



Lesson Plan

Nature's Colours

There are some outdoor learning activities that we just love. They can be standalones that get repeated with different groups or at different times of year, or starting points for learning, that leaps off into many different directions. Colour palettes are a particular favourite of ours – whether you try the activity in its purest form, or have a go at some of our extensions, it is a fantastic way of taking learning outdoors and connecting your pupils with nature.

Key info

- 30 minutes + (depending on how you decide to extend the learning)
- Predominantly for EYFS and KS1. However, this activity can be used by pupils across the Primary age range.
- Adaptable for all subjects

Activity Details

Curriculum links

This session can be adapted to fit nearly all Primary School subjects. However, the 'classic' version of the activity and our suggested extension activities, cover the following Early Years and National Curriculum objectives:

ELG: Creating with Materials

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

ELG: The Natural World

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures.
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation and discussion.
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ELG: Writing

- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Art and Design- KS1

- To develop a wide range of art and design techniques in using colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space.
- About the work of a range of artists, craft makers and designers, describing the differences and similarities between different practices and disciplines, and making links to their own work.

Science-Year 1- Seasonal change

- Observe changes across the four seasons.

Design and Technology- KS1

- Select from and use a range of tools and equipment to perform practical tasks (for example, cutting, shaping, joining and finishing).
- Select from and use a wide range of materials and components, including construction materials, textiles and ingredients, according to their characteristics.

Writing- Year 1 - Composition

- Develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by writing poetry.

Resources

You need the following equipment to do the basic colour palette activity:

- thin white card
- double-sided sticky tape

Colour palettes – the ‘classic’

Each child will need a small, sticky collecting palette. Thin card and double-sided sticky tape will do the trick. The task is for the children to collect as wide a range of natural colours as they can find in a given area, sticking tiny bits of each colour to the palette.

By using close observation, the children will be able to find a surprising amount of colour – even in unpromising locations or at dowdy times of year. Encourage them to look at the edges of things, under things and round the back. You can have useful conversations about natural and unnatural objects, and about limiting damage to plants by collecting only tiny bits.



Optional extension activities

1. Do it again

Repeat the process each week over the course of half a term. Try it as the seasons are turning and display each week's palettes. How do the colours change through the weeks?

2. Colour photocopy

Photocopy the fresh palettes. Display the originals and photocopies side by side. Ask the children to predict how the originals will change over time. Observe and record your discoveries. Talk about decomposition and decay. Where do the colours go?

3. Colour landscape art

Now you've got your eye in for colour in the landscape, make use of your skills to create some landscape art. Search for 'Andy Goldsworthy colour' in Google images for inspiration from the master.

4. Go 3D

So, the palettes are gorgeous, and lovely and easy to display. But why not use the same technique to make crowns? Or bracelets? Or amulets? We find New Zealand flax works brilliantly as a crown base. Cut a leaf off at the base and it'll rip easily down the central rib to make crowns for two children. Cardboard works just as well. You can punch holes in it to thread things through, or apply the trusty double-sided sticky tape. Who are you when you're wearing your crown? Use this as a stimulus for story-making.

Check out this link to find out about the importance of flax to the Maori in New Zealand <https://teara.govt.nz/en/flax-and-flax-working/print>

5. Collaborative poetry

Once the colour palettes are complete, gather the children together and share Annamaria Murphy's wonderful 'Heathland Palette' poem with the group (see below).

Using this as inspiration, ask them to pick one eye-catching colour from their palette and to write a short colour phrase describing it onto a post-it; using amazing adjectives, spot-on similes, magnificent metaphors (or whatever else you happen to be working on in literacy.)



When each child has written a line, gather them into groups of four and ask them to work together to share their lines and order them in a pleasing fashion, editing and changing as necessary. They have now created a collaborative colour poem. Hand out big chalks and ask them to write their finished poem on the playground tarmac – additional natural decorations and beauty optional. They'll cause a stir when the other children come out to play, and will wash off after a couple of showers.

Heathland Palette, by Annamaria Murphy

Red?

No

Brazen Bronzes

Bruised Crimson

Burnt Umber

Deep wine burgundies

Heather proud with purple

Dawn pinks blushing

Brown?

No

Rusts

Chestnut golds

Hot orange that burns eyes

Wild cat black.

Grey?

Nah!

Shy silver

Sea-spray whites

Yellow creams on fungus fans.

Green?

Nope!

Cat's eye emeralds

Moss of Green man's cloak

Jealous lichen limes.

