

The National Curriculum Outdoors – Five-minute Outdoor Activities

The National Curriculum Outdoors books were written to provide progression across all primary subjects, after research showed us that teachers found that linking outdoor activities to the National Curriculum was a key challenge and aspiration. However, there is also value in giving children short bursts out outdoor learning that refresh, stimulate and inspire learning inside the classroom.

Here are some suggestions for five-minute outdoor activities. How many more can you think of that would enliven a school day?

Yes or no

- Groups of children hold the edges of a sheet of fabric with two holes representing 'yes' and 'no'.
- The children (or an adult) can pose questions and the group must roll a ball slightly smaller than the holes, trying to get it to fall through the 'yes' or 'no' hole. Are all the children choosing the same answer? Can they argue their case?
- This is a great way to get children to consider different views and for you to assess their understanding of concepts. The children will also develop their co-ordination and teamwork skills. Also, it is useful to show children that some questions do not have a yes or no answer.

Physical arithmetic

- Each child is handed a numbered card from a set of playing cards.
- When the teacher (or one of the children) calls out a number, the children must form groups that make the total answer. For example, if the number nine is called, children with a one, six and two could join together.
- Once the children are in a group, they must explain the operations they used to arrive at the answer. Can they make sure that all children are included in groups?

Agile adjectives

- Give the children one minute to come up with adjectives inspired by the outdoors.
- Invite the children to tell their words to a partner, then swap partners and try to remember as many of their original partner's words as possible.
- Share all the adjectives as a class. Who can remember the most? Which is the most unusual? Can the children describe what the adjectives mean, or use the adjectives to make metaphors and similes? Can the children use any of these new adjectives in their writing back in the classroom?

Kindness is catching

- In a circle, invite the children to throw or roll a ball to another classmate and say something positive about that classmate or something kind that they have done. Encourage the children to make sure that everyone has a turn.
- Discuss as a class. What are the nicest things that they have heard? Are the children inspired to do something kind?

Interesting insights

- How many questions about their outdoor environment can children write in five minutes?
- Back in the classroom, share the questions and use them to practice inquiry skills, data management or stimulate creativity. How many questions were the same? Can the children make a bar chart of themes? How could the children find answers to the questions? Can the questions be answered using historical or scientific knowledge? Could the questions prompt the children to develop a mystery story?