

Country Parks Educational Visits



Let our Educational Rangers release your imagination and provoke creativity in outdoor classrooms across the county.

The Essex County Council Educational Rangers deliver National Curriculum-linked outdoor learning activities at 10 Country Parks from the north to the south of the county, covering all aspects of geographical terrain and habitats. From the coastal areas of Mersea and Hadleigh through to the ancient woodlands and formal gardens of Danbury, Thorndon and Weald we can offer environments to inspire outdoor learning.

We have designed a range of Activity Days you can experience with your class or group, concentrating on introducing or reinforcing subject matter covered in the classroom. We hope there is something to suit everyone. However, if you want to discuss creating your own day please call us.

All Activity Days are full days. However, if you are looking for a half-day visit, maybe because you are bringing younger learners, please call us to discuss.

We can also offer follow-up sessions to your visit at your school. If you are interested you can discuss this with the Educational Ranger at your visit.

To book an Outdoor Educational Visit to one of our Country Parks:
Use the Activity Day Storyboards on the following pages to decide which Activity Day you want to experience with your class or group. **Note:** the majority of Activity Days can be adapted to suit the age of the learners attending, see the Activity Day Storyboards for information
Chose the country park you wish to visit. **Note:** some Activity Days are restricted to certain country parks that can offer the facilities to enhance the learning, see the Activity Day Storyboards for information
Decide how many classes / learners are to be involved in the activity
Call us on 0845 603 7624 to book a visit.

We look forward to sharing our open spaces with you

Dinosaur Day

Overview

Huge or small, veggie or scary we will use the wide open spaces of our Country Parks to demonstrate who and how they would have lived within this part of the world. Numeracy forms part of the day, by using the trundle wheels we will measure out the length of the dinosaurs the children are all familiar with. We will collect natural materials and demonstrate visually how long ago they roamed the planet. There are trails to follow and problems to solve as well as art activities that all will enjoy.

Activities that might be included in your Dinosaur Day:

Woodland Trail – children follow Dino footprints and take plaster casts

Dig for Bones – children dig for dinosaur bones

Dinosaur Timeline – who lived when and how did they live in this part of the world

Measuring Dinosaurs – children will use a trundle wheel to measure the length of well known dinosaurs

T-Rex – an opportunity to work out the footprint stride of a T-Rex

Who is it suitable for?

Dinosaur days are either key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Dinosaur Day?

Available at all Country Parks



Environmental Art Days

Overview

Thankfully the days of only being good at art if you could draw are long gone. Environmental artists such as Richard Shilling and Andy Goldworthy provide the inspiration to thousands to get out and give it a go when it comes to land art. Creating pieces of artwork that are made entirely of natural materials your class will learn not only about the art and natural materials found within the parks, but will also have the knowledge to be able to create something from nothing in every green space they go to from now on.

Activities that might be included in your Environmental Art Day:

Wood Sculpture – take a sensory walk through the woods and meadows to discuss natural art objects

Mud Drawing – using the natural environment to create art

Traditional Crafts – investigate the technique of weaving using sticks

Tree faces – make tree faces using clay

Land Art – the children would use natural materials from the woodland to make land art

Tree Decorating – decorate a tree using natural materials

Who is it suitable for?

Environmental Art days are either key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Environmental Art Day?

Available at all Country Parks



Gruffalo Day

Overview

You and your class will experience the Deep Dark Wood that has made this story so popular with young children and adults alike. Each of the activities are designed to link in with the storyline, and range from energetic team games to a woodland trail that requires simple problem solving. We look for the animal homes of Owl, Mouse, Fox and Snake and learn about what they need in order to have a happy habitat. There is storytelling and singing, and to ensure that there is excitement and not fear the big man himself is usually off site whilst the children are here. The day is rounded off with either mini dens for animals or creating themed land art using natural materials found in the woodland.

Activities that might be included in your Gruffalo Day:

The whole day is based around the story of the Gruffalo and brought to life with activities such as:

Woodland Trail – setting the children simple problem solving challenges

Animal Homes – looking at the habitats of Owl, Mouse, Fox and Snake

Land Art – the children would use natural materials from the woodland to make land art

Storytelling and singing – to help bring the story to life

Animal Dens – look at mini dens for animals

Who is it suitable for?

The Gruffalo days are suitable for EYFS, key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Gruffalo Day?

