

Activity Guidance

Should we rewild Britain?

Introduction

This activity enables Environment Agency STEM Ambassadors to introduce their work to pupils and link it to elements of the National Curriculum. The main part of the activity is a role play debate discussing whether parts of Britain should be rewilded considering the views of various stakeholders.

The aim of the activity is to highlight the various ways biodiversity can be improved and the role of the Environment Agency.

It is designed to be delivered either by a teacher alone or an Environment Agency STEM ambassador (if one is available) together with a teacher.

> Pupils' prior knowledge

Pupils should have an understanding of:

- food chains, food webs and interdependence
- the factors that affect a living organism in a habitat
- human activities that impact the climate

Ideally pupils should understand the meaning of biodiversity and why it is important, but this is covered in the slides if needed.



Topic | Biodiversity



User Environment Agency STEM Ambassador



Age group Ages 14 - 16



Length of activity Approximately 1 hour



Subjects Biology, Geography

Includes Literacy skills

At the end of this activity pupils should be able to do the following:

- ✓ Explain the meaning of rewilding
- ✓ State the advantages and disadvantages of rewilding
- ✓ Explain the meaning of biodiversity
- ✓ Explain why biodiversity is important
- ✓ Describe the role of the Environment Agency in improving biodiversity
- ✓ Evaluate the arguments for and against rewilding
- ✓ Decide whether parts of Britain should be rewilded and justify their choice
- ✓ Identify compromises that can be made to achieve the aim of rewilding (optional)

> What is the activity about and how to organise it

This is meant as a guide to running the activity, but please feel free to adapt it to suit your particular requirements.

The powerpoint presentation shows the full structure of the activity and there are guidance notes for some slides.

Discuss with the teacher in advance the age, ability and the time available for your session and how much you wish to deliver. It may be that you would prefer the teacher to deliver the session and you talk about the role of the Environment Agency in improving biodiversity in slide 8 and circulate amongst the groups as they carry out the role play debate. Or, you may feel more confident and want to deliver some or all of the session with the teacher's help. In either case remember to introduce yourself to the pupils. Slide 2 can be adapted to add your name, job title and, if available, a photo of yourself at work.

This activity is separated into 3 parts:

Before the session display the poster 'Agree - We should rewild parts of Britain' on one side of the room and on the other side display the poster 'Disagree – We should NOT rewild parts of Britain.' (Make sure it is easy for pupils to move toward these posters).

Part 1

 **Approx 20 mins**

Slide 1 introduces the task.

Slide 2 is the opportunity for you to introduce yourself to the pupils.

In this section the pupils are introduced to the meaning of rewilding and biodiversity, why they are important, and how they are linked.

Slide 3 asks the question 'What is rewilding?' in a think, pair, share, activity. The responses will help you to gain an understanding of pupils' level of understanding about rewilding and maybe biodiversity.

Slide 4 gives a definition of rewilding for you to talk further around the topic and introduce the ideas from the pupils where appropriate.

Slide 5 gives the definition of biodiversity if pupils are not familiar with this term. Slide 6 asks 'Why is biodiversity important?' This elicits how much prior knowledge the pupils have. The answer is on slide 7.

Slide 8 is the opportunity for an Environment Agency STEM Ambassador to briefly explain the role of the Environment Agency in improving biodiversity.



Part 2

 **Approx 40 mins**

Split the class into suitable groups of a minimum of 5 pupils.

Use slide 9 to discuss why rewilding might be controversial and ask pupils to record what they think are some of the arguments for and against rewilding in section 1 of their student sheet.

Slide 10 introduces the role play debate. Each pupil in the group is given a different role play card which represents a character who has an opinion on rewilding. Each pupil reads out the opinion and justifications for that opinion for the character on their card. The pupils record the arguments for and against rewilding mentioned by each character in section 2 of the student sheet. There are 10 different role play cards. Depending on the time available and the ability of the students all the cards can be used with some pupils taking on the role of more than one character, if needed. If not using all 10 cards in the role play select those that are the most appropriate for the pupils, but it is strongly recommended that the Environment Agency Biodiversity character is used.

Pupils then decide if they agree that parts of Britain should be rewilded or not. Slide 11 asks pupils to vote by standing up and walking toward the poster on the wall which represents their choice. You might find some pupils do not go to a side which is fine. Once the pupils have made their choice ask some pupils why they have chosen to support that opinion. If there are some pupils that are undecided they should be asked why they are undecided. It may be that they think rewilding is a good thing, but that the introduction of some species like wolves is too controversial. This demonstrates that to rewild parts of Britain compromises might be needed from all parties involved.

