

The River of Life

Upper Key Stage 2

Summary

Using the environment of the River Thames pupils will develop their scientific skills by using their own observations, keys and labels to identify and classify a range of living things.

Pupils will also use their observations to help identify different animal and plant adaptations to suit their environment.

Pupils will work scientifically to survey the river birds, to discover which behaviours and species are the most and least common.

Workshop Contents

Education Centre (Museum Tutor Led)

- An introduction on the characteristics of living things, kingdoms, vertebrates, invertebrates and different phylum.
- A carousel of activities where pupils working in groups of four or five will do the following:-
 - a) classify a range of living things (plants, vertebrates and invertebrates) using keys and labels
 - b) identify different adaptations of animals suited to their environment

Outdoor Session (Museum Tutor led)

If you have previously booked a boat trip, it will replace this session

- A walk along the tow path where pupils will work individually to identify and record a variety of river birds and their behaviours.
- **Food Chain Game.** Each child is given a card with an image of a plant or animal. The pupils take on the identity of different members of various food chains, and they have to link up the other four or five members of their food chain, based on what they eat and what eats them. There is a competitive element to this activity.
- **Bird Beak Game.** *(Please note pumpkin seeds are used in this activity.)*
- Pupils will visit Cold Bath stream and discuss the national decline of Water Voles.

Galleries (Teacher led)

- The Museum provides challenge cards to reinforce the workshop activities and help the pupils to understand the danger environmental change can pose for some animals.
- Tasks can be completed individually, in pairs or in small groups.

Learning Outcomes

- Pupils will work scientifically using classification keys and labels to identify, name and group a range of living things (plants - flowering / non-flowering, animals - vertebrates/ invertebrates, different phylum).
- Pupils will use their observations and make their own decisions to identify different animal and plant adaptations to suit different environments.
- Pupils will work scientifically, and carry out a survey of the river birds on the Thames.

Equipment

Equipment provided by the Museum

- Clipboards

Equipment to be brought by the school

- Paper and pencils
- Waterproof clothing and shoes for the outdoor activity
- Photocopied bird recording sheets, both sides - 1 sheet per student

Follow-Up Ideas

Choose an example of an invertebrate and a vertebrate from a meadow or wood habitat. For both animals identify the following:

- a) What do they feed on and what feeds on them?
 - b) How do they move?
 - c) Where do they live/ type of habitat?
 - d) How do they breathe (lungs, gills, etc)?
 - e) Which senses do they use the most to tell them about their environment?
- Using quadrat throws investigate a habitat at school to establish which plants are the most popular and why (hedgerow, wooded area, marshy area).
 - Investigate the different types of invertebrates living in the school pond (March/ April is a good time to do this). Choose one of the invertebrates found and find out how it moves, breathes, and feeds.
 - Choose an animal which is now extinct (eg. ammonite) and find out if there is any fossil evidence which tells us what it ate, how it breathed, moved and what type of habitat it lived in.

Large print versions of this and all teachers' and pupils' materials are available. Please ask when booking.

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Ducking and Diving!!



Choose a common water bird, watch it carefully for a while and then record some information about it.

What colours are the feathers?

Write down three things the bird is doing.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

How big is your bird compared to a loaf of bread?

- 1) Smaller
- 2) Same size
- 3) Larger
- 4) Much larger

Is the bird alone, in pairs or with a group of birds?

Where is the bird?
