



The  
countryside  
charity



# Hedgerow Detectives

Key Stage 1





This is a lesson plan developed by CPRE, the countryside charity. CPRE campaigns to promote, enhance and protect the countryside for everyone's benefit, wherever they live. With a local CPRE in every county, we work with communities, businesses and government to find positive and lasting ways to help the countryside thrive - today and for generations to come. CPRE's Hedgerow Heroes project is planting and restoring hedgerows across the country. We are also campaigning for the government to commit to a target to increase the hedgerow network by 40% by 2050 – to help achieve net zero. This has been recommended by the Climate Change Committee.



## Science curriculum links



Identify and name a variety of common animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores.



Understanding animals that are active during daytime (diurnal) and active during night-time (nocturnal)



Identify and name a variety of common wild and garden plants, including deciduous and evergreen trees.

## Why hedgerows matter



Hedgerows are packed full of life - a single stretch of hedgerow can contain thousands of plants and animals. Hedgerows are one of the most important wildlife habitats in the UK, and it is vital that we understand them and protect them. Today your class are going to follow a number of clues to help them identify some of those special plants and animals. But first, let's find out what a hedgerow actually is!

A hedgerow is a strip of woodland, usually made up of many different trees, shrubs (these are plants that are smaller than trees), brambles and flowers. Hedgerows were originally created as field boundaries and to provide shelter and barriers for animals to stop them escaping. Today, hedgerows have many important uses including:



providing shelter and food for wildlife



preventing soil erosion (soil slipping or blowing away)



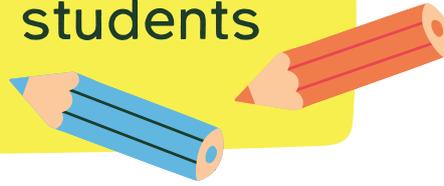
providing us with clean air.

The use of hedgerows systems in England dates back thousands of years to the Bronze Age, when fields were first starting to be carved into the landscape. Two-thirds of England has had hedgerows as a continuous part of the landscape for more than a thousand years. By the Anglo-Saxon period (AD 410 – 1066), hedgerows were a well-established part of the countryside.

Some hedgerows that we see today are hundreds, and perhaps even thousands, of years old. The oldest hedgerow in England is called:



## What your students will need:



Paper and colouring pencils. Planning a visit to a hedgerow would be ideal, but not essential, for this lesson. If the students cannot visit a hedgerow, there are a number of educational videos available that can demonstrate what a hedgerow looks like to children, such as this one by the NFU: Science Farm - Hedgerow Habitat Heroes - KS1 Microhabitats - YouTube



## Learning outcomes



By taking part in this lesson, pupils will:



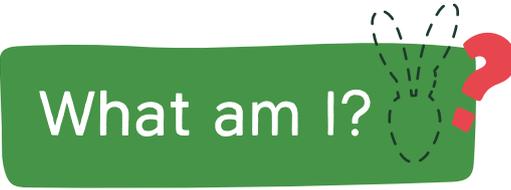
Identify animals that live in hedgerows, learn about what they eat and when they are awake



Learn about hedgerow plants, trees and flowers



## Guidance for teaching resources:



## What am I?

In this section your children will learn about nocturnal/diurnal and herbivore/carnivore/omnivores animals and insects. You could ask the class if they know what these terms mean and explain it to them:



Nocturnal animals – those that are awake during the night and sleep in the day



Diurnal animals - those that are awake during the day and sleep during the night



Herbivores – that eat only vegetable matter (including grasses, leaves, bark etc)



Carnivores – that eat only meat and flesh



Omnivores – that eat both vegetable matter and meat

Print off copies of this worksheet and ask the children to work in pairs or small groups. Ask them to try and identify what animal or insect it is and fill in the blank underneath the clues.

Answers to worksheet:

Clue 1: Hedgehog. Clue 2: Butterfly. Clue 3: Ladybird

### Additional activity

Ask your pupils to draw a picture of one of the animals they have identified, using the clues to show in their picture whether the animal is nocturnal or diurnal, and whether it is a carnivore, omnivore or herbivore. For example, the picture of the hedgehog might include the moon and stars as it is nocturnal.

# When do I sleep and what do I eat?

Print off the worksheet and ask the children to draw a line from the animal, insect or bird to whether they are nocturnal, diurnal, omnivore, carnivore or herbivore. This can be discussed with the class to explore whether there are other examples.