Available at all Country Parks



Habitat Day

Overview

Learning about animal homes and habitats is one of the first scientific enquiries children experience and for that reason we want to make sure its good one. Whilst at one of our Country Parks children will have the opportunity to search for minibeasts, both crunchy and gooey! Learn how to identify common insects and also, if the water levels are safe, have the chance to pond dip. We explain food chains and the importance of preserving natural habitats and respect for the natural environment. During the sensory earthwalk we will look for habitats of all shapes and sizes.

Activities that might be included in your Habitat day:

A Minibeast Hunt – Search for minibeasts both crunchy and gooey

Pond Dipping – an opportunity to discover what lives in the pond

A Sensory Earthwalk – children follow a ‘seasonal’ trail through the park with activities such as bird and flower spotting and sound mapping

Plant Scavenger Hunt – an opportunity to create a collage depicting the time of year

Variation – pupils carry out plant and animal grouping games

Food Chains – children create food webs to introduce the idea of energy transfer up a food chain

Comparison of sites. – looking for similarities and differences between areas of the park.

Den Building – children can create their own animal home

Who is it suitable for?

Habitats days are either key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Habitat Day?

Available at all Country Parks

Inspector Le Plant – Plant Day

Overview

Inspector Le Plant will lead his or her detectives on a journey through the park to solve the case of the ‘Dug Up Daisies’! Throughout the day each activity will focus on a different element of plant life, reproduction and survival. Will your class solve the mystery and find the guilty culprit?

Activities that might be included in your Inspector Le Plant day:

Seed Dispersal Mime – a drama based activity where children perform the process of seed dispersal

Helping Plants to Grow – identify plants from different habitats and what they need to grow

Forest Story – learn about the story of the forest

The allotment survival game – Learn about the perils of being a plant.

Woodland Trail – learn about the trees and plants in the wood, collecting leaves and bark rubbings

Who is it suitable for?

Inspector Le Plant - Plant days are either key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Inspector Le Plant Day?

Available at all Country Parks

Maths and Art

Overview

Woodlands and Parks are great places to inspire creativity. They are neutral spaces that carry mostly positive experiences. It is because of this, you may be surprised at what your class can achieve when asked to do Maths in this environment. By using the natural and man made structures within the park we cover various elements required for Key Stage 1 and 2. Tasks are set along the way and working in small groups we make sure that no one is left behind either physically or in ability! Naturally occurring patterns, sequence and shape are all studied and in the afternoon we create our art work. There are no rules on what is created but pupils must be able to describe what they have created using the correct mathematical terminology practised in the morning session. Key stage 2 children will cover the Golden Ratio and Fibonacci number sequences. Once understood this will change their outlook on nature forever.

Activities that might be included in your Maths and Art day:

Willow structures – Learn how to create strength in shape

Natural sculptures – Create patterns, sequence and shape.

Mud moulds – using plaster to create a patterned tile

Fibonacci spirals – understand how to look at the world differently once you know the secret.

Who is it suitable for?

Maths and Art days are either key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Maths and Art Day?

Available at all Country Parks



Maths in Nature

Overview

Explore the fascinating world of pattern, shape and sequence that is all around us. Education Rangers will lead your class on a journey through the park and show you the fine line that exists between art and maths. There are exciting games to play that can be recreated in school grounds and challenges tailored to your exact needs and key stage. Everyone will have a great time and learn how to see nature as a thing of beauty and where it fits into our mathematical world. By the end of the day children will be able to apply the correct mathematical vocabulary to a wide range of environmental objects. This day brings numeracy to life and dispels the fear of the term maths. It is about seeing, understanding and achieving in a neutral and natural environment. The day includes learning how to measure trees with just a stick and a friend and how to create 3D artwork.

Activities that might be included in your Maths in Nature day:

Giant Pick up Sticks – what triangle is that?

Walking the Fibonacci sequence – create spirals from canes and rope

Outdoor graphs – It doesn't have to be on paper.

Arithmetic games- Great for those that like to throw things!

Who is it suitable for?

Maths in Nature days are either key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Maths in Nature Day?

Available at all Country Parks



Pirates Challenge

Overview

From the moment you step off the coach you and your class need to be prepared for the harsh world you are about to step into. Having been ship wrecked off the coast of one of our 'islands' your challenge is to survive the day without mutiny. By working together to tackle a series of team and individual challenges your class will have fun whilst learning about themselves and their fellow pirates. Map reading, blindfold trails and den building all form part of this day but depending on the skill and experience of the pirates present who knows what the Pirate Captain on duty will throw at them! This day is perfect for covering the adventurous activity units. It will encourage independence and build confidence in an unfamiliar location.

