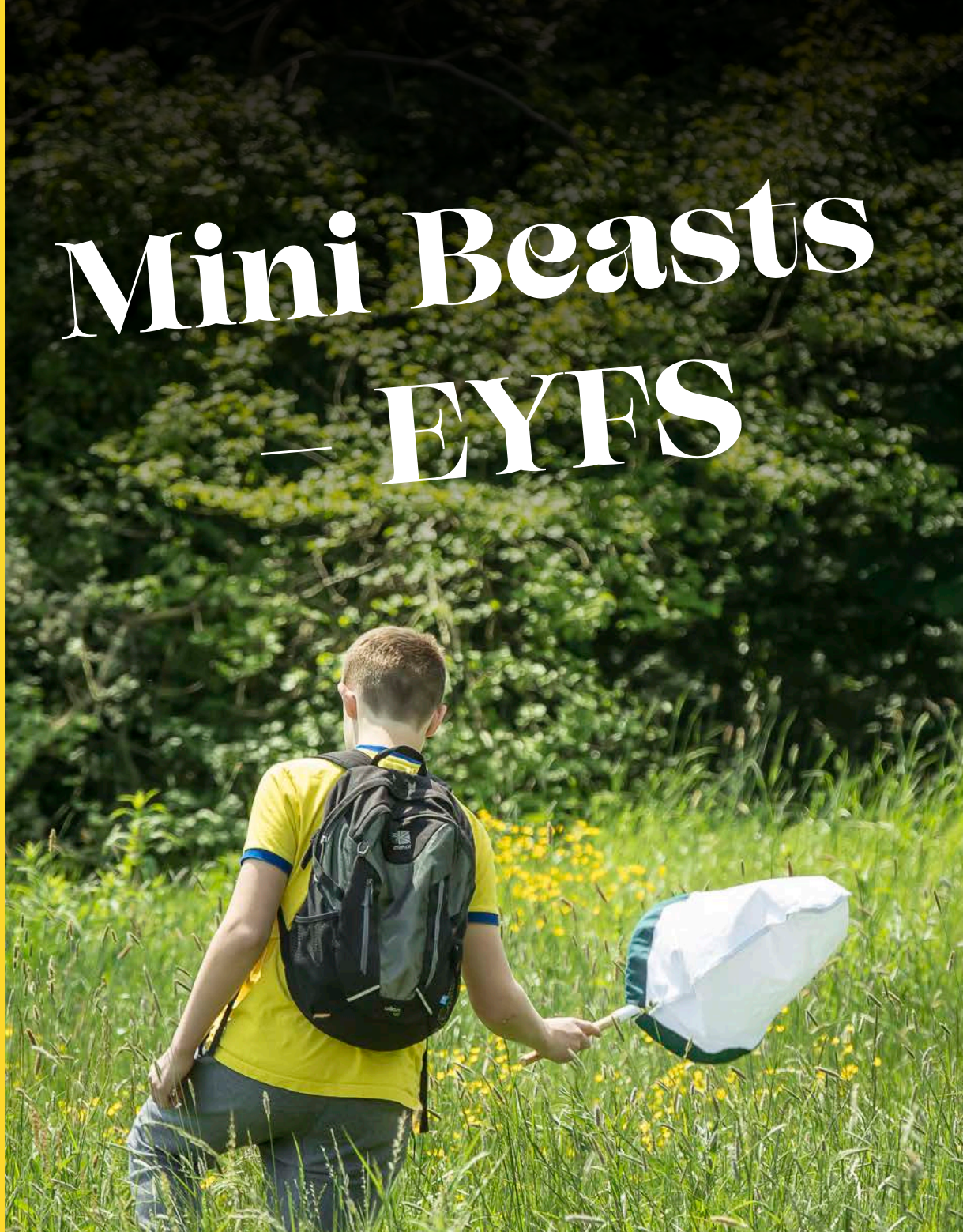


WILD IN THE PARK

Mini Beasts — EYFS



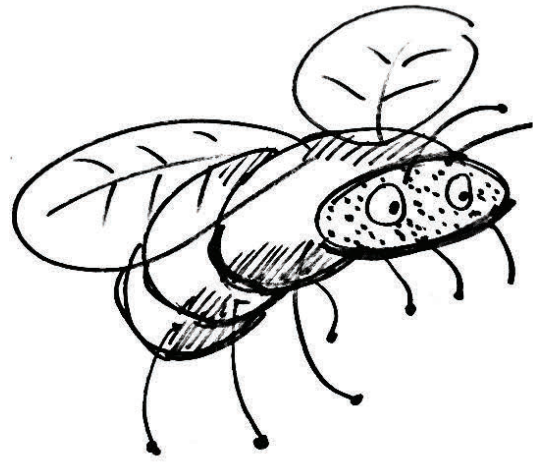
This is a 90-minute lesson. With 15 minutes dedicated to the walk-down from the Creativity Pavilion (based at the entrance to the East Court) to the Peace Garden at the beginning and 15 minutes to return. The times listed are to act as a guide to support you.

