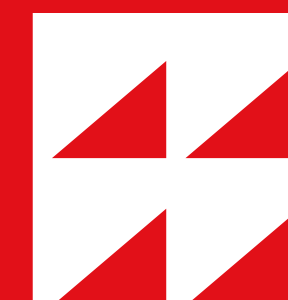
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