

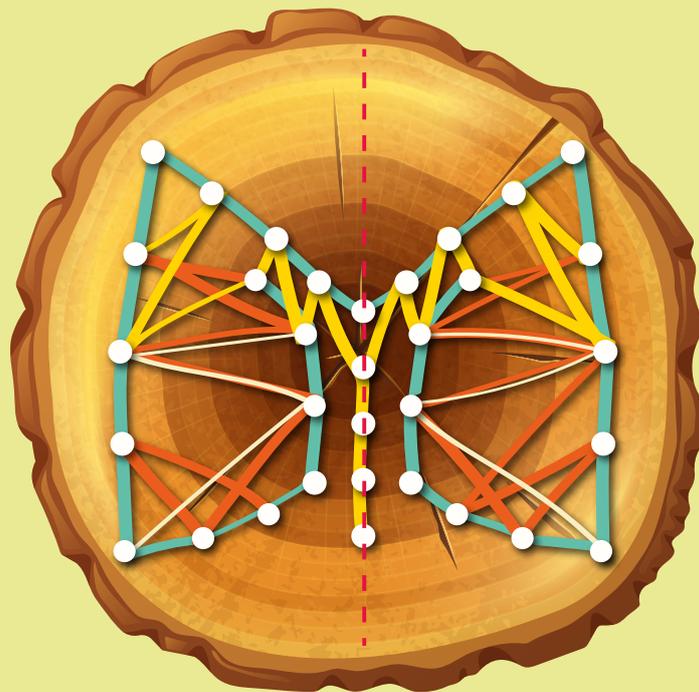
6. Geometric minibeasts and plant patterns

Hammer home habitats with this creative activity using nails and wool.

Activity description:

Not only is this activity great for practising dexterity and developing tool-use skills, but it can be used as a creative way to review and reinforce learning by using it as a follow up to a minibeast hunt. The minibeast hunt could take place within your school grounds and/or, ideally at one of our gateway chalk downs sites.

The children can take inspiration from their finds to design and create geometric shapes based on the plants and minibeasts they have seen. Use a pencil, and ruler if required, to mark out the outline of the plant or minibeast. Demonstrate how to carefully hammer in nails to wooden discs and how to wrap the wool around the nails to make shapes and patterns. This activity can be adapted to suit the subject area, key stage and developmental requirements. For example, if concentrating on the maths curriculum, measuring and marking out the shapes and the distance between nails, will only add to the challenge! Making the task a collaborative commitment will encourage the children to co-ordinate their actions and hopefully develop communication skills and a joint sense of achievement.



This practical activity encourages the children to investigate:

Grasses and wildflowers

Ask them some of the following questions:

- What colour and shape are the flowers?
- How many petals do the flowers have?
- What shape and size are the leaves? Are they oval, diamond shaped, toothed or broad?
- Do the leaves have rounded or pointed edges?
- Are the leaves hairy, rough or smooth?
- What is the stem of the plant like? Is it round or angular?

Minibeasts

- Does the minibeast have wings?
- How many legs do they have? No legs? 4, 6, 8 or more legs?
- How many body parts do they have? 1, 2 or 3 main parts?
- Does the creature have a shell?
- Is the minibeast symmetrical?
- Is the minibeast/animal an insect? To be an insect it should have 6 legs, 3 body parts and wings.
- What colour/s is the minibeast?

Equipment

- Flexible string or wool
- A pot of nails (approx 25mm)
- Stubby hammer with a claw
- Marker pen/pencil
- Ruler or measuring tape
- Wooden board (soft wood is easier to hammer into).
- Wildflower shapes worksheet
- Field Studies Council Wildlife Pack 01: Garden Safari guides
- Field Studies Council 'Describing flowers' Identification guide
- Field Studies Council Grasses identification guide
- Field Studies Council Grassland plants 2 (chalk and limestone)



Why not begin this activity using our wildflower shapes worksheet?



Curriculum links:

KS1 Science

Plants -

Identify and name a variety of common wild plants.
Identify and describe the basic structure of a variety of common flowering plants.

Living things and their habitats -

Identify and name a variety of living plants and animals in their habitats, including microhabitats.

KS2 Science

Working scientifically -

Gathering, recording, classifying and presenting data in a variety of ways to help in answering questions.

Living things and their habitats -

Identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment.

Give reasons for classifying plants and animals based on specific characteristics.

KS1 Maths

Geometry

Identify and describe the properties of 3-D shapes, including the number of edges, vertices and faces.

Measurement -

Measure and begin to record lengths and heights.

Choose and use appropriate standard units to estimate and measure length/height in any direction (m/cm) to the nearest appropriate unit.

KS2 Maths

Geometry - properties of shapes

Draw 2-D and make 3-D shapes using modelling materials.

Complete a simple symmetric figure with respect to a specific line of symmetry.

KS1 Art and design

Use drawing, painting and sculpture to develop and share ideas, experiences and imagination.

KS1 Design and technology

Make -

Select from and use a range of tools and equipment to perform practical tasks

KS2 Design and technology

Design -

Generate, develop, model and communicate their ideas through discussion and pattern-pieces.

KS1 English

Spoken language, reading, writing, spelling and vocabulary.

Extension Activities:

Ask the children to identify lines of symmetry in their classmate's geometric creations.

Ask the children to describe the key features of their plant or minibeast creation.

Can they describe how these features ensure the plants or minibeasts are suited to live in their habitat?