Activities that might be included in your Pirates Challenge day:

Blindfold Trail – working in pairs one child wears a blindfold and is verbally guided along a rope trail

Map Reading – children practice their map reading skills to find hidden treasure and win a prize

Walk the plank – to avoid the shark infested custard

Den building – using materials to construct a den, thinking about water-proofing and insulation

But remember the Pirate Captain is in charge ... so who knows what duties he might throw at the pirates

Who is it suitable for?

Pirate Challenge days are either key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Pirates Challenge Day?

Available at all Country Parks



Rocks & Soils

Overview

Armed with digging equipment your class will venture out into the park to step back in time and see for themselves the layers of soil, mulch and leaf litter that builds up over 100s of years. Learning about the different components of soils and even painting with different types of soils to bring the subject to life and help emphasise the importance of this understated natural resource.

Who is it suitable for?

Rocks and Soils days are either key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Rocks and Soils Day?

Available at all Country Parks



Survival Days

Overview

We don't expect your class to be able to live for a week alone in the woods after one day with us, but we do want your class to leave having done some exciting and very useful exercises. These activities are great for team building, gaining confidence and give the children the opportunity to learn practical, commonsense tasks that could save their lives. This is the trip that your class will remember for the rest of their lives.

Activities that might be included in your Survival day:

Building a Fire - a demonstration of fire lighting (weather dependant)

Cooking – cooking in the open

Shelter Building – children will learn to build a shelter using wood and tarpaulin

What to pack – children will learn what to put in a day kit when out in the woods

Getting Lost – children will learn what to do if they get lost

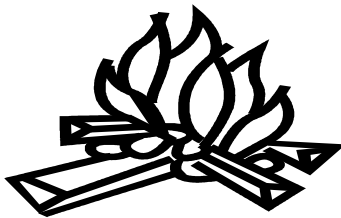
Traditional Crafts – Children will investigate weaving with grasses

Who is it suitable for?

Survival days are either key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Survival Day?

Available at all Country Parks



Sensory (AM) and Teddies in Dens (PM)

Overview

For many of the young children who come on this trip it could be their first visit without their parents or carer. Therefore, Teddies in Dens is designed to be a gentle and fun experience that highlights our desire at Country Parks to be the early intervention team for nature. The bears are all carefully looked after and the day moves with the pace of the children. In the afternoon children have a fun time which involves taking their teddies on a picnic. Hands on activities include role play, story telling, animal games and den building.

Activities that might be included in the Sensory morning:

Sight – making sticky pictures and doing leaf painting

Sound – children make a sound map of the environment

Smell – smelly cocktails

Touch – Children meet a tree, experience feely bags and bark rubbing

Taste – time for lunch

Activities that might be included in the Teddies in Dens afternoon:

Storytelling – to bring the activity to life

A Bear Hunt – a hunt in the woods

Woodland Trail – to learn about the woodland environment

Building a Den – using materials to build a den for teddy in the wood

Who is it suitable for?

Sensory and Teddies in Dens days are suitable for EYFS and key stage 1 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the Sensory and Teddies in Dens Day?

Available at all Country Parks



World War II Day

Overview

Children visit gun emplacements and searchlight pillboxes. Using a variety of materials they also design and plan a shelter to protect them from the elements and even from the enemy.

Activities included in your World War II day:

Shelter Building – children will have the opportunity to build a shelter

Man Made – look for historic man made feature in the woodland

Also at Thorndon Country Park:

The Firing Range – children can walk to the firing range

A Bomb Crater – the children will visit a bomb crater

Also at Cudmore Country Park:

Pill Boxes – the children will explore these defensive structures

Who is it suitable for?

World War II days are either key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience the WWII Day?

Available at Thorndon and Cudmore Country Parks



A Day at the Seaside

Join our Rangers for this most enjoyable day away from the crowds, where you can step back in time and enjoy a traditional day by the seaside. Cudmore Grove on Mersea Island is the perfect location for taking groups of children to experience the sights, sounds and smells of the seaside. Whilst on this seaside adventure we will discuss with your class what changes have happened over the years at Cudmore and how it has become a tranquil place to enjoy the coastline. What part it played in the WWII and what was it that made even the Roman soldiers want to retire here.

This is a relaxed and enjoyable day for you to share with your class, a day that will create memories that will last a lifetime.

