



Shropshire
Wildlife Trust

Beavers in Shropshire

Learning Resource

Foreword by Iolo Williams

Beavers are truly incredible animals. They can help restore and manage river and wetland habitats for a huge variety of wildlife, and because they can help tackle important issues like downstream flooding, they're great for people too.

UK wildlife is under severe threat, and we are in danger of losing some species altogether, so beavers are a vital element that can help reverse the decline of biodiversity in our countryside.

Beavers provide an excellent example of how everything in nature is linked and their study can be incorporated into many subjects in the curriculum.

I have no doubt that all children will enjoy learning about beavers and the fantastic work they do from this education pack.



Naturalist and broadcaster
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PHOTO: Chris Shein, Wyre Films

The Beavers in Shropshire learning resource has been produced by Shropshire Wildlife Trust, with support from North Wales Wildlife Trust.

The document is a result of the Shrewsbury Beaver Project which saw Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Shrewsbury Town Council release two Eurasian beavers at the Old River Bed Nature Reserve, in February 2025. This was doable thanks to the generosity of multiple funders and supporters.



PHOTO: Mia Clement,
Shropshire Wildlife Trust



The Shropshire Beavers learning resource has been produced by Shropshire Wildlife Trust, with support from the Wildlife Trusts in Wales. This resource has been generously funded by Veolia Environmental Trust, using money from the Landfill Communities Fund.

The Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*) is the largest rodent in Britain and once lived widely across our rivers, meres and wetlands.

For thousands of years, beavers shaped the landscape, creating a rich mosaic of lakes, mires, bogs and swampy places. But by the 16th century they had been hunted to extinction in Britain for their fur, meat and scent glands. Along with the loss of this charismatic species came the loss of the dynamic wetland habitats they so brilliantly created and maintained.

Across Europe, conservation efforts have helped reverse this decline. Since the 1920s, beavers have been reintroduced to more than 25 countries. Here in the UK, changes to legislation in 2025 made it possible for free releases of beavers in the wild under licence – an important milestone in restoring a species that once played a vital role in our ecosystems.

Beavers are often described as keystone species and ecosystem engineers. Through coppicing trees, digging channels and building dams, they naturally restore and manage wetland and river habitats. Their activities benefit a huge range of plants and animals. They also help people by improving water quality, stabilising water tables, slowing the flow of water to reduce downstream flooding, and even helping mitigate drought.

Here in Shrewsbury, three beavers – Beryl, Bertie and their young kit – now live within a securely enclosed 37-acre site at the Old River Bed Nature Reserve. Owned and managed by Shrewsbury Town Council, this wetland has long been threatened by the rapid growth of willow and other scrub, which risk drying the habitat and outcompeting specialist swamp plants. The beavers' natural behaviour is expected to help manage this vegetation in a more sustainable, nature-led way.

For many years, the site required contractors and grazing livestock to maintain the delicate habitat – both costly and labour-intensive. We hope much of this work will now be carried out by the beavers themselves, helping reduce management costs while restoring ecological processes that have been missing for centuries.

The Beavers in Shropshire learning resource has been created to support teachers in exploring the fascinating world of Eurasian beavers within the KS2 curriculum. Through hands-on activities, enquiry based learning and cross-curricular links, pupils can discover how beavers live, how they shape their environment, and why their return matters for wildlife, climate and people.

We hope educators across Shropshire and beyond find this resource inspiring, practical and engaging for learners

Further information about beavers can be found our web page:
www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/protecting-wildlife/bringing-back-beavers

PHOTO: Mia Clement, Shropshire Wildlife Trust



Links to the National Curriculum

The activities in this learning pack support the aims of the National Curriculum to:

- Offer a broad and balanced curriculum
- Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of pupils
- Prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Activities include descriptions of learning, and highlight areas of learning within the National Curriculum focusing on Key Stage Two. The activities focus on developing learners' skills to take responsibility for their own learning and provide opportunity for problem solving, collaboration, communication, creative thinking, critical thinking and independent research. They include high-quality questions to improve learners' higher order thinking skills and lead to discussion.

The pack has links to the English National Curriculum throughout most activities but also includes a range of cross curricular links, including computing, science, geography, history, alongside multiple outdoor learning opportunities. The pack also links to the goals of understanding the causes of and solutions to the climate crisis and provides opportunities for nature-based curriculum enrichment. Respecting and protecting our landscapes and wildlife is an integral part of nature recovery in Shropshire and forms part of the solution to the climate crisis.

Nature plays an essential role in combatting climate change, and beavers can contribute to restoring diversity of habitat in riparian woodlands. As well as bringing ecosystems to life by creating and managing wetlands, beavers can also help reduce flooding and clean river water. There is an emphasis on outdoor learning in several activities, focusing on improving well-being, physical activity and development of an appreciation of the wealth of nature in Shropshire.

It is possible to adapt or expand on the activities to answer individual learner or class needs.

Activity 1

What Can You Tell Me About Beavers?

In this activity, learners will share their current knowledge about beavers and consider areas for further learning and exploration.

