

Meet the Minibeasts KS2

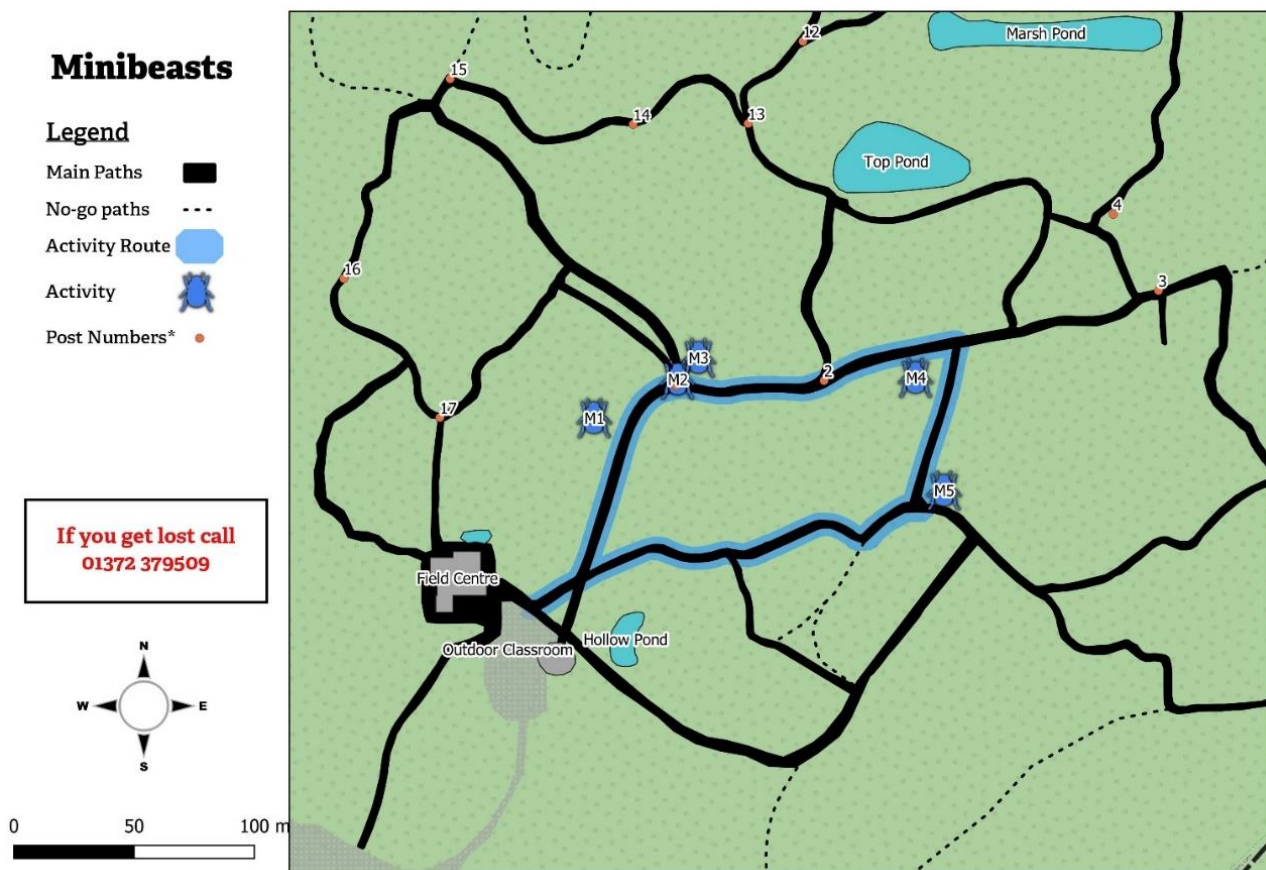
Activity How-To Guide – Anticlockwise Trail

Session Outline

| Time | Location | Activity |
|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 5 mins | Trail | Walk to site M4 |
| 25 mins | Minibeast site M4 | Minibeast hunting |
| 15 mins | Either M3/M1 | Minibeast game |
| 5 mins | Benches | Plenary |

