

# **Wonderful Woodlands**

**An Educational  
Resource Pack for  
Teachers  
Key Stages 1 and 2**

# Wonderful Woodlands Introduction

This pack is designed to teach children more about woodlands and to support teachers when delivering lessons in this outdoor environment. A number of woodland-based activities are suggested, looking at various aspects of the woodland world. These are set within the wider context of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A sample risk assessment and useful websites to further support outdoor learning are also included.

The High Weald is an ideal place to learn about woodlands. Trees and woodland are a particularly distinctive feature of the High Weald landscape - with woodland, much of which is classified as ancient, covering over a third of this nationally important landscape.

Sharing woods with children can help them to better understand their local environment. In addition, current guidance is that, "every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances" (Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, 2006).

In the woods, children can experience, first hand, woodland habitats, creatures, plants and archaeological features. By learning more about the history of the High Weald's woodlands they can discover how woods have been important to people for generations, for example, as Norman hunting forests, the fuel for the Roman and Tudor iron industry or as a source of food for medieval pigs!

For further information about woodlands in the High Weald or support in developing these activities with your class, please contact: [info@highweald.org](mailto:info@highweald.org).

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## Wonderful Woodlands Historical Context

The woods of the High Weald were relatively slow to be cleared because they were a valuable resource: yielding timber for building; fuel for heating and charcoal for iron smelting as well as animal feed - acorns and beech mast (nuts from beech trees) for pigs. Although heavily exploited, woods in the High Weald were rarely destroyed and the High Weald remained relatively uncultivated. At Domesday (1086) it was the most densely wooded area remaining in England.

### **A valuable resource**

Even when agricultural clearance did begin in the High Weald, much of the woodland was retained. Field boundaries were formed by clearing spaces within woodland, leaving strips of the original woodland between the fields. The many woods on steep-sided valleys and gills were impossible to clear and farm. The remaining woodland continued to provide valuable resources, particularly for the iron industry.

### **Over 400 years old**

Much of today's High Weald woodland has probably never been cleared. Today, over 70% of the High Weald's woodland is classed as ancient - having been continually wooded since at least 1600AD (nationally, only about 19% of woodland is ancient). As they have existed for hundreds of years, ancient woodlands are important habitats for certain woodland plants that can only colonise very slowly. Ancient woodlands also contain a wealth of archaeological features - for example the remains of iron workings.

### **Home to rare species**

High Weald woodlands were managed for centuries by skilled workers, using a rotational coppice system. This ensured that a renewable supply of wood was always available - especially for charcoal and building materials. Traditional coppicing is an important woodland management technique, creating a unique habitat that has vital biodiversity benefits. Many British flowering plants, mammals and insects thrive under this rotational system - often the rarer species are now only found in working coppice.

Discover more about the High Weald's woodlands at [www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org)

## Wonderful Woodlands Where to go & What to take?

You may already be aware of an accessible, safe and local wood that you can explore with your pupils. If you are trying to find a site to visit, remember that many woods are private and permission must be sought from the landowner before entering.

However, a number of woods *are* open to the public, look at:

[www.visitwoods.org.uk](http://www.visitwoods.org.uk) to find one near you. There are also details of facilities and features present at each woodland site.

**TIP:** If you are a confident web user and would like to discover more about the types of woodland in your area go to [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk). Type in your postcode and view 'habitat inventories' – particularly useful for identifying which woods are ancient.

When a suitable site has been found, a date for a visit booked and you know the activities you wish to do with the children, there are a few final things to check on the day...

**Do you have?**

- Hi-vis vests – 1 for each adult
- A selection of activities and relevant resources required
- Spare clipboards, paper & pencils for spontaneous drawings & observations
- Digital cameras with **CHARGED** batteries
- Signed risk assessment
- Parent consent forms
- Mobile phone + relevant contact numbers
- First aider + kit
- Fully equipped children e.g. lunch/snack, suitable footwear, coat/sun tan lotion etc.

## Wonderful Woodlands National Curriculum Links

For the activities suggested in this pack, the links to the National Curriculum (Curriculum 2000) are listed below. Please note that these links are not exhaustive and many of the activities suggested can be adapted to suit older or younger children as required. Once you begin to spend time in the woods you will probably start to create your own activities and investigations with the children. Subsequently, additional curriculum content can be covered.

