

DOWN IN THE WOODS PLANNING – WEEK ONE

Theme: Conservation of the woodland and understanding its importance.

Overview of Investigative Learning:

- The class will investigate environmental questions.
- They will learn about the importance of trees and the effects of deforestation.
- The class will work as a responsible team to problem solve.

Interesting Aspects: Animals, habitats, endangered animals, plants, trees, their future, the environment and planet.

Inquiry Questions:

- Do we have an obligation to protect the environment for future generations?
- Why are we bothered about the trees?
- New houses are more important than woodlands?
- Spiritual – is nature important for our wellbeing? Discuss the Zones of Regulation. How would walking in the wood make you feel?

Narrative

We overhear a local resident gossiping with an adult in role. Oh no, the local wood is going to be chopped down to build houses. She is so worried about the plants and animals. Also the wood has been there for generations to enjoy. Local schools use the wood for pond dipping and it is opposite an old people's home. This is going to affect the local community as well as the plants and animals.

Expert Team: conservationists charged with protecting the local woodland.

Client: Woodland Trust. They are very concerned a local woodland is going to be chopped down for housing.

Commission: To help the Woodland Trust provide evidence to save the woodland to help protect the woodland and the animals and plants that live there.

Other points of view: We don't need the woods. Housing, shops and schools are more important. Why are we bothered? Young families and children need houses. Local councillors. School children. Residents in care home.

Lists of Tasks: posters, leaflets, newspaper articles, surveys, data

Links to the curriculum:

- **PSHE** – caring for the earth and environment. Making conscientious decisions.
- **Science** – plants and minibeasts.
- **English** – reports, persuasive writing.
- **Art** – posters.

Steps:

Step 1: Introduce context (science lesson – Monday pm)

Task 1 – show children a selection of items all made from or related to trees. I wonder how all these things are connected? Discuss and introduce trees. Think about all the benefits of trees.

Task 2 – give small groups an envelope each containing maps of forests over time showing loss of forest. Discuss what they notice. Write deforestation on the board – explain that all over the world we are losing trees faster than we are planting them. Some charities like WWF and in the UK, the Woodland Trust who try to protect forests. I wonder what kind of people work at the Woodland Trust? Do you think it would be a big job to look after all the woodlands left in the U.K?

Step 2: Research

To help us understand the work of these charities we need to use our science research skills to find out all about trees.

Task 1 - Look at PPT and then go on a tree identification hunt.

Task 2 - Children to look at books and text on trees. Make notes in mantle books.

Step 3: Introducing the Imaginary Context (Wednesday)

Task one – have children sitting around large sheet of paper on carpet. Start to silently draw the trunk of a tree. What could this be? Once children can say what it is pass pen round so everyone

gets to draw part of the tree or add plants underneath. LSA hands out pens to 2/3 other children to use and then pass on.

Task two - discussion around importance of trees in the environment – I like visiting forests. Are there any activities you like to do in forests? Do you remember why they are important? Re-cap facts about forests – important for air quality, habitat for plants and animals, personal well-being. Did you know hundreds of years ago England was covered in woodland? These are in decline due to pressure of land use and environmental changes such as pollution and climate change.

Step 4: Using drama to move into story.

Task 1 - Overhead conversation – LSA discussing with another adult a text they had received. Ask what they are talking about – what's happened? Rumours that local woodland is to be knocked down for housing. Come and see.

Drama circle – remind chn of code of conduct and step into our story.

Go outside and imagine we are exploring a forest. Use our senses to explore. Spot a poster in the forest – there is a public meeting called by the Woodland Trust to discuss the proposed building of 500 new homes. Shall we find out a bit more?

Step 5: Commission

Return to class room - use drama techniques to visualise entering the Community Centre. Teacher in role as Woodland Trust Regional Co-ordinator. Explain that the local council have been told that they need to provide homes for families in the area. This area has been suggested as an excellent location with good road links already and a school with spaces, plus shops and bus route.