Route

Each session follows a marked trail through the woods, guided by coloured bands on posts placed at intersections. **The minibeasts trail follows the blue bands.**



Equipment

You will be able to borrow the equipment required on the day:

- 5 square clear plastic tubs – per group of 15
- Small black pots – one per person
- 4 different ‘number of legs’ labels – per group of 15
- 2 green viewers with clear conical lids – per group of 15
- Identification guides and laminated pictures of minibeasts
- Blindfolds
- Bell bracelet

Remember to ensure the right walk group leader has the medication for the children in their group.

Key Points

Short reminders for the key points of each activity. Please read on for full descriptions.

| Activity | Key Points |
|-------------------|--|
| Minibeast Hunting | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lay out the big tubs on the table and add a leg label card to each one. 2. Lift a log with your hands, use a little twig and a small black pot to collect a creature gently. Never pick up creatures with your hands – only use the pot and a stick. 3. Remember to put the log back the same way down. 4. Put the creature in a green viewer for a closer look and use the identification guides to learn its name before tipping it into the tub for animals with that many legs. 5. At the end, gently sprinkle the animals back into the habitat so they can go back under the logs by themselves. |
| Minibeast Game | <p>Predator –prey</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blindfold the ‘predator’ child and put the bell bracelet on the ‘prey’ child. Other children make a ‘habitat’ circle. 2. Ask children which minibeasts they are. 3. Predator tries to catch prey by hearing and feeling alone. 4. Once prey is caught, it’s someone else’s turn. <p>Or the blindfold trail</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hand a blindfold to each child 2. One hand is to hold the blue rope, which guides them around the trail. Their other hand is their ‘antennae’ used to feel ahead of them and protect their head, like woodlice. 3. Children also use their feet to feel as they go. 4. Adults to be around the trail to help at difficult points. |
| Plenary | <p>Hold up the pictures of the minibeasts, can the children remember the animals they found? What have they learned?</p> |

Minibeast Hunting

Walk to the site labelled M4 on the map.

We recommend around 20 minutes should be allocated for this activity once you are at the site.

Top Tip: To give the children focus as you walk to the site, ask them to think of as many types of minibeasts as they can and share their thoughts with a partner on the way.

Equipment

Gather the children around in front of the bench and put the following equipment out:

- 4 square clear plastic tubs – separated and spread along the table
- 4 ‘number of legs’ labels – one in each tub: ‘No legs’ ‘6 legs’ ‘8 legs’ ‘more than 8 legs’
- 1 additional tub with small black pots inside
- Identification guides
- Green viewers with clear conical lids

Instructions

1. Everyone will need a small black pot and a short, narrow stick.
2. You will see logs carefully placed around the site. Don’t stand on them - these are special minibeast habitats to make finding creatures easier.
3. Use your hands (not your feet) to turn the log over gently. You might see lots of creatures running around or they might be hiding under leaves so look very carefully.
4. Put your small black pot down in front of a creature and sometimes they will go in by themselves to hide in the dark inside. If a creature isn’t going in by itself, use your stick to gently encourage the creature into the pot. Be careful not to accidentally hurt it.

Important: never pick the creatures up with your fingers as they can easily be squashed by accident. Some creatures might also feel threatened and try to bite, but they’re all very small and no creatures are dangerous enough to pose a real risk.

5. Once you have a creature, put the log back in the same place and the same way up that you found it. This is the creature’s home so we can’t leave it broken with no roof!
6. Return to the table and carefully tip the creature from your small pot into the clear conical lid of a viewer, then put the green base on top and slowly turn it around to be the right way up. This helps to prevent the creatures escaping/getting squashed by the lid.
7. Look through the yellow parts of the viewer and use an identification guide to work out what type of creature it is and how many legs it has.
8. Once you have counted the legs, tip the creature carefully from the viewer into the appropriate square tub for animals with that number of legs to group similar animals together.
9. After 15-20 minutes searching for creatures, come together around the table again to discuss what you found.