### Key Stage 1

Activities	National Curriculum Links	
Find Your Tree	Ma 3, 1a, 3a Geo 1ab, 7	Sc1, 2bef Sc2, 1c, 5, Sc3 1a
Mirror Walk	Sc1, 2bef Sc2, 1c, 5	Sc3 1a Geo 1ac, 3ac, 4a, 7
Leaf Sizes	Ma 2, 1 Ma3, 4ac Geo 1ab, 2b, 7	Sc1, 2befh Sc2, 1c, 3b, 4b, 5 Sc3, 1abc
Tree Hugging	Sc2, 1c, 2bef, 5 Sc3, 1ac Geo 1ab, 7	
Natural Mapping	Ma3, 2c, 3a, Geo 1, 2, 3b, 7	Sc1, 2bef Sc2, 5
Minibeast Sculptures	Ma3, 2c Sc1, 2bef Sc2, 1c, 4b, 5	Geo 2b, 7 Art 1a
Woodland Photo	Sc1, 2bef Sc2, 5 ICT 1a	Geo 1b, d, 2b, 7 Art 1a
Seasonal Study	Ma2, 1, 5 Ma3, 1b, 4ac Sc1, 1, 2 Sc2, 1ac, 2g, 4b, 5 Sc3, 1c Sc4 3c	En1, 2abc, 3 ICT 1a, 5bc Geo 1, 2ab, 3, 4, 5, 7 Art 1a, 5a Music 4a PE 4a

## Wonderful Woodlands National Curriculum Links

### Key Stage 2

Activities	National Curriculum Links	
How Old?	Ma2, 1, 2i, 3k, 4ac Ma3 1a, 4ab Ma4, 1 Geo 1abc, 2bdg, 3e, 4b, 5, 6a, 7	Sc 2, 1bc, 4bc, 5ab En 1, 2b ICT 1, 3a, 5ab PE 11
Mirror Walk	Sc 2, 1bc, 5ab Geo 1a, 2b, 3ad, 5, 6a, 7 PE 11a	
Leaf Sizes	Ma2, 1a, 4a Ma3, 4e Ma4, 2df PE 11	Sc 2, 1bc, 3b, 4bc, 5ab ICT 1, 3a, 5ab Geo 1abc, 2b, 3a, 4b, 5, 6a, 7
Tree Hugging	Sc 2, 1bc, 5ab Geo 1ae, 3a, 5, 6a, 7 PE 11ab	
Natural Mapping	Ma3, 2d ICT 1ac, 3a PE 11	Geo 1abce, 2abede, 3abedg, 5, 6a, 7
Build A Tree	En1, 4ab Sc 2, 1bc, 3bc, 5ab	PE 11ac Geo 5, 6a, 7
Fantastic Food Chains	Sc 2, 1bc, 4bc, 5abede Geo 1a, 2b, 5, 6a, 7 PE 11a	
Minibeast Sculptures	Sc 2, 1bc, 4bc, 5abc Geo 5, 6a, 7 PE 11ac	
Seasonal Study	En1, 2b Ma2, 1, 4a Ma3, 1a Ma4, 1, 2a Geo 1, 2abf, 3, 4, 5, 6a, 7 PE 11	Sc1, 2 Sc 2, 1bc, 5abc Sc4, 4d ICT 1, 2a, 3a, 5ab Art 1, 5a Music 3a, 4a

## Wonderful Woodlands Who Can Help?

High Weald AONB

[www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org)

Discover more about this unique landscape, download additional education resources or contact us for further information and support.

Woodland Trust

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

Find your local woodland trust site, discover more about woodlands and download numerous free resources and activities for having fun in the woods.

Forestry Commission

[www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6xdck4](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6xdck4)

Resources for students and teachers.

Tree Council

[www.treecouncil.org.uk/](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/)

Campaigns and events to support and get involved in.

Royal Forestry Society

[www.rfs.org.uk/learning/woodland-discovery](http://www.rfs.org.uk/learning/woodland-discovery)

A 'virtual' woodland to explore as well as further activities to undertake when outside, plus National Curriculum guidance.

Learning Outside the Classroom

[www.lotc.org.uk/Out-and-about-guidance/Introduction](http://www.lotc.org.uk/Out-and-about-guidance/Introduction)

For support in developing more outdoor learning opportunities, including writing a policy for learning outside the classroom.