The answers are:



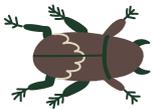
Badger: nocturnal and omnivore (eat mainly earth worms but also eat bulbs and fruit)



Bumble bee: diurnal and herbivore (eat mainly pollen and nectar)



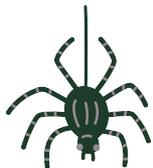
Dormice: nocturnal and herbivore (eat berries, apples and nuts)



Beetles: diurnal and herbivore (eat roots, stems leaves, and seeds)



Birds: diurnal and omnivore (eat seeds and nuts, insects, worms and grubs)



Spiders: diurnal and carnivores (eat insects, flies, mosquitoes, moths)



Snails: diurnal and omnivores (eat mainly vegetation: leaves, plants, but also animal waste and rotting matter like flesh)



Voles: nocturnal and herbivores (eat grass stems and blades, seeds and small nuts)



Flies: diurnal and omnivores (eat decaying matter such as vegetables, meat and faeces)



Which hedgerow plants do these flowers and fruits belong to?



Explain to the children about hedgerow plants; there are hundreds of different plants found in hedgerows, including trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses. Each of these plants play an important role in a hedgerow, such as providing food or shelter for small animals.

As there are so many different plants in a hedgerow, it is useful to know what the common ones are. A handy way to do this is to look at the different fruits, flowers and nuts. When these fruits, flower seeds and nuts fall to the ground they then put out roots to grow new shrubs or trees.

This exercise can be done either individually, in pairs or small groups.

Give the children/groups the worksheet with the pictures of the plants and the list of questions. Ask them to look at the pictures and identify which of the plant pictures the descriptions match.

Discuss what they have learnt and if they can think of other hedgerow plants, do they have a favourite?

Answers to worksheet:

Clue 1: Hazel. Clue 2: Blackberry. Clue 3: Oak.  
Clue 4: Hawthorn. Clue 5: Holly.

# Spot the difference

Ask the children to look at the spot the difference worksheet and to think about the differences between the two pictures. They could also draw circles around those differences. They should see:

Countryside: then - smaller fields, hedgerows, flowers, insects, small animals and birds

Countryside: now - bigger fields, fewer hedgerows, no wildlife, tractor

Discuss which picture they like better and why?

Ask your class if they know why hedgerows have been removed over time. Ideal answers will appreciate how farm machinery such as tractors have increased in size and therefore work best on large fields with fewer hedgerows and also that more building such as new houses and roads can mean hedgerows are removed.

## Additional activity

If it's autumn or winter children could go into the playground and collect leaves to stick around the edge of their answer sheets or in their exercise books.

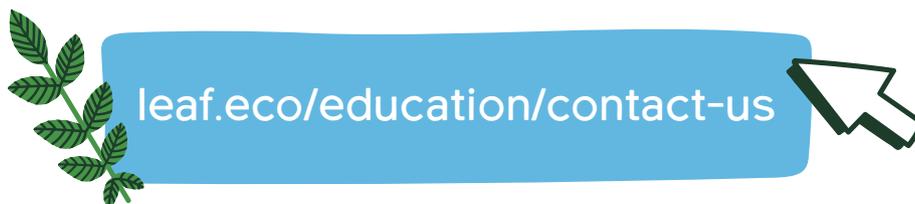


## Extension activities

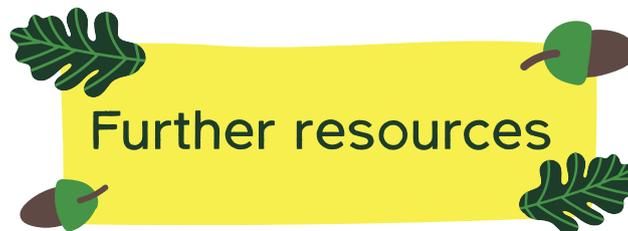
Arrange an excursion to a local hedgerow to find out what species of plants are growing in it, use CPRE's 'Little rough guide around the hedges' leaflet to help your students find out what species there are:



Alternatively, contact your LEAF Education Regional Education Consultant to arrange a farm visit to hear first hand from farmers how they look after hedges and plans to reintroduce hedges on their land:



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## Further resources



Hedgelinek  
[hedgelinek.org.uk](http://hedgelinek.org.uk)



Exploring hedgerows printable board game  
[wildoxfordshire.org.uk](http://wildoxfordshire.org.uk)



People's Trust for Endangered Species has great resources about hedgerow history  
[ptes.org/](http://ptes.org/)