Opportunities for learners to:

- Activate prior knowledge about beavers
- Consider what they would like to learn about beavers
- Reflect on what they learn about beavers over time.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects

- Spoken Language
- Reading
- Computing

Activity Outcome

To identify known facts about beavers, consider questions they have about beavers and complete initial research.

Resources

- Internet access
- Reference books

- Beaver soft toy/photo
- Box/bag

RESOURCE: 1 & 2

Vocabulary

Beaver | Lodge | Dam | Crepuscular | Rodent | Coppice

Questions / discussion points

What do you know about beavers? How do you know this?
What questions would you like to ask? What would you like to find out?
How is a beaver different to other animals? Why do you think that?



Activity

Explain to learners that they will be studying a very important and interesting animal.

Hide a photo/soft toy of a beaver in a box/bag. Challenge learners to ask questions to guess which animal it may be.

When learners have guessed correctly, share a copy of **Resource 1** or ask learners to create their own grid in their books. Ask the learners to write what they know about beavers in the **K** column.

In pairs, ask learners to discuss what they would like to learn about beavers. Encourage learners to write down any specific questions they have about beavers in the **W** column.

Ask the class to consider where or how they could find more information about beavers.

Challenge the class to use their independent research skills to find out an interesting fact about beavers to share. To ensure learners search the internet effectively, you may wish to remind them how to use key words, the minus operator and quotation marks as effective search strategies. You may also wish to encourage learners to use a specific search engine.

Ask learners if they have already found out the answer to any of their questions in the **W** column. Remind learners to revisit their grid to write a summary of what they have learnt in the **L** column during any further activities.

Additional activity

In pairs, ask learners to share what a beaver may have in common with the animals/items on **Resource 2**. Why do the learners think this? You may wish to question any misconceptions or provide an opportunity for learners to discuss their thoughts.

Activity 2

All About Beavers

In this activity, learners will create a simple fact page about beavers for a younger class. They will share their newfound knowledge whilst adapting their writing for a younger audience.

Opportunities for learners to:

- Identify physical features, behaviours and habitat of a beaver
- Consider how a beaver has adapted to its environment
- Create an engaging fact page about beavers for a younger class.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects	Activity Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spoken Language• Writing• Science	Gain deeper knowledge of beavers, focusing on their appearance, diet and habitat. Write a simple fact page for a key stage one class about beavers – considering audience, word choice and simple sentence structures.

Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internet access• Reference books	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Range of simple fact pages
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RESOURCE: 3 & 4 (Optional 5-10)

Vocabulary

Adaption | Habitat | Appearance | Diet | Teeth | Aquatic | Environment | Features

Questions / discussion points

What adaptations do beavers have that help them survive in the wild?
What do beavers eat? Why do you think this?
How will you make the information easier to understand?



Activity

The aim of the lesson is to write a fact page about beavers for a key stage one class.

Look at a range of simple fact pages either in groups or as a whole class. Discuss what makes them 'good' and suitable for young children. Make a list of features required e.g. clear headings and sub-headings, knowledgeable, uses topic-specific vocabulary, simple sentence structure plus any other visual features that may be relevant e.g. photos, diagrams, glossary box etc.

As a class, create a list of headings which are required for the fact page. Explain to the class that they need to make notes about each of these headings. You may wish to use a writing frame for note taking **Resource 3** and our writing frame **Resource 4** for writing the final document. Using one of the websites, model how to make notes, alternatively, you may wish to use **Resource sheets 5-10** instead of the internet. Pupils should make notes of the information required for each sub-heading. Once the pupils have recorded a few facts for each sub-heading, bring the class back together to share what they have learned.

Display the writing frame on the board (see **Resource 4**). Explain that the introduction has been written and read this through. Model turning the notes for one sub-heading e.g. diet, into a cohesive informative paragraph. You may wish to discuss the use of simple sentence structures, adding technical words to the glossary box etc. Pupils to use the writing frame on **Resource sheet 4** to write the rest of the fact page, using their notes.

At the end of the lesson, pupils may wish to draw a labelled diagram of a beaver, highlighting the important features of their appearance e.g. strong paddle shape tail, rear webbed feet etc.

This activity can be adapted so one fact page is created by a group of children with each child writing a different section of the fact page, or a class fact page could be created as a shared writing exercise.

Additional activity

Complete a paired reading activity with a younger class where pupils share their fact page. This could be a lovely opportunity to take learning outside, where pupils find a quiet spot outdoors to read their fact pages together.

Activity 3

Beavers in Shropshire

In this task-based learning activity, learners will gather information and create social media content about beavers in Shropshire.

This could be posted on the school's social media account – if you do, please tag **Shropshire Wildlife Trust**: [@shropshirewildlifetrust](https://www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org/)

Get Social!

Opportunities for learners to:

- Develop, organise and present information and ideas
- Locate, select and use information, responding to what has been read
- Express themselves for different purposes and audiences.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects	Activity Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spoken Language• Writing• Computing• Science	To research, plan and create a social media post about beavers in Shropshire.

