

Green Hearts

Learning from the natural world around us is always an exciting prospect filled with discovery and opportunity. A sensory concoction of smells, sounds, sights and textures to tickle, dazzle and surprise encouraging curiosity and a wealth of physical and practical learning to take place.

The Green Hearts project was developed to provide such learning opportunities for five Tees Valley Primary schools. A partnership between Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Tees Forest and Tees Valley Arts, Green Hearts encouraged young people to get out there, explore and learn about their local environment through increasing opportunities to site visits, environmental education and interpretation using eco arts activities.

The manual is specifically designed to provide teachers with practical and enjoyable arts activities that can be used to raise awareness and spark discussion about nature conservation and environmental issues both in and out of the classroom.



Green Hearts

A manual for creative learning in green spaces



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Green Hearts - A Manual For Creative Learning In Green Spaces

Foreword>>



“From prehistoric times, people have transformed the environment, shaping their tools from stone, and, in their cave wall paintings, megaliths and stone circles, seeking ways to connect with the forces of nature. Since those times, artists and designers have been profoundly influenced by the images, colours, patterns, structures and systems of nature around them.”

Clive Adams, Director of the centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World

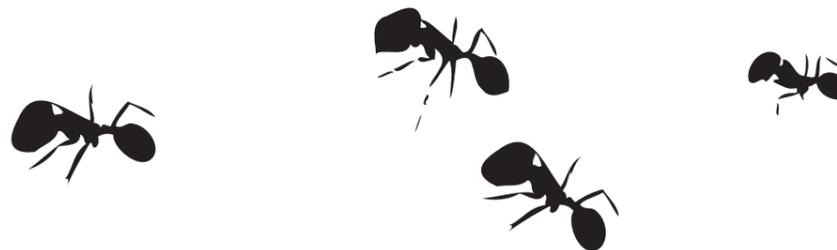


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The Green Hearts project was developed to provide such learning opportunities for five Tees Valley Primary schools. A partnership between Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Tees Forest and Tees Valley Arts, Green Hearts encouraged young people to get out there, explore and learn about their local environment through increasing opportunities to site visits, environmental education and interpretation using eco arts activities.

Green Hearts arose from two main ideas;

1. Awareness of our own local environment is often eclipsed by the wider global environmental agendas, yet there is still so much to gain and learn from exploring and understanding the distinctive environments on our own doorstep.
2. The arts is an effective tool to engage young people and new audiences in positive learning experiences that can inform further interpretation and change attitudes towards our environment.



Over the course of Green Hearts, artists have worked with teachers and pupils exploring local wildlife sites through creative writing, visual arts and sound/music production. During this process artists have provided teaching staff with alternative/complementary curriculum materials, skills in using eco arts and new ways for pupils to learn. The resulting manual documents these approaches as a series of exercises and step by step instructions.

The manual is specifically designed to provide key stage 2 teachers with practical and enjoyable arts activities that can be used to raise awareness and spark discussion about nature conservation and environmental issues both in and out of the classroom.

We hope that this manual can continue to inspire young minds and forge deeper connections between schools and their local green spaces, to raise awareness of the natural diversity around them and encourage a sense of mutual responsibility for the conservation of our shared environment.

So go on, get out there, have a go and get really really muddy!

Creative Writing Activities

Writers Bob Beagrie & Andy Willoughby worked with the primary schools developing poetry, stories, raps and spoof articles based on the visits to the wildlife sites.

The approach focussed on recording immediate impressions from the site visits, providing examples of wildlife poetry, stories and myths, with follow up workshops drawing on sense memory techniques, personification and group writing games which lead to group performances.

The activities encouraged in depth discussions around habitats, ecology and conservation.

Creative Writing Activities



Objective

- To stimulate an imaginative response to a green space.
- To develop observation skills.

General Application

- Mapping a journey through a green space.
- Sensory motor skills.
- Observation.
- Literacy; speaking, listening and writing.

Space requirements

Identify a suitable green space for your group. This could be within your school grounds or a local wildlife site.