# Risk Assessment

Remember the outdoor environment is subject to change and seasonal differences must be considered. Always check the site for new risks before venturing out with a group of children. Blank spaces have been left at the end of the document for you to add site specific risks, individual children etc.

## Risk Assessment for Woodland Activities

Name of Assessor: Location:	Date of activity: Date of R.A./Site visit:	Other information: e.g. No. of children taking part
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Group Name/Class	
Teacher/Contact	
Leader of activities	
Other Helpers	
Group size	___ children + ___ adults
Age of young people	
Ratios	1 adult : 8 children
First Aiders	

A copy of the risk assessment will have been read by all staff as well as the teachers involved, this will ensure that all adults are able to supervise children effectively.

Hazard	Risk	Who might be harmed	Likelihood of risk taking into account the proposed actions	Proposed action
Uneven ground/tree roots	Slips, trip and falls	Pupils and Staff	Low	Ensure all participants are wearing suitable footwear, sturdy boots or Wellingtons. Warn participants of hazard at start and throughout activity.
Moving vehicles	Collision with car or motorbike on private and public roads	Pupils and Staff	Low	Ensure adequate supervisors are present for number of children. Walk (no running) in single file in areas where vehicles are likely to be present and ensure children stick close to edge of road/on grassy verges. Adults will wear hi-vis vests and walk on the outside of the children whilst walking along roads. Warn all participants of risks throughout activity.

Over-hanging or falling branches or trees	Injury to eyes and face from whips or crushing injuries from larger branches / trees	Pupils and Staff	Low	Check route for hazardous trees before the event and avoid. Contact County Public Rights Of Way (PROW) team to report dangerous trees on route Cancel activity if it is windy. Warn participants of small branches flicking behind them, look out for each other.
Brambles and nettles	Cuts, thorns, and allergic reactions	Pupils and Staff	Low	Identify hazardous plants to participants and warn of potential risks. Warn participants of brambles flicking behind them or catching clothes, look out for each other. Long trousers to be recommended.
Livestock and other animals	Scared and intimidated	Pupils and Staff	Low	Dogs encountered may be on leads but warn participants of possibility that they might not. Warn group to be quiet when walking through fields with livestock and not to approach them. Sheep and cattle in fields should be used to walkers and are extremely unlikely to pose any threat to the group. Ensure adequate supervisors are present for number of children.
Barbed Wire Fences	Cuts, scratches	Pupils and Staff	Low	Warn participants not to touch barbed wire fence.
Stiles and steps	Trips, bruises	Pupils and Staff	Low	Warn participants that they should go over the stile and up/down steps one at a time, no rushing or pushing.
Litter and rubbish	Trips, cuts	Pupils and Staff	Low	Warn participants of risks, ask them to not touch or move any litter unless equipped with gloves and litter picker
Rivers, streams and ponds	Slippery banks, drowning.	Pupils and Staff	Low	Warn participants of risks, instruct to stay away from waters edge and to be careful when on bridges crossing bodies of water – use appropriate handrails etc.
Tetanus and Leptospirosis (weils disease)	Contracting illness	Pupils and Staff	Low	Warn participants of risk of contamination from animal faeces and soils before and during activity. Handwipes/antibacterial gel available before eating snacks Wash hands on return to school
Issues relating to child protection	Abuse Alleged abuse	Pupils and Staff	Low	Ensure that pupils are never left on their own with an adult and do not wander off on their own Follow school policy and reporting procedures if the situation arises

Unacceptable behaviour from pupils	Damage to property, harm to self or others	Pupils and Staff	Low	Ensure pupil to adult ratios are adequate and any children with special behavioural needs have one to one supervision. School will act within the school behaviour strategy in the event of an incident. Involve pupils in the risk assessment before and during the visit.
Weather Rain, wind, sun	Hypothermia, sunstroke	Pupils and Staff	Low	All children will have received a letter from the school asking them to be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions. A decision will be made on the day to change the contents of the trip or cancel if the weather conditions are too severe e.g. high winds or torrential rain.