Resources

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internet access• Reference books | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Device for recording videos• Video and photo editing apps |
|---|--|

RESOURCE: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10

Vocabulary

Territory | Herbivore | Crepuscular | Mammal | Species | Presentation

Questions / discussion points

- What makes a good social media reel? Why?
- What do you want others to know? How will you engage your audience?
- How will you make your content interesting?



Activity

Organise the learners into small groups of 3 or 4.
Each group will create a social media reel about beavers in Shropshire.

Learners may wish to use the headings provided in the resource sheets (**Resource 5 - 10**), or you could let the class decide on headings for themselves – e.g. appearance, features, natural habitat, diet, interesting facts.

Discuss what makes good content for social media and the length of the content, as well as what type of media (e.g. documentary style videos, images etc) would it combine? What type of software would they use to create the post? Identify the key stages of the content – introduction, main points in order of importance and conclusion. Decide on responsibilities of the group – who is going to create what and how, ensuring there is a variety of media (e.g. mixture of videos, information and images).

Refresh knowledge on how to record videos, good presenting skills, overlaying text on images etc. Most children have knowledge of how to do this already. Remind them of the need for presentations to be accurate and factual. You may wish to revisit **Resource Sheets 5-10** for additional information.

Provide time for groups to research, plan and create their content e.g. still images.

This may be an ideal time to visit the beaver site to record their own documentary style footage, or use a location near school where beavers may create a habitat – if they were released in the wild (please refer to your schools outdoor learning and visits policy). Remind pupils to make the presentation their own, original work and to be mindful of plagiarism. Share effective research strategies and remind learners to provide citations if required.

Once the pupils have completed their presentations, they could be shared on the school communication channels (media permissions and policies allowing). Alternatively, the social media posts could be shared in assemblies or parents could be invited to school to view them too.

Additional activity

Support learners to create a quiz about beavers, linked to their presentation. They may use a game-based learning platform, e.g. Kahoot!
Or a coding tool such as Scratch/Scratch Jr to programme their own interactive quiz.

Activity 4

Nature's Engineers Beaver Dam Challenge

In this activity, learners will turn their hands to creating a beaver dam, using a selection of twigs, hedge clippings and leaves.

Opportunities for learners to:

- Learn about beaver habitats
- Work as part of a group
- Recognise that there are connections between nature, climate change and human activity.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects	Activity Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spoken Language• Geography• Science	Use a wide range of natural materials to make a model of a beaver dam; consider the benefits of having beaver dams in local waterways and how this may reduce the impact of flooding.

Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Logs/branches• Pine cones• Leaves• Rocks• Mud	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outdoor learning area• Grass/plants/moss• A jug/watering can• Stopclock/timer• A shallow, rectangular container
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RESOURCE: 11

Vocabulary

Dam | Lodge | Habitat | Climate change | Construction | Drought | Floods

Questions / discussion points

Why do beavers build dams? Where? How?
How well does your dam hold water? Could you make it better?
How would heavy rain affect a beaver's habitat? Why do you think that?



Activity

Beavers build dams to create living conditions where they are protected from predators. Dams slow the flow of water and create ponds which are ideal for beaver lodges. Dams also help with flood mitigation by slowing the flow of the water.

In small groups, challenge learners to put their engineering skills to the test by building their own dam. Share **Resource 11**. This activity should ideally be done outside, on the school ground or in the local area, e.g. park/forest. You will need to follow your school's health and safety guidelines in relation to the outdoor space that you will be using.

Encourage learners to make a dam by creating a channel in the ground or in a container, e.g. school drawer. Discuss as a whole class what natural materials a beaver may use to create it's dam, and note what the learners could collect to build their own beaver dam.

In pairs, ask learners to gather suitable materials outside to build their dam. Using their materials, challenge learners to build a dam across their container/canal. What materials will they use? Why? Will they mix materials together?

Provide opportunity for learners to test out their dams. Encourage them to use different materials in different combinations to see what happens.

Discuss what would happen in heavy rain, when the water flows quickly? Try adding water faster or slower to the dam to see what happens. What would happen to a beaver pond if there was a drought?

Ask learners to consider whether beavers could be useful in their local area? Why? If they were beavers, where would they build their dam? Why? Can they show you the location on a web mapping platform, e.g. Google Maps?

Additional activity

A beaver dam can improve water quality within some water systems. Challenge learners to use their dam construction to clean water. Ask them to put some leaves into their water and pour. What happens to the leaves/debris? Why?

Activity 5

Beaver Board Game

In this activity, learners will create and play a game about beavers. They will learn of the dangers and threats facing young beavers as they move to find a new territory.

Opportunities for learners to:

- Understand dangers and threats facing beavers
- Create a fun game to play with others
- Play and evaluate a game.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects	Activity Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spoken Language• Science	To research and identify the needs and threats for young beavers when finding a new habitat.

Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internet access• Reference books	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dice• Game pieces/counters• Scissors
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RESOURCE: 12, 13, 14 & 15

Vocabulary

Territory | Danger | Threat | Habitat | Survival | Challenges

Questions / discussion points

What are the problems and threats facing young beavers?
How could these dangers be prevented? Why would this work?
Are there potential beaver habitats in our community?



