



Quick 'Can you find?' Outdoor Challenges

Can you find? - Language skills

Do younger children need a focus or distraction on a walk? Try this simple activity.

Write a word on a piece of paper and encourage them to find something that matches that description. Then give them the next word. The type of words you use will depend on the age and ability of your child and can even link to the things they are doing in their home learning. Here are some ideas for words you might want to use:

- Colours
- describing words such as spiky, rough, smooth, long, short, tough, delicate
- phonics based – can you find something beginning with 's', can you find something with the sound 'ea' in etc.

Get your child to write you a list too. See who does the best!



Can you find? - Maths

Can you find the oldest tree?

Ask your child which trees they think will be the oldest.

These are usually those that are taller, larger and with wider trunks. This isn't the most scientific method of working out a tree's age but it is good enough!

The girth of a tree can be used to estimate its age. Each year a tree adds roughly 2.5cm to its girth. If you have a tape measure you can use it to measure (about 1m above the ground) around the tree's trunk.

So, for example a tree with a girth of 50cm will be about 20 years old. If you don't have a tape measure, don't worry. You might not be able to work out a rough tree age but you can use string to wrap round and see which is the fattest. Or hug the tree: can your arms reach all the way round the tree? Do you need to hold hands with someone else to reach round the tree?



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If you have older children you can tell them that different species of tree grow at different rates. 2.5cm is the average growth of girth per year. Species such as oak and beech grow slower, at 1.88cm per year, than pine at 3.13cm per year.

Ask the children whether they think it will make a difference if trees are in the open or in the woods. Where do they think trees will grow faster and why? Trees in the open tend to grow faster because they don't have as much competition for water, light and nutrients.

Can you find the tallest tree?

Ideally this requires a tape measure, but if you don't have one measure, and record, how long your stride is. This activity requires a bit of space around the tree so may be best in a more open space.

Before you try this get your child to estimate how tall the tree is.

This method is based on trigonometry. If you view the tree top at a 45 degree angle, then the height of the tree is the same as the distance you are from that tree.

Choose a tree and walk away from it. Regularly stop and bend forward and look through your legs back to the tree. Stop when you can just see the top of the tree and then measure the distance between you and the tree. This is the rough height of the tree. If you don't have a tape measure then count your strides back to the tree. Multiply your stride length by the number of strides back to the tree. Ex: if your stride length was 0.5m and you took 20 strides you would do 0.5×20 which would give you 10m. Your tree is roughly 10m tall.



Quick fun 'add up' game for younger children: Ask them to find different numbers of things. For example: can you find 5 pine cones? You can extend this by asking follow up questions like how many would you have if you found 5 more.

We hope you enjoyed these activities. If so, why not try something different? You can find other countryside activities worksheets at elmbridge.gov.uk/countryside. For further information, please email countryside@elmbridge.gov.uk