LSA – I wonder if everyone who lives near the woods is ok with this? Do you think we could ask some questions? Give time for chn to discuss or jot down questions.

Teacher in role takes any questions. What I think we need to do to solve this is to ask for a team of volunteers to survey the woodland to see what's there and to talk to all the local people. We can present this information to the Local Council to help them make the best decision for this community. I'll close the meeting by showing you a short film that explains why we stand up for trees at the Woodland Trust. Watch clip - <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

Step 6: Debate should we help or not.

Task 1 - Pause the story - Chn to discuss with LP and then decide which side of the room to choose – help or not? Ask chn to persuade each other to their point of view. If we wanted to help what do you think needs to be done? It occurs to me that we've been involved in sorting out problems and

helping people decide what's best before. I wonder if we could investigate for the Woodland Trust and find a solution? Isn't it true that families with children need houses to live in? Would it be right to stop them building here?

Task 2 – visit the woodland and take some photos of how local people enjoy the space. In small groups children to depict the image as a photograph. Other groups then look at each other's and make picture come alive to explain activity and feelings of those depicted.

End of chapter.

Step 7: Forming Expert Teams

Invite the chn back into our story. What did we decide? After the meeting I emailed the Woodland Trust Regional Co-Ordinator and said that we were interested in helping and asked what was needed. Produce email from the Co-Ordinator.

Task 1 – raise awareness by writing a piece for the local paper. Children to write a newspaper report to describe the facts to the local paper. (Big Write).

Week 2/3

Task 2 – form teams – Teacher in role – Woodland Trust Regional Co-ordinator visits – she has read the newspaper reports we prepared and needs to ask us to survey the woodland. She has met with the council and they are prepared to discuss with us but need to have evidence of impact if woodland chopped down. She would like to publish a booklet of all the plants in Bluebell Woods. She gives us a basic map. She leaves.

Team discusses how we will survey woods. What jobs will need to be done. Form teams – e.g. photographers, plant identifiers, specimen collectors, safety, note taker, map maker. Make a list of equipment needed. Possibly have one person in each team doing each role?? Pack up and leave for woodland.

Step 8 – Survey the Woodland

Task 1 - Area outside set up with images of common woodland plants plus a rare protected orchid (Science and Geography). Chn to work in their teams to find images, record locations of plants on map, take photos (use class cameras if possible IT skills) and collect specimens. If possible to be outside and include real plants in our survey.

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Task 2 - Once survey completed chn return to our HQ to research facts about each plant (English and Computing). Use information texts, internet and books to record facts on two plants they found. Make notes.

Task 3 – Write a fact page about one plant. Illustrate with pictures and diagrams. (English – Big Write)

Week 4

Step 9 – Interview other stakeholders

Hazel (Woodland Trust) comes to collect our plant book and is pleased. Discuss what else we can do to get the council to listen. Asks us to find out how local people feel about the loss of Bluebell Wood. Gives us a list of local people to contact.

Hot seat adults in role as a variety of local people – chair of the art club, local headteacher, resident of the care home, young parent who needs to buy a house, local dog walker, child who lives nearby. Phone call from Hazel – she has been looking at our plant guide and talked to plant experts about the orchid. Seems somehow that it is a Lady`s Slipper. There is only one wild plant known in the UK. Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/ladys-slipper-orchid-in-england> What does this mean for the house building? What about the family who need a home? Can the houses go somewhere else? Look at a local map (fake one) for possible sites.

I wonder how we can share all this information with the council? Discuss and let the children plan.

(posters, powerpoints)

Big Writing (assessed piece?)– report to Council stating evidence why Bluebell Wood should not be knocked down.

Step 10 – Plan for meeting with council. Form teams to prepare – posters, banners, leaflets, petition, photos of Bluebell Wood, PowerPoint presentation, speeches, letters, newspaper articles, book the hall and invite the Local Planning Officer.

Step 11- Present evidence to the Planning Officer and persuade them to halt the development. If necessary close Mantle with visit from Hazel to say well done the woodland is saved.