

Forest Activity Ideas

This activity is all about looking at forests and woodlands and understanding how they affect Animals, People and the Environment.

The finalised activity will specifically designed as a 'kick start' for groups who are just starting out with Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots and would like to try a bit of everything the programme has to offer. The activities are geared to using local forests/woodlands as a learning resource so that students can get out and about and interact with their local environment. Groups can try one, two, or all three of the main sections, and are also encouraged to extend the activity by comparing and contrasting their findings about their local environment with the experience of the Jane Goodall TACARE project in Tanzania.

The criteria is not just about how grand the students' efforts are, but how broad their thinking is from taking part in the activities, so no matter how large or small a school's resources are, every group will have a chance to show that through taking part they are becoming more conscientious members of society and truly encompassing the aspirations that Dr. Goodall has made the heart of Roots & Shoots.

Part 1 – People

Forest Jobs: What jobs/industries does a forest provide here in Europe? With the class, make a list of all the jobs that you can think of that depend on forests. A good way to do this is to think about all the things that are made from products of the forest (check out e.g. <http://www.borealforest.org/school/trees.htm>). Some responses might include:

- Timber (logging and processing)
- Paper (logging and processing)
- Farming (Fruits, animals that are kept in a forest, Christmas trees!)

Then try to think about some of the other less obvious uses for forests:

- Tourism (forest trails, high ropes courses!)
- Flood management
- Slope stabilisation

Things to do with this:

- Make a picture collage of different jobs;
- Choose a job and write either a short report on how that person uses forests or a "day in the life" story;
- Arrange a visit to see someone using the forest for their job;
- Arrange a school visit from people who use forests in their job;
- Imagine a world without trees - what would we use instead?

Take home message: Forests are important for PEOPLE - without forests our lives would be very different.

Part 2 – Animals and Plants

What kind of plants and animals do you find in a forest in Europe? What are the differences between old, natural forest and new, managed forest? <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/why-woods-matter/what-are-they/types/Pages/types.aspx>

Things to do with this:

- Go for a walk in a local forest/wood and count how many different tree types you can find. Take pictures/fallen leaves and see if you can identify the tree types (use e.g. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5g2kv3>). What sort of forest is it? (Coniferous/deciduous, managed/'natural', old/new)
- Do a biodiversity survey. Lots of great resources from Australia here: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/education/BiodiversityTeachersGuide.pdf> that can be adapted, especially lesson plan 7. Also some good ideas from the hedge survey here: <http://www.opalexplornature.org/BiodiversitySurvey>

Take home message: Forests are important for PLANTS AND ANIMALS. Older, more established forests have a greater biodiversity than newer forests.

Part 3 – Environment

How have forests and woodland changed over the years in Europe? Can you link the change in deforestation rates to changes in the way people live their lives (the industrial revolution, etc.). What impact does deforestation have on the wider world (e.g. climate change, more flooding, more landslides, etc.)

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deforestation>
- <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/deforestation.htm>
- http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/agriculture/environment/ev0007_en.htm
- <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/why-woods-matter/what-are-they/decline/Pages/decline.aspx>

Things to do with this:

Given its broad scope, this is more classroom based than the previous parts of the activity. E.g. you could:

- Draw a chart of how forests have declined over time. Annotate with events such as the industrial revolution, World Wars, etc. (some info for the US on this here: <http://www.globalchange.umich.edu/globalchange2/current/lectures/deforest/deforest.html>)
- Write a report of a reforestation programme and the positive impact this can have: http://www.naturefund.de/en/our_projects/already_saved/trees_planted/reforestation_in_europe.html, <http://blog.sustainablog.org/reforestation-projects/>, <http://www.hekluskogar.is/Skjol/Heklubackl%20enska2.pdf>, <http://www.forestsforwatersheds.org/reduce-stormwater/>

Take home message: Forests are important for the ENVIRONMENT. Deforestation does not just impact on local people, but can have regional and global consequences.

Additional work – TACARE

Carry out similar exercises for the area of Tanzania around Gombe. What are the similarities and differences to Europe/North America? How important is the forest for these people? What has happened to the forest over the past 60 years? How can people use the Tanzanian forest more sustainably? Use the TACARE resources to help in this:

- http://www.ehproject.org/phe/jgi-tanzania_final.html
- <http://janegoodallhopeforanimals.com/exclusive-content/section-5-healing-earth's-scars/taking-care-of-people-and-wildlife/tacare-take-care/>
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7Z_UftN4Yw
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jq2UHiyYwLo>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ha0YWjThq9U&feature=relmfu>