Activity

A beaver's family includes about five to six animals.

Younger siblings usually stay with their parents for up to two years. During this time, they will learn how to collect food, build dams and help with infant care.

The problems start at the age of two! At this age, the beavers must leave their parent's territory, and begin their hard struggle for survival. Young beavers are often reluctant to leave and are frequently chased away by their parents.

Because habitats have changed, a young beaver may face several challenges when trying to find a new home. They may need to get through desolate stretches of water before finally arriving in a suitable area. They may come across unwelcoming territory owners, or even hydro-electric power stations or roads. Ask learners to research the dangers that young beavers may face when they move out into the big wide world.

Share **Resource 12, 13 and 15** with the learners, and challenge them to create their own scenes of beaver life cards. They will need to create 6 positive cards and 10 danger cards. You may wish to share examples from **Resource 14**.

Learners can play the game, using their cards. They should start at the lodge, roll the dice, and move along the track accordingly. When they land on a 'heart' or "exclamation mark", they will need to draw a corresponding card, read it aloud, and follow the instructions.

Each player can decide on their own way through the river system. Whoever reaches the end first, wins.

Additional activity

Wanted: a new home! Ask learners to create an advertisement for a potential beaver habitat. They may wish to draw a picture of the habitat and include a description to persuade a beaver to move in. Is there a suitable area locally that they could photograph? Encourage learners to be as descriptive as they can.

Activity 6

Beaver Ecosystem

In this activity, learners will consider the important role a beaver can play in its ecosystem and discover how everything in nature is connected.

Opportunities for learners to:

- Explore food chains, food webs and energy exchange
- Visualise the concept of biodiversity interdependence
- Understand how beavers effect an ecosystem.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects	Activity Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoken Language • Science 	To know what an ecosystem is; to identify producers, consumers/herbivores, consumers/carnivores, top predators in a food chain. To know that food webs and ecosystems are interdependent. To relate this knowledge to a beaver's ecosystem.

Resources

- Ball of string
- Sticks or chalk
- Outdoor learning area or large hall

RESOURCE: 16a & 16b

Vocabulary

Organism | Food web | Ecosystem | Interdependent | Herbivores | Carnivores | Omnivores | Decomposers

Questions / discussion points

- Where do we get our energy from? Where does a beaver get its energy from?
- What is an ecosystem?
- How does the removal of the beaver affect the whole ecosystem?



Activity

This activity is best suited outside or in a large hall. Explain that all food chains start with the sun. Green plants use the sun's energy to make sugars in a process called photosynthesis. Ask learners to suggest a food chain that includes a beaver.

Ask learners to get into two groups of up to 15. Allocate one card (from **Resource 16a and 16b**) to each learner. Ask the learners to consider what it is and how it would behave. Ask everyone who thinks they are a producer to raise their hand.

Next, ask those who are consumers/herbivores to raise their hands, followed by secondary consumers/carnivores and top predators. Challenge each group to come together to make a complete food chain using 3/4 cards.

Next, ask both groups to form a large circle. Explain that an ecosystem is an interconnected web of living and non-living things in an area. Using string, ask learners to connect themselves to one another: what would their animal/plant eat? Who would eat them? How are they connected? Learners should explain the connection, and if the group agree, pass the ball of string, keeping the string taut.

Once everyone is connected in the food web, remove an animal and ask the children: what happens to the animals or plants that were connected to that animal? To further demonstrate how all species are interdependent, pose a scenario e.g. "a wildfire has destroyed all the trees from the area." Children should note that the food web will collapse if a part is removed and that every species in a food web is important.

Finally, each group can connect the web using natural materials such as sticks or use chalk to draw onto a tarmac surface. The learners should place their cards and work out the direction the energy flows from each living thing, drawing one or more arrows from each living thing to the ones that feed upon it. It is easiest if they start with the sun, followed by plants. Some learners may be able to identify and describe the process of decomposition and its importance in ecosystems.

Additional activity

Ask learners to draw an energy pyramid with chalk or using sticks and include examples of producers (plants) in the bottom section, followed by primary consumers (herbivores), secondary consumers (omnivores/carnivores) and tertiary consumers at the top.

Activity 7

Beaver Reintroduction Debate

In this activity, learners will consider the advantages and disadvantages of reintroducing a beaver in their local area. They will take the role of different community members, considering the ethical and moral issues that the reintroduction of a species can raise.

Opportunities for learners to:

- Take on the role of different community members
- Present an argument
- Consider differing points of views.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects	Activity Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spoken Language• Writing	To host a debate considering the reasons for and against the reintroduction of beavers.

Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internet access• Reference books	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beaver profile
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RESOURCE: 17, 18 & 19

Vocabulary

Extinction | Population | Predators | Reintroduction | Species | Habitat

Questions / discussion points

- Who would be involved in the reintroduction of beavers?
- Are there benefits to reintroducing beavers? Why do you think that?
- How can you play a role in making decisions in your community?



