



4 Outdoor learning on the beach

Introduction:

It has been recognised that many children now grow up without learning about the world through first hand experiences of the outdoors. HWDT offers outdoor learning on the beach and on *Silurian* and has found it to be very powerful and inspiring for all involved. As an endorsing partner of the [Real World Learning Partnership](#) HWDT supports their view that:

'Every child, regardless of their background, should have regular access to inspirational and challenging outdoor learning, where they can enjoy firsthand experience of their cultural heritage and natural environment, as part of a full and complete childhood'.

The benefits of outdoor or real world learning are well documented and include raising achievement, improving self esteem and enjoyment of learning, improving environmental awareness and connection, improved mental and physical health and developing new skills. These resources are designed to support teachers in delivering outdoor learning as part of the Biodiversity Eco-Schools topic.

Preparation and planning:

Whilst teachers will be following local authority and school guidelines for educational excursions including for example, child protection, staff to student ratios, emergency procedures, parental permissions, insurance, risk assessments and so on, HWDT can offer tips about beach environments and has exciting activity suggestions.

In addition to other planning remember to check the time of low water so you can plan your visit around this time to make best use of the beach. When checking out your venue, look for nesting birds close to the beach and avoid if present. Consider where you will set boundaries for the activities. Also it is worth being aware of beach litter as a potential hazard to include on a risk assessment and which can be included in initial briefings to children beforehand. When you carry out your risk assessment on the day of your visit consider weather, other members of the public, and tides. Shingle beaches will be home to little life as seaweeds cannot attach to the rolling pebbles there and animals can be crushed. However it may be rich in shells. Rock pools, rocky, sandy and muddy shores are more suitable environments to explore to find live creatures. Beach learning is a great opportunity to foster a sense of respect for the environment, so discuss leaving no trace and the seashore code during the outing.



Seashore code:

- If you think you might need help, take an adult with you
- Be careful... on rocks, as they can be slippery
 - ...on the shore at all times - check the tides and keep away from cliffs
- Stay out of rock pools - they are someone's home
- Think before you touch...be gentle
 - ...it might bite, sting or nip
 - ...don't keep it out of water for too long
 - ...put everything back where you found it
- Carefully lift and replace any rocks you may have moved - there are animals underneath which need them for shelter
- Watch out for birds, seals and otters so that you don't disturb them
- Leave anything that is firmly attached to the rocks where it is
- Don't take anything home with you - an empty shell will make a great new home for a hermit crab

4. Exploratory activities on the beach:

(a) Eye spy book - Paper resource which folds into a book. Use this resource with students to encourage an exploration of the beach.

(b) Seashore Rainbow - Print out these colour palette sheets and ask children to find all the colours in natural objects on the beach. A creative type of treasure hunt which will encourage exploration and close observation of the beach.

(c) Sea shell bingo - Fun activity to explore the seashells found on the beach. Can students get a row, line or even a full house?

(d) Scavenger hunt - Inspire students to use creativity and thinking skills whilst exploring and discovering.

(e) Rock pooling - Lead an exploration of rock pool communities.

There is also a document with teacher notes for these activities.