Discuss: Which box has the most in? Which ones were hard to find and hardest to catch - why? What do we think they might eat - why?

10. At the end of the session, take the tubs and gently scatter the creatures near to the pieces of wood so they can crawl back underneath by themselves.

Minibeast Games

Depending on the other sessions selected, there is an option to play either our Predator-prey game, or take part in the Blindfold Trail. Both explanations are below.

Follow the map to walk to the location M1 on the map.
At least 15 minutes should be spent on this activity.

Predator – Prey Game

Equipment

- Blindfolds
- Bell bracelet

Instructions

1. Explain that in the dark, damp world of the minibeasts, seeing is not the most important sense. Hearing and feeling are how they catch their dinner!
2. One child is chosen to be the predator, and one to be the prey. The rest of the children stand in a circle; they are the ‘habitat’ that the predator and prey are living within. The size of the habitat can be changed by the children moving closer together or further away.
3. Ask the children which minibeasts they might be (for example, a centipede and a woodlouse, or a beetle and a worm).
4. Blindfold the predator and put the bell bracelet on the prey. The prey must move around within the habitat while the predator tries to catch them by listening carefully for the jingling bell. The children being the ‘habitat’ keep them safely inside the circle.
5. Once the prey is caught it’s someone else’s turn!

Extension: If you would like to, this can be extended to introduce echolocation, with the predator being a bat and the prey being a moth. In this case you don’t need to use the bells – instead, whenever the predator calls ‘bat’, the prey must say ‘moth’ in response (the predator can say ‘bat’ as often as they like).

Blindfold trail

Equipment

- Blindfolds – one per child

Instructions

This activity brings the children's focus to their sense of touch.

1. Explain to the children that they are going to find out how a woodlouse experiences these woods. Woodlice, like many creatures that lives under logs, don't rely on their sense of sight like we do. They use feelers (antennae) to feel their way through a dark world.
2. Show the children how to hold one hand outstretched in front of their face to protect them from branches etc., while the other hand holds on to the rope to guide the way.
3. Line the children up and give them a blindfold each.
4. Once they are wearing their blindfolds guide them one by one to the beginning of the rope trail, placing their guiding hand on the rope. **Ensure their protective 'feeler' hand is outstretched in front of their face.**
5. Set them off along the rope with at least 5 paces between them to help avoid traffic jams.
6. Meet them at the end of the trail and help them to remove their blindfolds. Try to keep them quiet until everyone has finished the trail, then let them express how moving with no eyes made them feel!

Plenary

This can be done where you finish your last activity or once you get back to the field centre.

5 minutes should be spent on this activity

Equipment

Laminated pictures / PowerPoint of minibeast pictures

Instructions

1. Hold up or display a picture of a minibeast
2. Ask the children to share something they have learned about that creature
3. Let the children share their answers and add extra observations if needed

Example Questions

- Which creature is an insect? (beetle)
- Can they think of any others? (have 3 segments and 6 jointed legs)
- Which creature is a crustacean? (woodlouse)
- Which creature is an arachnid? (spider)
- Which creatures are arthropods - has an exoskeleton?
(beetle/centipede/millipede/spider/woodlouse)
- Which creatures have biting jaws? (centipede/beetle)
- Which creature has antennae? (woodlouse/beetle/millipede/centipede)
- Which creatures eat other animals - carnivores?
(beetle/spider/centipede/leopard slug)
- Which creature eats plants - herbivore? (slug)
- Which creatures eat dead plants - detritivore?
(woodlouse/millipede/worm/some beetles)
- Does a millipede or centipede have 2 pairs of legs per body segment? (millipede - centipedes have 1 pair of legs per segment)
- Which creature uses slime to move around? (slug)
- Which creature has a saddle? (worm)
- Which creature is a predator? (centipede/ beetle/spider/leopard slug)
- Which creature is prey to something else? (all of them)
- Bonus: What creatures will eat them? (birds, hedgehogs etc.)