

Visiting a Nature Reserve



with your school

If you are visiting a nature reserve with your school it is good to prepare your pupils for their visit and provide follow up activities when they return to school. Below we have provided a selection of activities that you could do to prepare for and follow up after your visit. If you need any more information, please contact Tees Valley Wildlife Trust.

Preparation

Preparing your group for the visit is important. If pupils arrive knowing a bit about what they are going to be doing they will be more ready for the activities and learning. Here are some suggested activities you could do to prepare for your visit.



1. Where is the reserve?

Use an online map website such as Bing or Google to find where the nature reserve is in relation to your school.

Look at the satellite images and identify different areas of the reserve such as woodland, water, streams, paths and buildings.

Compare the satellite images to your school location – how is it different? Are there more buildings? Roads? Etc.

Plot the route you will take, identify different places (towns or villages) that children might know

Bing maps has an Ordnance Survey overlay. Use this to look at map symbols and contour lines to show how flat or steep the nature reserve is.

2. Nature Reserve features

Use our [website](#) to find out more about the special habitats and features of the reserve

- Ask the pupils to think about what they are expecting to see, hear or smell on the visit
- Use the photos on the reserve web pages to find out what the reserve looks like.

3. Wildlife

All our reserves are great places for wildlife. Some species are very shy or nocturnal and so pupils are unlikely to see them on a school trip. Research the species on-line or in books before the trip. Find out what they look like, what habitat they live in, what they eat and what noises they make.



4. The visit

Getting the pupils to think about where they are going, what they will need for the day, how to stay safe and how to behave before they visit helps them be more prepared.

- Get them to make a list of things they will need to bring with them on the day (lunch, drink, coats, sensible shoes/boot wellies...).
- Talk to them about things they might need to be careful of such as areas of water, roads or brambles.
- Ask them to come up with ground rules about looking after the reserve such as not dropping litter, not making too much noise and walking instead of running.
- Encourage them to talk about what they are looking forward to or hoping to do or discover on the visit.



Follow Up

Following up after you have returned from a visit is really important and helps cement learning. It also helps pupils remember their visit and allows them to discuss with the group what they got out of it. If your visit was part of a topic or scheme of work you are following in class then you are likely to be doing follow up activities anyway. If not, these ideas below might help you.



Repeat activities

Are there any activities you did on your visit that you could repeat in your school grounds for example a mini-beast hunt? You can compare the findings from the reserve to your grounds – what are the differences and similarities?

Art work

Can you use your visit for inspiration for some art work? You could make posters about the reserve or species. If you bought anything back from the reserve with you, try and do some close up, observational drawing.

Creative Writing

Visiting a nature reserve can help pupils create fantastic creative writing including poems, short stories or descriptive prose. Focussing on a special aspect of the visit might be helpful or getting the pupils to describe the sights, sounds and smells of the reserve.

Create wildlife spaces

You can make your own wildlife spaces within your school grounds. Visit our wildlife gardening web pages to find out how you can create wildlife habitats in your grounds.

For more information about visiting one of our Nature Reserve with your school, email education@teeswildlife.org