Activity

Ask the class why they think animals become endangered and what factors contribute to a species becoming extinct. Ask learners to remind you of the factors that led to beavers becoming extinct in England.

In pairs, ask learners to consider the statements in **Resource 17**, sorting statements 'for' and 'against' reintroducing beavers to England.

Explain to the learners that a wildlife conservation organisation wants to reintroduce beavers to a local stream. Explain that there will be a council meeting in the area to discuss the proposal, and that they will play the role of a community member at the meeting.

Ask each pair to choose a role from **Resource 18**. They will need time to research their role and consider what effect a beaver reintroduction may have on them. They may wish to use **Resource 19** to write a summary that includes their position and their research.

Set up a 'council meeting' and provide each group with an opportunity to present their argument for or against beaver reintroduction. Some roles may be impartial. A chairperson (teacher) should call the meeting to order and introduce the various representatives, ensuring that speakers keep to time and speak in the right order.

The wildlife conservation representatives should open with details of the proposal.

Where? When? How?

Each pair should have up to two minutes to present with an additional minute to answer questions from other community members.

At the end of the meeting, learners can vote on whether they would support beaver reintroduction in the proposed area. Discuss the results with the learners. What are the difficulties with issues such as these?

Additional activity

Learners can write a newspaper article or blog to share the outcomes of the meeting.

Activity 8

History of Beavers

In this activity, learners will consider evidence of beavers throughout history and the reasons for their previous extinction in Britain. They will track historical evidence of beavers on a timeline of British history and discuss why they were hunted. Learners will need to consider the arguments against hunting beavers.

Opportunities for learners to:

- Link known historical periods to evidence of beavers during these time periods
- Reason why beavers were hunted to extinction
- Provide arguments against hunting beavers.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects	Activity Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoken Language • Writing • History 	To know the history of beavers in England. To know the reasons why beavers were hunted to extinction. To write a persuasive piece of writing against beaver hunting.

Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet access • Reference books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaver profile
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RESOURCE: 20 & 21

Vocabulary

Extinction | Neolithic | Iron Age | Anglo-Saxon | Archaeologists | Persuade

Questions / discussion points

What reasons did people, from over a thousand years ago, have for hunting beavers?
How could you persuade them not to hunt beavers based on the knowledge that we have now?



Activity

Display the Resource Sheet 20 – historical evidence of beavers.

Ask the class to explore and identify the periods in history when evidence confirms beavers lived in England.

As a class, map the periods of history, identified on the evidence cards, to a timeline of British history. Discuss when pupils think beavers may have become extinct.

Explain to the learners, that they are going to use the evidence on **Resource Sheet 20** to consider the reasons why beavers were hunted. Learners to work in pairs to create a list of reasons. Once completed, discuss as a class the varying reasons – justifying their reasons linking back to the evidence sheet.

Display the writing frame **Resource Sheet 21**. Ask the learners, how they can use their knowledge of beavers to convince people of this period to protect the beaver rather than hunt it?

Explain to the class, that they are going to imagine that they will travel back to the 6th century to convince the Anglo-Saxon people to stop hunting beavers.

In the first section of the writing frame, write one of the reasons why beavers were hunted.

The class teacher should model writing a paragraph to persuade Anglo-Saxons to stop hunting beavers for this reason. Explain to the pupils, they should write two more reasons for hunting beavers and write a persuasive paragraph for each reason to persuade against hunting them.

Complete a 'Conscience Alley' activity. Split the class into two groups – one group being Anglo-Saxons and the other group being activists to stop beaver hunting.

The two groups should line up opposite each other – have one pupil walk slowly between the two lines. Role play that this person is the chief law maker and has the power to ban the hunting of beavers and protect them by law. They should listen carefully to arguments for and against hunting beavers. Once they have reached the end of the line, they should explain whether they have been convinced to stop hunting beavers and protect them by law.

Additional activity

Activity 9

Biodiversity

In this activity, learners will be asked to create a scavenger hunt, including species that can be found in the school grounds to share with others. They will also consider ways of attracting wildlife to the school grounds.

Opportunities for learners to:

- Discover the variety of species that exist in the area
- Develop and implement ideas for how to increase biodiversity in the school grounds
- Work collaboratively as part of a group.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects	Activity Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Geography• Science	To complete a simple biodiversity survey in the school grounds.

Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internet access• Reference books	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outdoor learning area• Plant and animal identification charts• Seek by iNaturalist app
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RESOURCE: 10 & 22

Vocabulary

Territory | Lodge | Biodiversity | Environment | Keystone | Species

Questions / discussion points

What species can be found in your school grounds?
How can you enhance the physical environment at your school to attract local wildlife?
What would you need? How could you achieve this?



Activity

Discuss the importance of biodiversity with the learners.

Remind them that beavers are a keystone species, and that they can contribute to increasing the variety of species and ecosystems that exist in an area. See **Resource 10**.

Ask the learners to share what species they believe they may find in the school grounds. Where would they find them?

Following the school's health and safety guidelines in relation to the outdoor space that will be used, ask learners to go outside in groups of 2-4, to find various species within the school grounds that could be included in a species scavenger hunt.

