

LESSON PLAN

CREATED FOR TEACHERS BY EDEN'S EDUCATION TEAM

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 leap off into many different directions. Colour palettes are a particular favourite – try the activity in its purest form, or have a go at some of our alternatives/extensions. Differentiated accordingly the activities below are suitable for early years upwards.



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.

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Then what?

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? (National Curriculum - Science Y1 'Pupils should be taught to observe changes across the four seasons.')

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

www.teara.govt.nz/en/flax-and-flax-working

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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 (at the bottom of this page).

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

Annamaria Murphy

Red?

No

Brazen Bronzes

Bruised Crimson

Burnt Umber

Deep wine burgundies

Heather proud with purple

Dawn pinks blushing

Grey?

Nah!

Shy silver

Sea-spray whites

Yellow creams on fungus fans.

Brown?

No

Rusts

Chestnut golds

Hot orange that burns eyes

Wild cat black.

Green?

Nope!

Cat's eye emeralds

Moss of Green man's cloak

Jealous lichen limes.

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