Materials:

- Pre-prepared instructions/directions based on the specific site
- Selected short stories e.g. Aesop's Fables, Rudyard Kipling's Just So Stories or creation myths
- Writing paper/notepads
- Pencils

Instructions

- Before arranging a site visit make a preparatory inspection.
- Chart a journey through the green space choosing a number of specific features as areas for activity.
- Using creation myths, Aesop's Fables or Just So Stories, invent mythic or cryptic names for the features e.g. a hawthorn bush – the fairy kings palace
- Using the simple activities outlined below perform the tasks at each key point of the journey.
- Write them up as a set of instructions and give them to the group on their arrival, along with note pads and pencils on which to record their observations, responses and ideas to map their journey.
- You may also want to select some short fables that relate to the site to read at different intervals.



Here is a list we prepared for our visits.

- 1 Place your palm on the Horse & Grouse Stone.
- 2 Tap three times on the Stone of the Egg & The Wave.
- 3 Blow upon the Totem of The Fox & The Crow. **(Read out Aesop's Fable – The Fox & The Crow)**
- 4 Skirt The Field of Whispering Barley (Listen carefully and write down what it says). **(Read out Aesop's Fable The Oak and The Barley)**
- 5 Cross the Honeycomb Bridge.
- 6 Listen to the babble of the beck. **(Write down what it says).**
- 7 Salute the ten slim guardians of the Trees, standing straight as needles.
- 8 Sit in the Glade of Myth & Legend **(Close your eyes and imagine a story).**

Here are some trigger questions you may consider.

What are you standing on?

What is above your head?

Find something that is inside something else.

Write down something that is coming and something that is going.

Write down three sounds you can hear.

Write down something you know is here even though you can't see it.

Write down how this environment effects your movement.

Write down a wish you could make here.

Write down a question someone might ask about this place.

Write down three colours you see.

Follow Up/Development

From the notes and responses each group member will have a wealth of raw material based on personal, focused observations and imaginative ideas. This material can be used by pupils to play with and create poems or stories.

- 9 Write down your ideas for a story, then share them. **(Read out Aesop's Fable The Mice and the Weasels)**
- 10 Stand in the shade of the Candyfloss Tree.
- 11 Look through the hole of the ruined wall.
- 12 Write down what you can see through the hole
- 13 Steal a stick from the Pheonix nest.
- 14 Find the three fallen thrones of Fairy. **(Read out Aesop's Fable The Queen Bee and The Fairy King)**
- 15 Write down what you would ask from the Fairy King.
- 16 Write down what he would ask in return.



Examples:

Here is an example group poem composed from the Treasure Hunt/Story Trail.

Directions to Fairy

Wander out of the bus
Fairyland awaits you.
But how do you get there?

Gather around the Horse and Grouse Stone,
Feel it's rough texture, it's like ice chopping your hand.

If you can stand it move on to find
The Stone of The Egg and The Wave
Tap on it three times and make a wish.
Keep it secret from your enemies.

Blow upon the Totem of the Crow and the Fox
Listen to the crow singing it's solo
Watch the fox cover it's ears.

Then meet the golden army
Swaying from left to right,
Ignore it's whisper to walk into it's grasp.

Cross the honeycomb bridge if you dare,
Going slow and steady, please beware.
Hold on to the moss covered fence
Feel it's slime stain your hand bright green.

Below your feet the rippling beck says,
'Give me freedom. Where is the sea?'
Point the way to the shore through the new leaves.

And who could jump the furthest,
Hunt down the ten slim guardians of the trees,
Stand up straight and salute ten times,
Follow the muddy path with squelching steps
To the Glade of Myth and Legend,

Close your eyes and imagine a story
Of a grass hopper and a spider

Or a time travelling tree,
Or the blade of grass and the grey tit
Or the contest between the nettle and the thistle
Or the tale of the Green Man.

Stand in the shade of the candyfloss tree
Guess this riddle:
'I am the walnut of the woods,
name me.
My job is to provide oxygen,
give me my name.'