Participants will:

Have a talk on health and safety prior to departure

Leave the school on foot following a specified route along public footpaths

Take part in various activities and discussions along the route

There will be an opportunity for a break for a snack/lunch

- All participants are advised to wear old / suitable clothing and *comfortable* shoes for the long walk e.g. Wellingtons or walking boots – preferably **no trainers** as their feet will get wet in long grass and mud.
- Indemnity forms for all children are to be completed.
- There will be no hand washing facilities until returning to school, so participants must be advised not to put hands in mouths and to use the antibacterial gel/wipes, particularly before eating.
- If there are no toilet facilities on route, children should go before they leave school. Toilet roll carried by adults as precaution.
- First Aiders at hand, including First Aid Kit and mobile phone for emergency contact.
- OS map to be carried for grid references.

# Wonderful Woodlands

## Find Your Tree - Activity Card 1

**Equipment:** Felt tip pens, wet wipes.

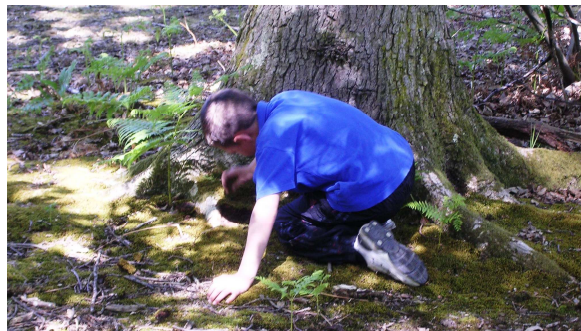
**Location:** Woodland

**Audience:** KS1

**Time:** 10 minutes

### An exploratory introduction to woodlands

**Activity description:** Explain to the children that every person has their own tree when they visit the woods. They are going to discover their own special tree by using patterns on their hands that are unique to them. With a felt tip pen, help the children draw along the main lines of the palm of one hand so that they can see the pattern clearly. Only draw the main lines to keep the pattern as simple as possible. Once each child has their pattern drawn, send them to find a tree that has the same pattern. They will need to look very carefully, looking in branches, in the bark, or in the leaves. When they have found their tree, they need to sit underneath it and enjoy investigating any more patterns or interesting features that the tree may have.



**High Weald Teaching Point:** High Weald woodlands have been managed for years by skilled workers. Although heavily exploited (largely to fuel the Roman and Tudor iron industry), they were rarely destroyed - being managed by coppicing on a rotational basis. This ensured that a *renewable* supply of wood was always available, especially for fuel and building materials.

Activity inspired by Gordon MacLellan, Talking to the Earth

## Wonderful Woodlands How Old? - Activity Card 2

**Equipment:** Tape measure, chalk, pencil, paper, calculator, leaf identification sheet e.g. [www.naturedetectives.org.uk/download/id\\_leaves.htm](http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/download/id_leaves.htm)

**Location:** Near some large trees

**Audience:** KS2

**Time:** 1 hour

### Using numeracy skills to learn about tree growth

**Activity Description:** Children are put into pairs and choose a tree to measure. Get them to estimate the age of the tree. On the tree trunk, measure from the ground up to a height of 1.5m\*. Mark with chalk. Wrap the tape measure around the tree at this height, making sure it is horizontal. Measure and record the circumference. Divide the circumference by the average annual growth rate to calculate its age. How accurate were the children estimates?

*\* recommended height by the forestry industry*

Trees grow at different rates depending on the species and location. Within a woodland setting **the average growth rate is 1.5cm a year**. However, for greater accuracy the following growth rates can be used:

Tree	Average annual growth rate (cm)
Holly & Yew	1.25
Hazel, Ash, Elm, Beech	2.5
Pine & Spruce	3.13
Oak	1.88
Sycamore	2.75

Children could collate their information to do further calculations and make comparisons. For example, can they calculate the difference between the real age and their estimate? Or how big the trunk of their tree will be in 1, 5 or 10 years time? Data collected can be used for creating visual graphs and bar charts or posing and answering further questions.

**High Weald Teaching Point:** One of the unique characteristics of the High Weald is its abundance of ancient woodland. This means woodland has existed on the same site since 1600AD. Point out to the children that this doesn't mean all trees are 400 years old! Woodlands, like all of the High Weald, are continually changing.