Activities included in your Day at the Seaside:

Beachcombing Art - Gather shells, seaweed and driftwood for creating huge land art pictures on the beach.

Balancing Pebbles - A very addictive game that can become quite competitive amongst the grown ups!

Landscape Variation - Explore the differences in this landscape and that of where the class is based

What lives here? – Animals and plants that like to be close to the water.

Who is it suitable for?

A Day at the Seaside is suitable for EYFS, key stage 1 or 2 and can be adapted to meet individual class requirements.

Where can you experience a Day at the Seaside?

Cudmore Country Park

Billy Goats Gruff Day

Overview

All of the activities your class will experience are either related to goats or trolls on this day of discovery!

This is a brilliant way for your class to bring classic literature to life. Using the natural environment as a classroom we will tell stories, explore habitats and there will be lots of trip trapping across bridges!

Activities that might be included in your Billy Goats Gruff Day:

Habitat walk – discuss the needs of goats and trolls.

Shelter building – build a shelter for trolls who have no bridges due to repair work.

Outdoor theatre show – tell the story of the 3 Billy Goats Gruff your way

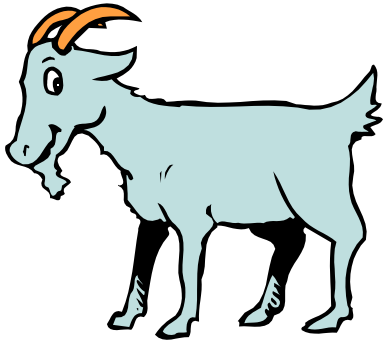
Literacy activities – to show understanding of size and methods of description.

Who is this most suitable for?

We would recommend this day for EYFS and Key Stage 1 children.

Where can you experience the Billy Goats Gruff Day?

Available at Danbury and Thorndon Country Parks. Danbury Lakes in particular are excellent for this day as there are a wide range of troll bridges. This day can also be run at Thorndon with similar effect.



The Very Hungry Caterpillar Day

Overview

This is an exciting day out that brings the familiar tale of the Very Hungry Caterpillar to life. Your class will experience a day full of colour, counting and investigation. Country Parks Education Rangers will lead your class on a gentle expedition of the park with all the needs of early years in mind. We stay near the toilets and our aim is to inspire a love of the countryside and nature from a very young age.

Activities that maybe included your Very Hungry Caterpillar Day:

Land art – Caterpillars and butterflies made from natural materials

Caterpillar camouflage – a colour hunting game

Story and drama time – recreate the story with lots of audience participation.

Minibeast hunting – have a good look for the wiggly, crunchy and juicy bugs in the woods.

Who is it suitable for?

This day is particularly suitable for EYFS children and early Key stage 1. We are able to adapt this day to meet your individual requirements.

Where can you experience the Very Hungry Caterpillar Day?

Available at all Country Parks

Physics in the Park

Overview

Using the fabulous adventure trail that spans the length of the park your class will have the opportunity to experience the full force of the physics principles that are commonly taught in a classroom environment. The day is fun, energetic and will create a learning environment that the lessons learnt will last a lifetime.

Activities included in your Physics in the Park Day:

Let's Swing – Using the swings to understand the principles of kinetic and potential energy.

Let's Slide - Using the slides to understand the effects of friction and the benefits and risks of too much or too little!

Gravity – Looking at the effects of gravity

You can also experience ...

The sensory trail – younger children can investigate the sensory installations around the park.

Kite flying – We provide all of the equipment and the ranger to help put it all together. These kites fly brilliantly and using only a plastic bag and garden canes no one will be disappointed!

Who is this day suitable for?

Key Stage 1 and 2, this day can be adapted to suit the individual requirements of your class. This day is perfect for revision in a fun and exciting way that will embed previous learning or used as an introduction to physics.

Where can you experience the Physics in the Park day?

Great Notley Country Park

Geocaching in the Parks

Overview

Geocaching is a treasure hunting game using GPS technology to find hidden caches (boxes). There are currently over 1 million caches hidden worldwide for further information visit www.geocaching.com. So why not come along and experience Geocaching at a country park.

Full day Geocaching courses

We offer day courses in Geocaching which involves training in the use of the GPS unit and the benefits of using this modern method of navigation. The Geocaching day can be themed to any subject or topic that you are currently working on or alternatively can be used as a team building exercise or method of revision using challenges at each cache that must be solved before moving on.