If you answer correctly
The three thrones of fairy will appear,
Upon who sit the Fairy King
The Fairy Queen and the Fairy Princess.
Give them a gift of trust and love
And they might let you stay.

Ben, Kirsty, Sam and Louise – Lockwood Primary School

Here is an individual poem developed in a follow up session from the trigger questions asked en route.

The stream in its muddy banks is carving a watery path.
There is a network of tiny worm tunnels in the old wooden fence.
Last time I came here lightening flashed,
Illuminating all the water laden branches.

Demi Melbourne

Making a Green Man - Cut Up Poems

Objective

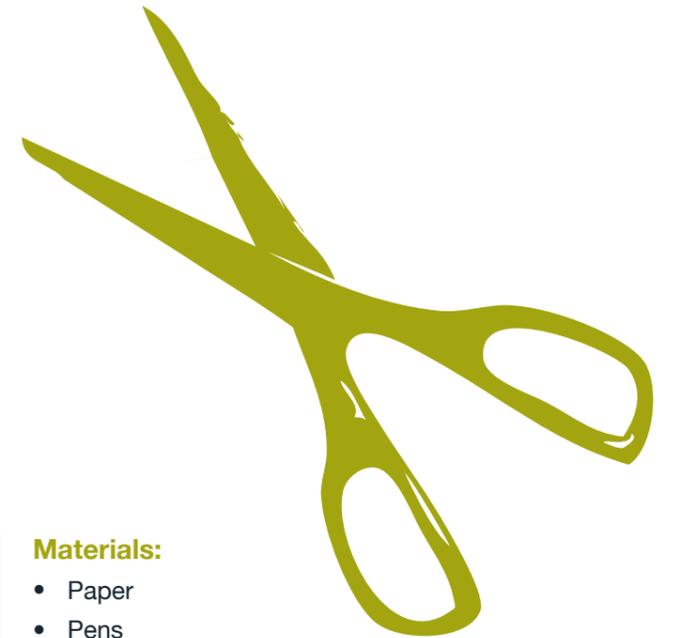
- The pupils will create a green man in poetry from natural imagery using their memories of the sites and then cut up techniques.

General Application

- This activity can be used as a stand alone exercise or as a precursor to a site visit.
- Literacy; speaking, listening and writing.

Space Requirements

Suitable for indoor or outdoor environments.



Materials:

- Paper
- Pens
- Photocopier
- Pictures of the green man
- Envelopes

Instructions

- Ask the students to think about their own gardens or a garden they know well
- Ask some questions to elicit a list, for example:
 - Write down three crunchy things you can find.
 - Write down something that moves and how it moves.
 - Write down something you have to be careful of.
 - Write down two things that change in the Autumn.
 - Write down something that may be the home of an animal.
 - Write down two things you can hear in the morning.





Give them up to ten questions.

Show them pictures of the Green Man of myth to show how he is made of natural things leaves for hair, stones for eyes etc

- Ask pupils to describe their garden Green Men using their answers.
- Ask pupils to describe his face and body and what materials they are made from.
- Ask pupils what their garden Green Men would say to us.
- Pupils can do this alone or in pairs/groups.

This activity can be used as a precursor to a site visit. In this instance you can ask pupils to think about the Green Man of the site using these questions.

- What would he be made of (specific to that site)?
- Where might he be hiding?
- What messages may he have for us?
- Which animals and plants are his friends or under his protection?
- What would his voice sound like?
- Might there be other legendary beings there?

For wilder more surreal results make a Green Man Cut Up Poem - Cut Up Poem

- Invite pupils to talk about the site.
- Ask them to list all the plants, animals and other things they saw or heard on their visit. Invite pupils to discuss the subject of the Green Man.
- When pupils have sufficient notes begin the activity.

Each student completes the following sentences on a photocopy –

His hair is ...
 His eyes are...
 His mouth is...
 His ears are...
 His nose is...
 He dreams of...
 He is afraid of...
 He sings about...
 He loves...
 He believes in...
 He likes to eat...
 He says...