Activity adapted from Teaching with Trees, Oldham Council and Pennine Edge Forest

## Wonderful Woodlands Mirror Walk - Activity Card 3

**Equipment:** Mirrors – 1 for each child

**Location:** Along a woodland path

**Audience:** KS1 & 2

**Time:** 30 minutes

### **A good introduction to woodland, encouraging observation at different layers**

**Activity Description:** Choose a path with no exposed roots or low overhanging branches. Children stand in a line, about an arms length from the person in front. They hold a mirror just above their nose and under their eyes. Encourage the children, whilst warning of any hazards, to walk very slowly behind each other.

The children must look at their mirrors and describe what they can see. Children can discover where the 'canopy' is and what it looks like – discuss if it will look like this all year round. Mirrors can then be used upside down to explore the ground layer in further detail.

Younger children could imagine that they are a woodland animal. As they walk along, they can use their mirror to look for somewhere to live and something to eat. Older children can investigate different features of woodland, estimating the percentage of canopy cover or comparing vegetation on the ground in lighter/ darker parts of the woods.

At the end of the walk, mirrors can be placed on the ground to reflect a woodland scene and a natural frame created around the mirror using objects found on the woodland floor.

**High Weald Teaching Point:** The High Weald is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Discuss with the children what they think is beautiful. Look around where you are walking or sitting – can they understand why the High Weald has been given this special title?

## Wonderful Woodlands

### Leaf Sizes - Activity Card 4

**Equipment:** Squared paper (1 sheet per child), pencils, leaf identification sheet e.g. [www.naturedetectives.org.uk/download/id\\_leaves](http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/download/id_leaves).

**Location:** In the woods where there are lots of fallen leaves

**Audience:** KS 1 & 2

**Time:** 45 minutes

### An activity that combines numeracy skills and leaf identification

**Activity Description:** Ask the children to collect a selection of different leaves. Leaves should be ones that have already fallen to the ground. Once collected, spend time identifying them and see which is the most common or if anyone has found something unusual. Children then place each leaf onto squared paper and draw around it. They can then measure the area of the leaf by counting the number of squares inside the outline. Part squares should be counted as half, or as nothing if they are very small (an opportunity for discussing rounding!). For KS1 children it may be more suitable for them to just collect the leaves and carry out simple sorting or identification activities.

**Extension:** You may wish to extend this task to include work on averages. For example, if children have collected 3 leaves each, they could add up their respective areas and divide the total by 3, to find the mean. Alternatively, this could be done by species type, e.g. calculating the average size of all oak leaves found.

As part of this activity, you are likely to find leaves from common trees in Britain such as oak, ash, hawthorn and birch. However, if you are completing this task in ancient woodland, look out for hornbeam, hazel and sweet chestnut leaves too.

**High Weald Teaching Point:** In the woods, see if there are any signs of 'coppicing' - a traditional woodland management technique. Coppicing is when trees are cut periodically to ground level and are left to re-grow from the cut stumps, known as stools, often producing multiple stems. The word coppice is derived from the French 'couper', meaning to cut. Coppicing trees allows more light to the woodland floor, as the trees are smaller or have been taken away. Increased light is very beneficial for plants. Ground flora in ancient coppiced woodland, e.g. bluebells, often flowers before the leaves on the trees emerge in spring. In addition, seeds which have lain dormant - sometimes for many years - germinate in response to this additional light.

Activity adapted from The Outdoor Classroom, Scholastic

## Wonderful Woodlands Tree Hugging - Activity Card 5

**Equipment:** Blindfolds

**Location:** Woodland

**Audience:** KS1 & 2

**Time:** 10-15minutes

### **An activity that uses senses and promotes close observation**

**Activity Description:** Children are put into pairs. One child is blindfolded and the other child leads them to a nearby tree. The blindfolded child needs to feel the tree to gauge texture, patterns etc. Then they stretch up to see if they can reach any branches and finally hug the trunk to gain an understanding of its girth (circumference).

Once the child thinks they know their tree, they are led back to the starting point via a different route, so they cannot memorise their way. The blindfold is then removed and the child attempts to find their tree. Discuss what makes them so sure? What clues are they using?

The child's partner can then reveal if they are correct. Swap roles and repeat.



**High Weald Teaching Point:** Medieval farmers brought their herds of pigs onto the High Weald to fatten them up for winter. The pigs would feast on acorns. Discuss where acorns come from and see if there are any oak trees in the woodland you are in.

