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Journey Stick – reflecting on a journey in nature

TOPIC: LITERACY

THEME: Trees and Nature

Aim – to connect with the natural world through observation and collection, leading to the creation of an item that provokes the memory of that place.

Introduction

It can be easy to walk through a space, such as a woodland, without looking and really seeing what there is around you. This activity uses observational skills found in **creative writing, art and design** and **science**.

This activity can take place at different times of year as trees come into leaf and flower and the spring and summer or drop their leaves in the autumn leading to barren branches in the winter.

This can also be used to create a nature or tree map of an area for **geography**. Different pupils focus on different spaces and add their findings to a large map of the site so that you can see the contrasts in what was found in different places.

Curriculum links - England

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- Use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- Maintain attention and participate in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- Select and use appropriate registers for effective communication

Curriculum links - Scotland: LIT 2-02a, LIT 2-06a, LIT 2-07a, LIT2-09a

Weblinks

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Resources

- An area with trees
- A good supply of sticks
- Lengths of wool, twine or string

Activity: Create your own journey stick

1. Each pupil finds a stick about the length of their elbow to their fingertips and ties a piece of wool, twine or string at one end. (They should make the spare wool into a ball so it is easy to carry.)
2. As they walk through the space, they look around them. What can they see in the branches of the trees? What is caught up in their roots? What is growing under the shade of the trees? Can they spot any signs of wildlife?
3. Discuss what you can take away from a wood and what should be left behind. Talk about respecting nature and how the woodland is created – look at the different layers – canopy, understory, herb (or field) and ground layers – and what makes them different.
4. As pupils walk around the space, they should pick up small objects that interest them and tie them to the stick. This helps to keep the memory of their journey.
5. When they have created their sticks, compare what they found. Did everyone find similar things or were there some areas of the wood that had different things to collect in them? Maybe the edges of the wood were different from the parts nearer the centre. What about spaces that were particularly wet – did they find lots of moss?



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6. Pupils should use their journey sticks as prompts to talk about their journeys. What did they see, what did they find, what have they attached to their sticks, what would they have liked to attach but couldn't – why was this? (was it alive, too big, too wet...?)
7. Revisit this space at different times of year to see how the journey sticks change.
8. Extension activities – map a journey, so all attachments are in the order that the journey took place. Use this as a starting point for creative or factual writing. Press natural resources between paper as another way of recording that space.

Key skills

- Working individually and as part of a team (collaboration)
- Supports creativity and imagination
- Speaking skills – expressing oneself and presenting to a group

Weblinks

t1.org.uk youngtreechampions.org treecouncil.org.uk

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