Examples:

The Garden Green Man

He has a body made from nettles to keep him safe,
 He has hair thornier than thorn bushes,
 His face is carved in stone and moss,
 His teeth are as sharp as dog's teeth.
 His legs are trees with two big blossoms for feet
 So he can dance like a flamingo!
 His eyes are shiny green pebbles,
 His voice is made of tweets, squawks and barks.
 He says,

"DO NOT DESTROY NATURE, DO NOT POUR CONCRETE OVER ME!"

Davis, Laura, and Caitlin of Whinfield Primary

The Greenabella Green Man

His hair is long slimy seaweed
 His eyes are Scary Man!
 His mouth is a sun bin.
 His ears are big chickens.
 His nose is green grass.
 He dreams of big slimy slugs
 He is afraid of long loopy worms
 He sings about a pretty ladybird
 He loves little plants
 He believes in ooze from a rock
 He likes to eat polluting humans
 He says "Eat sea-weed!"
 He hopes for a herd of flying pigs.

Ormesby Primary School Group Poem

He hopes for...

- In groups of three or four students cut off the beginnings of the sentences leaving only their own answers.
- Cut the answers into individual strips and fold them to conceal the answers
- Place each piece into a group envelope.
- When all the groups have done this they are given the original photocopy of unfinished sentences, one per team.
- Swap envelopes with another team.
- Each student in turn takes a strip from the envelope and completes the questions one by one.
- This produces some random nonsensical sentences and some amazing surreal imagery.
- Pupils can then rewrite each sentence correcting any grammatical errors accordingly.
- They can then read it out to the class perhaps competing in poetry slam teams.

Possible follow-up activities

- Make or paint the Green Man based on the poems
- write the song or rap of the Green Man write about the Green Man's treasures and secrets make a story up about the Green Man and his life on the site.

Gifts from the Green Man



Objective

To stimulate imaginative interpretation of objects for development within a story or poem.

General Application

- A follow up activity to defamiliarise the objects collected during the site visit
- Literacy; speaking, listening and writing

Space requirements

Classroom

Materials

- Brown wrapping paper, sticky tape, string and gift tags.

Instructions

- During your visit to the site ask the group to collect at least one object each, a stone, a leaf, a piece of wood, a feather etc. (N.B. Some ground rules or guidance should previously be given as to what is acceptable to collect).
- On return to school ask the children to wrap their objects up as parcels.

- Arrange the parcels and ask them to imagine them as gifts from The Green Man of the site.
- What could they be?
- Why would he give them as gifts?
- If they had magical properties, what would they do?

Ask the children to write

- a gift tag from the Green Man to accompany the parcel
- an account of when he gave you the gift
- a thank you letter to the Green Man for the gift.

Follow Up/Development

Get the children to write a story about a time they used the gift from the Green Man, for what reason, what happened, what went wrong, how was the problem solved and what happened to the gift.

Examples:

The Green Man gave me a gift
 Wrapped in brown paper
 And string tied in small bows.
 It felt cold, gooey and sticky.
 Inside was a piece of clear glass
 With rounded edges,
 Not sharp, but worn smooth.
 Its scratched surface told a story.
 The glass was wrapped in pond weed.
 Which felt like soft, wet string
 And looked like witches' hair.
 The glass gave me light,
 In the dark the glass shines,
 When I hold it in my hand
 And can help me see underwater.
 The pond weed gave me air
 So I can breathe under water.
 It also made me better when I was ill.

Bethany – Preston Primary School

Dear Green Man

Thank you very much for the present you gave me when I visited Bowesfield.
 Inside, if you remember, there was a boat made from brown bark, a black feather, a yellow flower and grass. The powers you gave me were perfect. The black feather lets me fly at night. With the yellow flower I can make any plant in the world grow strong. The bark makes me float on water and swim for miles.

Thanks again

Nicola – Preston Primary School