Activity adapted from Teaching with Trees, Oldham Council and Pennine Edge Forest



## Wonderful Woodlands Natural Mapping – Activity Card 6

**Equipment:** None

**Location:** A woodland clearing, room enough for the children to work on the ground

**Audience:** KS1 & 2

**Time:** 30 minutes

### Using woodland materials to enhance map skills

**Activity Description:** Using materials found on the woodland floor – sticks, leaves etc. ask children to create a map, on the ground, of the route travelled so far. Encourage creativity as they ‘draw’ roads crossed, buildings passed etc. For some children you could encourage them to use and develop a key e.g. oak leaf = building. The children should include as much detail as possible, which is a good way of seeing how observant the children have been on route!

As they map their journey, ask the children to consider direction. Can they work out which way is North and create an arrow on their map to show this?

For extension work, children could be given copies of a map, showing their route *from* this point – can they translate this information into a pictorial map on the ground?

**High Weald Teaching Point:** Many different types of maps are used to examine how areas have changed over time. If you were to compare a tithe map (c.1800) of the High Weald to a modern aerial photograph, you might be surprised to see that many landscape features are the same today. For example, an abundance of small irregular fields and patches of ancient woodland, remnants of when the forests were first cleared by hand. To discover more about maps go to: [www.highweald.org/look-after/property-management/historical-research.html](http://www.highweald.org/look-after/property-management/historical-research.html)



## Wonderful Woodlands

### Build a Tree - Activity Card 7 (Part 1 of 2)

**Equipment:** 15 or more children

**Location:** An open space, preferably in view of trees

**Audience:** KS2

**Time:** 30 minutes

#### A great way of learning how a tree works

**Activity Description:** Children act out the various parts of a tree. The leader arranges the children, explains each part (*in italics*) and then issues a 'call' for the children to respond. Start with everyone in a circle facing inwards. At appropriate times, children step forward and take their place.

**Heartwood** – 2 tall children stand back to back in the centre of the circle.

*You are the inner core and strength of the tree, you hold the trunk and branches high above the ground for the leaves to get the sun. The heartwood has been around a long time, so long that it's dead; but it's well preserved by resin.*

Leader Call: **Heartwood?** Child Response: **Standing tall and strong.**

**Taproot** – Up to 4 children sit at the base of the heartwood facing out.

*You are a very long root called a taproot. You reach 10 metres into the earth, are an anchor during storms and find water. Some trees don't have taproots but this one does!*

Call: **Taproot?** Response: **Holding fast!**

**Lateral Roots** – 2-4 children lie on backs with feet to the taproot and bodies extending away.

*You are the lateral roots, spread out like underground branches to keep the tree standing firm. You are covered with miles of tiny root hairs which grow towards water and suck it up. You have rough tips which help you push through hard soils.*

Call: **Lateral roots let's slurp!** Response: **Loud slurping noises**

**Sapwood** – 4-6 children form a circle around the heartwood facing inwards and hold hands - careful of the roots!

*You are sapwood and are the world's most efficient pump. You take hundreds of litres of water a day from the roots to the highest branches. The water travels at 100mph!*

Call: **Sapwood, bring up the water** Response: **Whheeee!** (Whilst raising arms in the air)

## Wonderful Woodlands Build a Tree - Activity Card 7 (Part 2 of 2)

**Cambium** - Group of children form circle around sapwood, facing inwards.

*Now we have the growing part of the tree, the cambium, which adds a new layer each year. We can see this when we count the rings of a tree.*

Call: **Cambium, grow!** Response: **Stretch up to the sky and make appropriate 'growing' noises!**

**Phloem and Leaves** - Group of children forms another circle around cambium, facing inwards. They are the phloem but their hands are the leaves.

*Behind the cambium we have the phloem that carries food made by the leaves and shares it with the rest of the tree. The leaves absorb energy from the sun to make food.*

Call: **Leaves let's make food** Response: **Stretch up arms and wave hands**

Call: **Phloem, bring the food down** Response: **Whoo!** (Bend knees and lower body and arms to the ground)

**Bark** - the rest of the group make a final circle facing out with arms linked, fists close to the chest.

*You are the bark and you protect the tree from...? (Hot/cold weather, fire, insects)*

Call: **Get tough Bark!** Response: **Make nasty snarling noises!**

Perhaps teacher or another child could try and break into the bark to see if they are doing a good job of protecting the inside of the tree.