Ask learners to draw or name different species in the blank squares provided in **Resource 22**.

These may include a variety of animals or plants, such as insects, flowers, trees, birds, etc.

Learners may benefit from foldout identification charts or use of image recognition technology such as the Seek by iNaturalist app to help identify plants and animals that they encounter.

Once the groups have completed creating their scavenger hunt, ask groups to swap their work with another group.

Can they find all the different species on the scavenger hunt within a set time?

Where did they find them?

Additional activity

How about taking part in a citizen science project, such as the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/get-ready-for-big-schools-birdwatch> or the OPAL Bugs Count Survey: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/opal/surveys/bugscountsurvey>

Activity 10

The Beavers from 'The Chronicles of Narnia' by C.S Lewis

In this activity, learners will explore the characters of the Beavers from the 'Chronicles of Narnia' by C.S Lewis. Pupils will consider how beavers have been portrayed and whether this is true to our knowledge of beaver traits. Learners will be able to develop their own fictional beaver character and write a character description.

Opportunities for learners to:

- Analyse the portrayal of the beavers in the Chronicles of Narnia by C.S Lewis
- Consider whether this is a realistic characterisation
- Create their own fictional beaver character.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects	Activity Outcome
• Writing	Analyse the portrayal of beavers in the Chronicles of Narnia by C.S Lewis; understand the characteristics and symbolism of beavers; write a character description of their own fictional beaver character.

Resources

Chronicles of Narnia by C.S Lewis;
Video clip: The Talking BEAVER - Narnia 4K Scene

Vocabulary

Characterisation | Portrayal | Theme | Symbolism

Questions / discussion points

What are the characters of Mr and Mrs Beaver like? How do you know? Is this an accurate portrayal of the traits and life beavers have? Why or why not? What characteristics of beavers would you choose to symbolise or represent in a fictional beaver character?



Activity

Read extracts from the Chronicles of Narnia relating to where the children from the Pevensie family meet Mr Beaver and the scene where the children arrive at the Beavers' home and meet Mrs Beaver.

Alternatively, you may wish to watch an extract from YouTube. Discuss how the beavers are portrayed by C.S.Lewis and the director of the film.

Are they positive characters?
Is there anything that is inaccurate?

Explain that in the Chronicles of Narnia, the beavers are portrayed as hardworking and practical characters who are loyal to Aslan. They demonstrate bravery and symbolise hope and resilience during the time of the White Witch's rule.

Imagine, you are going to write a story with a fictional beaver as the main character. What positive traits would the beaver have?
How would they show these when the character is first introduced?

Ask the pupils to draw their beaver character and then list the traits the beaver would have.

Next to the traits, ask pupils to list actions which may demonstrate these.

Once this is completed, bring the class back together, and model turning their diagram into a character description. Allow time for pupils to complete their own character descriptions.

At the end of the lesson, pupils can work in pairs to provide peer feedback about whether the descriptions are a realistic portrayal of a beaver.

Additional activity

Using plasticine, pupils can make their beaver characters and then bring their character description to life using stop motion animation.

Additional Playground Game

Beaver Outdoor Game

In this activity, learners will play a simple outdoor game, before being challenged to create and run their own outdoor game with their class, related to beavers.

Opportunities for learners to:

- Work with others as part of a team
- Develop running, speed and agility
- Communicate ideas, collaborate and solve problems.

Links to the National Curriculum

National Curriculum Subjects	Activity Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PSHE• Physical Education	Play and lead a playground game linked to beavers.

Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internet access• Reference books	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sticks
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Vocabulary

Territory | Communicate | Instructions | Strategy | Adapt | Recreate | Invite

Questions / discussion points

What materials will you need? Why?
What strategies did you use when playing the game? Could you try anything else?
Do you need to make any adjustments to the game? Why do you think this?



Playground Game

In a large outdoor area, place enough sticks on the ground so that there are at least two for each child.

Divide the class into two groups, named dams and lodges.

Explain that the dams will need to place two sticks parallel (=) to create a 'dam', and the lodges will need to create a cross (x) with two sticks to represent a 'lodge'. Remind learners that they can only move sticks one at a time, and that they cannot take sticks from a dam/lodge that has already been created.

The team that has created the most dams or lodges when there are no remaining individual sticks remaining, wins.

Next, adapt the game by allowing each team to change each other's dams or lodges, depending on which they are, e.g. the dams (=) can change a lodge (x) to a dam.

The team with the most lodges or dams at the end of a set time, e.g. 30 seconds, wins.

Does this game remind them of another game?

Learners may relate this to the game 'Cups and Saucers'.

In groups of 4-6, challenge learners to design and lead an outdoor game for their class to play.

They can create their own game or recreate a game that they already know.

How can you link the game to beavers?

Remind learners that they will need to share clear instructions with their class before they try the game out. How will they explain the activity? What materials will they need?

Encourage learners to use natural materials.

Games such as tag, hide and seek, Simon Says, Tail tag games, and predator/prey tag could all be easily adapted.

Additional activity

How about sending out invites to another class to come and play the new games?
Remember to let them know where, when and what they will need to bring along with them.