Extension

 **Approx 10 mins**

Slide 12 can be introduced for more able pupils or when there is more time available. In this task pupils are asked to complete section 3 of the student sheet where they have to state whether they agree or disagree with rewilding parts and justify their answer. More able pupils will realise that compromises can be made in order to alleviate concerns and achieve a level of rewilding.

As well as being used in a standard lesson this activity could be completed as part of an off timetable science/climate challenge activity day.



> Literacy Guidance for Environment Agency STEM Ambassadors

In order for pupils to comprehend a text, or the words said to them, they must understand 95% of the vocabulary used. Teachers use a concept called 'Tiers of Vocabulary' to help them to identify words that pupils will struggle with.

In summary, vocabulary can be divided into 3 tiers:

- Tier 1 - high frequency words spoken commonly (eg. table, slowly, write, horrible)
- Tier 2 - high frequency words used across different subjects, but they are not spoken as frequently so can cause significant problems for pupils when used in conversation. (e.g. formulate, evaluate, maintain, required, economic, issues, sustainable, objective)
- Tier 3 - words that are not used frequently and are subject specific (eg. osmosis, respiration, diffusion)

In education teachers take time to explain the tier 3 words. However, the tier 2 words are often neglected so these tend to be the words that pupils will struggle the most with. As a rule of thumb pupils are unlikely to understand words that are not used in everyday language.

What to avoid

- Do not assume pupils know the meaning of key words related to this topic. Avoid using the following words, especially without explanation. The pupils may not have studied these yet and therefore will not understand unless the context is explained in very simple terms.
Ecological restoration, ecology, alien species, mitigation, conservation
- Avoid telling the pupils which way to vote in the debate. They must be able to form their own opinion from the information given to them. You could ask them which way they might vote and the reasons why they may vote this way.

There is a full list of Tier 2 words on this website if you would like more information (<https://learningspy.co.uk/literacy/closing-language-gap-building-vocabulary/>)



> Key words

Pupils' speak definitions for subject specific terminology you may use in this session:

Science

Biodiversity - The variety and numbers of different species of organisms on Earth or within an ecosystem.

Carbon dioxide - A gas present in the atmosphere at a low percentage and is a greenhouse gas.

Climate Change – The long-term change in weather patterns which leads to more extreme weather, rising sea levels and continued increases in temperature that affect people, wildlife and the environment.

Deforestation - The destruction of forests by the excessive removal of trees.

Ecosystem - The interaction of a community of living organisms with their physical environment.

Environment – Where an organism lives and its surrounding conditions.

Global warming - the increase in the Earth's temperature due to increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas levels.

Grazing – When sheep or cattle eat grass in a field.

Habitat - A place where organisms live.

Interdependence – When one organisms is dependent on another.

Invasive species – A plant or animal, introduced by humans, which overpopulates and harms an ecosystem.

Native species – A plant or animal that has become part of an ecosystem in a particular location through natural processes over a long period of time.

Reintroduction of a species – The deliberate release of a species into the wild to re-establish a population in an area.

Rewilding – The conversion of large areas of land to their natural state with little human intervention.

Sustainable – The use of resources without harming the environment and ensuring resources are not depleted.



> Where does this fit into the National Curriculum?

Science - Key Stage 3: Biology

- the importance of maintaining biodiversity
- the interdependence of organisms in an ecosystem, including food webs and insect pollinated crops
- the importance of plant reproduction through insect pollination in human food security
- how organisms affect, and are affected by, their environment, including the accumulation of toxic materials

Geography Key Stage 3





- understand how human and physical processes interact to influence, and change landscapes, environments and the climate; and how human activity relies on effective functioning of natural systems

Science Key Stage 4: Biology

- positive and negative human interactions with ecosystems
- organisms are interdependent and are adapted to their environment
- the importance of biodiversity



> Equipment needed for session

-  The activity slides provided for the session
-  Computer, projector and speakers to display the presentation and play videos. (Most schools will have this equipment, but liaise with them in advance on how digital resources can be used.)
-  Printed off copies of the agree/disagree posters
-  Blutak or drawing pins to fix posters to the wall

Each group will need

- Set of rewilding role play cards.

Each pupil will need

- Student sheet.



> Resources for future use

The Environment Agency

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

Rewilding Debate Video Links

The battle for the Countryside: Britain should rewild its uplands

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIVifCNDp4k>

Ted Ed - What is rewilding?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3l9gDocYdk>

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