**Repeat the sequence a couple of times. Give yourselves a round of applause and applaud the real trees for making it seem so effortless!**



**High Weald Teaching Point:** In heathy areas, trees are cleared and carefully managed to ensure that heathland plants, which are unique, continue to survive. Existence of the heathland is important for other wildlife too – did you know that 5000 types of invertebrate can be found on heathland?

Activity adapted from Joseph Cornell, Sharing Nature with Children II

## Wonderful Woodlands Fantastic Food Chains – Activity Card 8

**Equipment:** Lower section of this Activity Card (1 for each child), pencils

**Location:** A woodland clearing

**Audience:** KS2

**Time:** 30 minutes

### A way of understanding how woodlands support food chains

**Activity Description:** Prior to your outdoor work, spend time with the children explaining the concept of a food chain, i.e. a food chain is made up of living things that are linked because one is eaten by another. Share examples, e.g. plants are eaten by slugs and slugs are eaten by hedgehogs. Can the children think of their own examples? Highlight the fact that food chains almost always start with a plant. Explain that the children are going to explore the woods, searching for different plants and animals, and will think about how each one fits into a food chain. Using what they find, help the children to complete the blank food chains below. Ask, what would happen if part of the food chain disappeared and think about what might cause this to happen.

**High Weald Teaching Point:** The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers an area of 146,170 hectares (1,461 square kilometres), supporting a range of habitats and many different plants and animals - including rare and protected species. Whether in the extensive ancient woodland, the wildflower meadows, patches of heathland, irregular shaped fields, ponds or rivers, many plants and animals depend on these rich habitats to survive.

Activity adapted from Ashford Green Corridor Education Pack

### Fantastic Food Chains

Spend time exploring the outdoor area. Think about how different plants and animals fit into food chains.

Complete three food chains below:

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## Wonderful Woodlands Minibeast Sculptures – Activity Card 9

**Equipment:** Magnifying pots, plastic cutlery, paper, pencils, minibeast identification chart e.g. [www.naturedetectives.org.uk/download/hunt\\_minibeasts.htm](http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/download/hunt_minibeasts.htm)

**Location:** Woodland

**Audience:** KS1 & 2

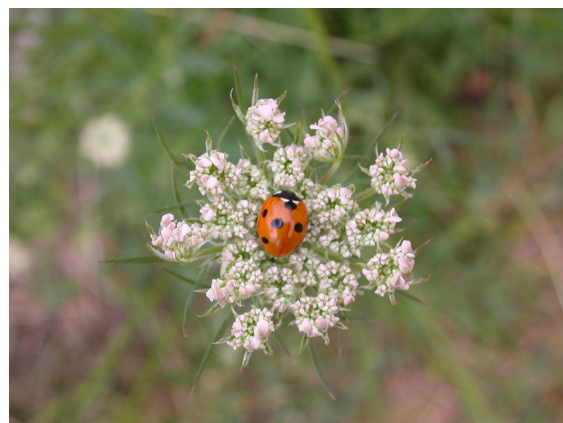
**Time:** 30 minutes

### A close and detailed look at minibeasts

**Activity Description:** Allow children to have a good rummage around the woodland floor, for example under leaves, logs, stones and inside bark crevices on trees, to see what minibeasts can be found. Allow lots of time for finding and examining them.

**Ask questions such as:**

- How would you describe your minibeast?
- What habitat was it found in?
- What does it eat?
- How many legs does it have?
- Are its legs long or short?
- How does it move?
- Can it fly?
- What shape is its body?
- How is it adapted to living in this habitat?



Encourage the children to take photos or draw the minibeasts that they have found.

In small groups, children choose a minibeast and create a sculpture from natural materials, taking note of the number of legs, body segments, antennae etc. Give it an imaginative name – then use a simple minibeast identification guide to determine its proper name.

Ensure minibeasts are safely released at the end of the activity.