This day is also suitable for those who find team games or physical education challenging as it gives purpose to the exercise by finding the 'treasure'.

Geocaching and another activity

You can combine Geocaching with another activity. Your class will experience a half day Geocaching course plus one of the following activities of your choice

Survival skills

Den building

Orienteering

Team challenges

Kite Flying

Who is it most suitable for?

We would recommend Geocaching to teachers of years 2 and up.

Where can you experience Geocaching?

Geocaching is available at all of our parks and we are also able in some circumstances to come to the school and investigate your local neighbourhood.

Hadleigh Farm 2012 Olympic Venue Experience

Overview

A day specifically designed so your class can experience the excitement of having an Olympic venue in our County. There are five activities to choose from that link to the 5 rings of the Olympic emblem, fit in with the National Curriculum and explore the values of the Olympic and Paralympic movements. So come and enjoy this exciting new programme by choosing two of following activities.

Heritage – Discover the local history of the Olympic site by meeting a Roman Centurion and visiting the reconstructed Iron Age Roundhouse

Environment – Using the industry and landscape that can be viewed from the park your class can investigate Waste and Recycling and understand why the River Thames is important to the landscape. There is also a chance to examine coastal erosion, water pollution and regeneration.

Team Building – Work as a team to discover the park. Your class will go on a high-tech treasure hunt using a handheld GPS unit to learn what's around them.

Biodiversity – Learn about sustainable habitats and environmental change by discovering the park's woodland, heath, saltmarsh and meadow habitats. We will look at lifecycles, plants and food chains.

Health and Wellbeing – From fast and furious fitness activities to a more tranquil understanding of wellbeing through the use of art and storytelling, we have activities to make everyone feel better about themselves.

Who is it most suitable for?

We would recommend The Olympic Experience to teachers of years 2 and up.

Where can you experience this Olympic event?

Hadleigh Country Park

Iron Age and Roman Days

Hadleigh Country Park proudly offers its unique Iron Age Roundhouse as an educational venue for schools to experience the daily life of the ancient Britons during the Roman invasion and Boudica's revolt. Learners can feel the past come to life as they explore the fully-furnished roundhouse, dig up real ancient pottery or meet a Roman soldier.

There is a choice of sessions available:

Life in the Iron Age – learn what it was like to live in the Iron Age and how it compares to life today

Settlements – what do we need to survive and what factors determined where people settled?

Archaeological Dig – learn how to use the tools of the archaeologist and take part in an excavation of an Iron Age site

Warrior School – try out the weapons of the ancient Britons and learn how they fought. Join the Roman Army and compare fighting methods

Roman Signal Game – meet a Roman soldier and learn how to send messages Roman-style.

We can also offer other activities including:

Clay pot making or other crafts

Interpreting and reconstructing excavated artefacts

Roman mosaic tile designs

Artefact feely bags

Dressing up

Grinding corn on the quern

Iron Age plant uses

Explore Saxon times

For more information visit www.visitparks.co.uk or call 0845 603 7624

Tudor and Medieval Days

Cressing Temple Medieval Barns are the ideal environment for inspirational educational visits. The Barns date back to the 13th century, a time when the site was owned by the mysterious Knights Templar. Come to Cressing Temple to experience an exciting historical activity day tailored to the National Curriculum.

A Tudor Day

Live like a Tudor for the day and experience the:

Walled Garden – discover plants used for food, clothes, dye, household tasks and medicine

Kitchen – discover what Tudors ate and drank, how they preserved and cooked their food, and make a Pomander to protect you from the plague

Classroom – learn what it was like to be in a Tudor classroom

Games – experience Tudor's at leisure including maypole dancing, skittles and horseshoes. Also listen to the popular music of Tudor times.

Medieval Realms

You can choose you to four of the following sessions:

Walled Garden – discover plants used for food, clothes, dye, household tasks and medicine. Learn to feed yourself from the hedges and byways.

Armoury – learn how to be a knight, see how heavy the armour is and study the weapons of the time.

Medieval Documents – look at the documents of the time, see the action and study the results

Barns and Architecture – learn about how the buildings were used

Medieval Medicine – visit the Apothecary and have those wounds and ailments treated

Music, Dancing and Games – Experience Medieval games and listen to the popular music of Tudor times.

For more information visit www.cressingtemple.org.uk or call Cressing Temple on 01376 584903

Outdoor Educational Visits

For more information about educational visit please call
0845 603 7624

Or

www.visitparks.co.uk