Resource 1

KWL Grid

Join me to find out more about beavers in Shropshire ...



K What I know

W What I want to know

L What I have learnt

Resource 2

Connections



A Pair of Flippers



A Pair of Swimming Goggles



A Boat Rudder



A Chainsaw



A Mouse



A Bat



With a partner, discuss what you think I may have in common with the animals or items in these photographs

Resource 3

Notes About Beavers

Possible headings

Heading

Diet

Notes

Herbivores / Eat leaves / Herbs / Bark / Twigs

Heading

Notes

Heading

Notes

Heading

Notes

Resource 4

All About Beavers Writing Frame

Beavers are mammals. They are part of the rodent family. They were extinct in Britain but some beavers are being brought back to Britain's rivers and waterways.

Did you know?

Use this space to write about beavers



Use this space to draw a labelled picture of a beaver

Glossary

A **rodent** is a mammal that gnaws and has big front teeth.

Get
creative

Resource 5

Shropshire Beavers



PHOTO: Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Useful Links

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/mammals/beaver

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beavers-nature-based-solution

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/protecting-wildlife/bringing-back-beavers

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-FAQs

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-project-FAQs

Questions

What is a crepuscular animal?
How long do you think a beaver can stay underwater?

Beavers in Shropshire

Adaptation

Beavers are rodents, a group of mammals which include mice, rats and other small gnawing animals.

There are two species of beaver in the world:

North American Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) and **Eurasian Beaver** (*Castor fiber*).

Although they are distinct species, they are almost identical in every way.

Beavers pair for life and have one litter (a number of babies are born at one time) per year.

A baby beaver is called a kit. A kit will stay with its family until it is around 2-3 years old.

Beavers know how to walk and swim when they are born.

Beavers live in families, typically the adults and up to two generations of offspring.

The families defend their territories.

Beavers will slap their tails on water to signal danger to other beavers.

The life expectancy of a beaver is around 10 plus years.

They have two layers of fur to keep warm. They have an orange coating on their teeth to protect them from damage. Like all rodents, a beaver's teeth continue to grow their whole lives.

Beavers are crepuscular animals, being active primarily at dawn and dusk.

They are semi-aquatic and have many features that help them to swim and gather food under water.

Beavers spend a lot of their time grooming to keep their fur in good condition to ensure it remains waterproof and to help keep themselves warm.

They have a strong paddle-shaped tail that helps them to swim and webbed rear feet to help push through the water.

They also have an extra pair of eyelids that helps them see under water.



Resource 6

Shropshire Beavers



Useful Links

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/mammals/beaver

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beavers-nature-based-solution

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/protecting-wildlife/bringing-back-beavers

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-FAQs

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-project-FAQs

Be part of history!

Follow the return of beavers to Shropshire on our social media channels.

Beavers in Shropshire

History

Prehistoric evidence of beavers in Britain includes beaver bones, such as skulls and teeth, fossils, and pieces of wood showing clear beaver gnaw (chew or bite) marks.

After the last Ice Age, Eurasian Beavers were widespread across Britain. Literature, historical records and archaeological finds all suggest that beavers were once common throughout the country, including in parts of what is now Shropshire.

Written records from the early medieval period mention beavers in several regions of England. In the 12th Century, for example, chroniclers noted beavers living along northern rivers, and place names in parts of England also point to their former presence.

Due to overhunting by humans for their fur, meat and scent glands, beavers became extinct in Britain by the Middle Ages. Their warm, dense pelt was used to make waterproof hats, and castoreum from the scent gland at the base of a beaver's tail was used as a general remedy or painkiller.

Habitat loss may also have contributed to the disappearance of beavers from Britain. By the late 19th century, there were only around 1,200 beavers left across Eurasia. They survived mainly in Norway, Germany, France and Belarus. However, their near-extinction was reversed through conservation efforts, including legal protection and the reintroduction of beavers to over 25 European countries.

Today, beavers are returning to parts of Britain through licensed projects in Scotland, England and Wales, marking an important step toward restoring this once-native species.



Resource 1

Shropshire Beavers



Useful Links

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/mammals/beaver

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beavers-nature-based-solution

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/protecting-wildlife/bringing-back-beavers

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-FAQs

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-project-FAQs

Questions

What do beavers eat?
What are herbivores, omnivores and carnivores?

Beavers in Shropshire

Diet

Beavers are herbivores and prefer to eat leaves, herbs, bark, twigs, roots, and aquatic plants. Contrary to popular belief, they do not eat fish.

A beaver's diet changes in different seasons.

In the summer months they eat grass, leaves and aquatic plants.

In the winter, they eat tree bark from trees like aspen, willow, birch and rowan.

Beavers fell broadleaved trees and bushes to reach upper branches to eat during the winter and for construction of lodges and dams.

Should it prove necessary, beavers can be prevented from damaging trees by fencing, applying sand paint or using wire mesh around individual trunks.

During the winter months, beavers store food underwater in a cache.

As a result, beavers do not hibernate.