WRITTEN BY

Mark Sears

Seven years ago Mark set out to explore rewilding and how it can support meaningful engagement in the world. During this time he led a people powered movement called The Wild Network - for the Rewilding of Childhood, which was born out of the film, Project Wild Thing; vimeo.com/68072823 Together they built a thriving community of mums, dads, teachers and community activists all seeking to take action towards a wilder world.

He is a speaker/activist, strategist, facilitator and brand activist exploring meaning, purpose and participatory leadership through human rewilding and life centred design.



Overview...

What's more exciting or compelling to children than minibeasts? In this session children use their senses to look, listen and touch their way

around - encouraging a sense of curiosity that could lead to adventures and imaginative play.

Resources...

Disposable spoon
Container (an old jar)
Magnifying glass (optional)
Sweep Net (optional)



Objectives and Curriculum links

This lesson enables children to:

- Treat animals in the environment with care and sensitivity.
- Observe and recognise some simple characteristics of minibeasts and other living things.
- Work together as part of a group or in pairs, taking turns and sharing fairly.
- Develop curiosity and interest by exploring their surroundings using their senses.
- Communicate through conversation by sharing experiences, ideas and information with each other.

Getting started [0-15 minutes]

Start by asking the children some quick questions:

- What is a minibeast? This is a good chance to talk about animals without backbones (invertebrates)
- How many minibeasts can you name in 30 seconds?
- Where do you think they would live? In soil, inside rotting logs, under stones, on leaves.
- What do they eat? They eat a wide variety of things - dead or alive, plant or animal, fresh or decaying. Many of them help dead things to rot down!

Next, introduce the 'Body Sculptures' warm-up game. Set clear boundaries for the children to stay within. Ask the children to pretend to be different minibeasts showing how they move. For example - scuttle like a spider, flap your arms like a butterfly, or wriggle like a worm. This activity can be developed further by getting them into groups of three and then seeing if they can make the minibeast's shape with their bodies. Do they have the right number of legs/body parts?

Bring them all back into a group. Explain that life can be tough for these little creatures but there are things we can do to help them. First, however, they need to train their sense of sight so they can spot them and become expert minibeast trackers.



Minibeast identification Sheet



ant



earthworm



centipede



millipede



earwig



shield bug



woodlouse



slug



snail



spider



ladybird



harvestman



beetle

Minibeast Safari [15-35 minutes]

Explain to the children that they are going to go on a minibeast safari to find out which minibeasts we have here and what they are doing. Set clear boundaries for where the children can roam. Talk about the health and safety aspects of the area that they are exploring and not to put their hands in their mouth, ears and eyes!

This is also a good time to get the children to agree upon a set of rules to follow about how to look for/handle minibeasts. For example:

- Be calm and quiet – otherwise they will all run/slither/fly away!
- Be gentle – they are delicate so do not squash them.
- Do not touch their wings.
- If you move rocks or logs make sure they go back exactly as you found them.
- If they do pick any of the minibeasts up they must be returned to the same place.



Challenge the children to work in pairs and see if they can find 5 different kinds of minibeast. Once they have found a minibeast encourage them to examine it using the magnifying glass (if you have one). They can look at size, shape, colour, number of legs, eyes and how it moves. They could use a minibeast picture guide to work out what each minibeast is. Ask them to tell you each time they find something new. You can keep a record of what they are finding on a notepad.

It is up to you whether you want the children to actually collect the minibeasts in a container or simply observe them in their microhabitats. Some minibeasts are hard to catch without damaging them – so this must be avoided. If

you do want to collect some then you need to show the children how to use a plastic spoon to carefully pick up delicate creatures.

It is good practice to place a small amount of leaves or grass in the bottom of the container so they feel at home. Also slugs and snails produce a slimy mucus so they must have their own separate container.

You may need to have a conversation about how to find the minibeasts; looking around flowers, bushes, in the grass or at the base of trees. The pupils will usually be able to find some sorts of minibeasts by turning over small or medium sized rocks (ensuring that they go back where they were found).

Minibeast hotel [35-50 minutes]

Bring the children back together as a group. Explain that sometimes minibeasts run out of good places to live because humans build things and also because we like to tidy up places in the garden where they might have lived (e.g. rotting piles of wood). Explain that we are going to build them somewhere to live. The aim is to give them a little bit of luxury – a minibeast hotel!

Within the boundaries set earlier, ask the children to get into groups of 3 or 4 and find a suitable safe space to build their minibeasts a

hotel. Try to get them to think about whether it would be best if the hotel is somewhere damp or dry? Light or shaded? They will need to collect sticks/logs, bark, leaves, stones and anything else they think the minibeasts will need to be safe. When they have found a suitable place ask them to thoughtfully build the hotel making sure that there are lots of cracks, crevices so that different minibeasts can find a home.



Show & Tell [50-60 minutes]

Once all the children have completed their hotel, go around each group and ask them to talk about what they have made, which minibeasts they think will like to live there and why.

