

# Investigating the seashore

Summer is an ideal time to explore outdoor habitats. A seashore habitat offers an exciting and rich variety of plants and animals for children to investigate.

If the seashore is adjacent to the school then it provides an ideal opportunity for all classes to investigate this habitat at different times of the year.

If the seashore is a distance from the school it could be the basis of a very enjoyable school tour.

## Before field trip

- The trip to the seashore needs to be planned well in advance.
- Geography Teacher Guidelines p. 78–79 has very useful checklists for pupils and teachers.
- It is important that the teacher is familiar with the chosen area.
- Tide tables are available on the web and in most sports shops.
- Check tide tables for the area and plan to visit one hour before low tide.
  - This allows for two hours on site.
    - Organise enough adults to ensure that children are supervised at all times.
    - Wear suitable footwear.
    - Have spare set of clothes.

## In class preparation

Starting with children's ideas Ask children to draw or write what they expect to see at the seashore.

- These drawings will form the basis for assessing new insights gained and will

contribute to valuable discussion back in the classroom.

- Practice children's observational skills using pictorial sources of seashore plants and animals.
- Check the library and relevant websites for any useful information.

## Safety

- Assemble children in a circle on the beach.
- Discuss the following safety rules.
- Each adult has two groups of three children.
- Always stay with your group.
- Never walk ahead of adult leader.
- Rehearse signal for assembly.
- When teacher puts two hands in the air.
- Each group follows suit.
- Each adult has two groups of three children.
- Teacher indicates point of assembly.
- Whistle used only in an emergency.



Scoil Mhuire Caiseal seashore trip 2006, Fanad, Co Donegal

**Science Strand:** Living things  
**Strand Unit:** Plants and animals  
**Geography Strand:** Natural Environments  
**Strand Unit:** The local natural environment



Drawing of what a child expects to find at the seashore



Observational drawing of what a child found at the seashore



**Whole group sits on beach observing, discussing features of the seashore**

- How far is the habitat from school?
- In which direction did we travel?
- What towns did we pass through?
- What mountains and hills did we see?
- Guide children's observations using senses.
- How many different sounds can you hear?

- What scents can you get?
- What is moving in the habitat?
- What Natural features can you see?  
Cliffs, rocky shore, sand, rock pools
- What will you find in the sand/ rockpools?
- What human features can you see? Buildings, lighthouse, boats.
- What do people do here?

Initiating observations in the outdoor environment

Exemplar II Science Teacher Guidelines p.

**Questioning**

Teachers need to model open ended questions. Suitable questions might include:

- Where would you expect to see animals and plants?
- Will the species in each rock-pool be the same?
- Will there be a difference between the species on the upper and lower shore? Investigate

- What would you expect to find on the beach?
- Do all the animals move?
- Describe the differences
- Where will you see the minibeasts?
- Where will you find plants?
- Will the plants be the same/ different as those on land?

**Organisation and equipment**

Each group of three children has:

- One cream/white plastic basin.
- One plastic sieve.
- One clipboard with identification sheet.
- One pencil.
- One thermometer.

The children take turns dipping in the rockpools, measuring temperature of air and water and recording observations

**Environmental awareness and care**

Depending on the seashore children should develop an awareness that different species are found at different places. (Science Teacher Guidelines p.13).

See exemplar 2 p.38 and exemplar 30 p.108 Science Teacher Guidelines for more details.

**This article was compiled by the science team of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP). For further ideas visit our website at [www.pcsp.ie](http://www.pcsp.ie)**