



Nature Table

Once a staple in most classrooms the nature table is a simple, but effective, idea that can provide pupils with a visual and hands on experience of nature within the classroom.

1. Filling the Table

A nature table can be covered with all manner of intriguing natural items, as well as books, models and pupil's crafts. Here are a few suggestions:

- Shells
- Bones/skulls
- Antlers
- Fossils and rocks
- Nuts/seeds
- Flowers
- Twigs
- Leaves
- Pine Cones
- Feathers
- Wool/Fur
- Conkers
- Acorns
- Plants
- Bark
- Cactus/succulent
- Mini beasts
- Nature crafts
- Soil/Sand
- Noise recordings (eg birdsong)
- Plaster cast tracks
- Habitat Models
- Books
- Life Cycle iDials
- Snake slough
- Nest

2. Interacting with the table

Items on the table can be used creatively as drawing subjects or to inspire writing, or scientifically, focussing on classification, adaptations, observations and labelling. In addition pupils can add their own models, paintings crafts representing living things and scientific processes, such as life and nutrient cycles, seasons and food chains.

Example Science Curriculum Links:

KS1

- identify and name a variety of wild and garden plants, including deciduous and evergreen trees (Year 1)
- identify and describe the basic structure of a variety of common flowering plants including trees (Year 1)
- identify and name a variety of common animals including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals (Year 1)
- describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food (Year 2)
- explore and compare the differences between things that are living, dead, and things that have never been alive (Year 2)

KS2

- identify and describe the functions of different parts of flowering plants: roots, stem/trunk, leaves and flowers (Year 3)
- explore the requirements of plants for life and growth (air, light, water, nutrients from soil, and room to grow) and how they vary from plant to plant (Year 3)
- investigate the way in which water is transported within plants (Year 3)
- compare and group together different kinds of rocks on the basis of their appearance and simple physical properties (Year 3)
- recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways (Year 4)
- explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment (Year 4)
- describe the differences in the life cycles of a mammal, an amphibian, an insect and a bird (Year 5)
- describe how living things are classified into broad groups according to common observable characteristics and based on similarities and differences, including micro-organisms, plants and animals (Year 6)
- give reasons for classifying plants and animals based on specific characteristics (Year 6)
- recognise that living things have changed over time and that fossils provide information about living things that inhabited the Earth millions of years ago (Year 6)
- identify how animals and plants are adapted to suit their environment in different ways and that adaptation may lead to evolution (Year 6)