**High Weald Teaching Point:** Almost a third of the High Weald is woodland and over 70% of this is classed as ‘ancient’ - having existed continuously since 1600AD. (Nationally, only about 19% of woodland is ancient). Ancient woods are important habitats for certain woodland plants that can only colonise very slowly. They also contain many archaeological features - for example the remains of iron workings. This is one of the characteristics that makes the High Weald a unique landscape.

## Wonderful Woodlands Woodland Photos – Activity Card 10

**Equipment:** Drawing materials, lower section of this Activity Card (1 for each child)

**Location:** Woodland

**Audience:** KS1

**Time:** 15 minutes

### An activity to help children look closely at the woodland environment

**Activity Description:** Explain to the children that they are going to take 'pictures with their memory' instead of a camera. Help them to use their forefinger and thumb from both of hands to create a rectangle (They'll have to turn one of their hands over!). This is their viewfinder to look through, like a camera. Encourage the children to use the viewfinder and look for something that interests them. It could be a close-up or distance shot. They can look down, underneath, or up. Once they have decided on a picture they then draw their 'photo' in as much detail as possible below.



Once everyone has completed their drawings they could swap pictures with each other and see if they can identify where the woodland photo was taken.

Activity adapted from Forestry Commission

**What can you see?**

**Draw what you remember from taking a picture with your hands!**

## Wonderful Woodlands Seasonal Study

We recommend that your visits to the woods are as frequent as possible and occur in different seasons. Although it may be more attractive to visit in summer, there are still plenty of reasons to explore the woods in January! The children will learn a great deal from seeing how the woods change as the seasons come round. Repeating the same tasks e.g. Activity cards 3 and 10 at various times of year will produce very different results and open up interesting points for discussion. Creating a seasonal display in your classroom made up of things collected or photos taken in the different seasons is a simple, but effective, way to remind the children how much the woodland can change.

In addition, why not set up a year-round seasonal investigation? Ask the children to complete the appropriate recording sheet and carry out the following tasks each time you visit e.g. in October, January, April and July.

**Recording Sheets:** For KS1 children, they can draw or write what colours they can see, sounds they can hear, feelings they have and what the ground feels/looks like (Page 24). They can also draw or write about any changes noticed from the last visit if appropriate. KS2 children need to answer the questions and draw or write relevant observations (Page 25). The 'Are the Trees Changing?' sheet (Page 26) is provided for children to illustrate what the trees look like in various seasons.

**Tasks** – When carrying out your seasonal study, try and visit at about the same time e.g. a Tuesday at 10am, to make it as fair a comparison as possible!

- Take a selection of photographs, at the same points, each time you visit.
- Collect and draw/photograph 10 interesting objects you find on the woodland floor
- Make a tally of the number of other people that you see in the woods – use this information to create graphs once back in the classroom.
- Sit still for 10 minutes. Write down all of your observations, sketch the wildlife you see, draw a picture of where you are sitting.
- Listen. Why not take sound recorders and record what you can hear. Challenge the children to identify all the sounds.
- On your first seasonal visit identify a sapling or a bush to 'adopt'. Measure its height and width, estimate leaf coverage % and note down any interesting features. Begin to plot this data in graphs and charts, adding to it each season. The children may even wish to predict measurements for the next seasonal visit and compare real findings with their estimates. You could also carry out a season specific data collection task e.g. finding the biggest puddle, or measuring the height of a bluebell.

For further information and to take part in a seasonal survey of woodlands, see [www.naturescalendar.org.uk](http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk).

Name:  
Month of Visit:

Season:



# Wonderful Woodlands Seasonal Study - Recording Sheet (Key Stage 1)

## COLOURS



## FEELINGS



## SOUNDS



## STOMP, STOMP!



## CHANGES



Name:  
Month of Visit:

Season:



## Wonderful Woodlands Seasonal Study – Recording Sheet (Key Stage 2)

**In the woods today...**  
Draw or write your answers below

What **colours** can you see?

What can you hear?

What does it feel like?

What do you think the animals could eat?



How have the woods changed since your last visit? Why?



How do you think the woods will have changed next time you come? Why?



Stomp on the ground – what does it feel like?

## Wonderful Woodlands Seasonal Study - Are the Trees Changing?

In the boxes below, draw what the trees look like as you visit in each season.

<p><b>Autumn</b></p>	<p><b>Winter</b></p>
<p><b>Spring</b></p>	<p><b>Summer</b></p>