Beavers forage close to water, usually within around 20 metres of the water's edge.

They build dams and canals to create suitable living conditions and to provide routes to and from food sources.

Beavers often eat in their lodges and they have a food store outside of their lodge to keep them going during winter months.

Beavers have been known to eat agricultural crops, including maize and roots such as sugar beet when these are grown next to water courses. Management options like mesh or electric fencing can address situations such as these.



Resource 8

Shropshire Beavers



Useful Links

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/mammals/beaver

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beavers-nature-based-solution

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/protecting-wildlife/bringing-back-beavers

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-FAQs

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-project-FAQs

Follow us on Social Media to discover ...

How Shropshire's beavers are reshaping their new home at the Old River Bed.

Beavers in Shropshire

Habitats and Homes

Beavers like to live near water. They feel safe and move easier in water. They generally do not like being more than 20m away from water. It's also usually safer for beavers to travel by water than on land. They are slow on land and their eyesight is poor. They can stay under water for up to 15 minutes.

Their territory size is dependent on food availability, but usually ranges from 1-7km. 95% of their activity is usually within 5m of the water's edge, with 98% of activity within 20m.

Beavers mark their territories with castoreum, from a scent gland at the base of their tail.

Beavers are known for felling trees, which are used for building and feeding.

A beaver's home is called a lodge. It is usually around 1-2m in height and has a secret underwater entrance and exit. Otters will sometimes move into disused beaver lodges. Water voles are happy to share a lodge with beavers.

Beavers have canals to go from one territory to another.

Beavers build their own dams out of mud and sticks. Their dams can help to clean rivers and lakes. Beavers usually build their dams in smaller streams or tributaries. They may also make their way into low-lying floodplains.

Beavers are now protected in most countries, and it is against the law to kill or trap them or disturb their breeding areas.



Resource 9

Shropshire Beavers



PHOTO: Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Useful Links

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www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/protecting-wildlife/bringing-back-beavers

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-FAQs

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-project-FAQs

Spotting beaver clues is exciting!

Follow us online to see what our Shropshire beavers leave behind.

Beavers in Shropshire

Tracks and Signs



Beavers are crepuscular animals and are not often active during the day. As a result, it can be difficult to see beavers in the wild.

In order to discover where beavers live, you will need to look for signs that they are near.

Along with scent mounds where beavers mark their territory with smells or scents, a spotter's guide may also include:

Beaver Lodge

Beavers build their home, called lodges, by piling sticks on the banks of a pond or river.

Beaver Dam

Beavers build dams across streams, using sticks, branches, logs, stones, mud and plants. This can raise the water level and turn a stream into a pond.

Tracks

Beaver tracks may be found in the mud near their pond. They have small front feet and larger webbed hind feet.

Coppiced Trees

Beavers gnaw bark off tree trunks, turning their heads sideways and bringing their four incisors together. This makes incisor bite marks in the wood. They may also leave woodchips.

Beaver Canals

Beavers dig ditches and canals so that they can travel from place to place.

These will go from their pond into nearby meadows or woods.

Beaver Cache

Beavers will cut down branches and store them at the bottom of a pond near their lodge.

During winter months, they will eat these.

Resource 10

Shropshire Beavers



Useful Links

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/mammals/beaver

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beavers-nature-based-solution

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/protecting-wildlife/bringing-back-beavers

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-FAQs

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/beaver-project-FAQs

Questions

How might the Old River Bed change now that beavers are back?

Beavers in Shropshire

Environmental Benefits

Beavers are a keystone species. They can provide a range of environmental benefits and help define an entire ecosystem. They are often referred to as 'ecosystem engineers' due to their ability to modify the habitats and landscapes they live in through coppicing, feeding and damming.

Ponds created from damming can promote growth of aquatic vegetation, and create a habitat for invertebrates, which in turn encourages greater amphibian and mammal life - including otter, water vole, frog, newt and dragonfly.

The coppicing of trees and other vegetation reduces canopy cover, creating further habitat diversity. Dead wood and increased light levels encourage growth of under-storey plants and aquatic flora as well as a growing abundance of invertebrates. This provides further benefit to a wide range of species including birds such as heron, duck, woodpecker and kingfisher.

Climate change is the biggest issue future generations face, and beavers are already playing their part in tackling it.

Dams created by beavers can help reduce flooding, by slowing down the water and evening out the throughput of water following heavy rainfall. They filter and clean the water, which can improve the water quality. Oxygenation of water flowing over dams and retention of polluted silt also improves water quality, which again leads to an increase in invertebrate life forms.

Wetland habitats created by beavers can capture carbon. Wetlands are extremely efficient at pulling carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and converting it into living plants and carbon-rich soil.



Resource 11

Beaver Dam Challenge



Can you build a dam like me?

Design, build and test your construction skills.

Ready... steady... build!

You will need

A shallow, rectangular, waterproof container
A jug/watering can
Selection of natural dam-building materials
Stop clock/timer/watch

Beaver Dam Challenge

Start! Head outside, and set up a container with a slight slope to it, or you may wish to dig your own canal.

Step 1. Pour water from the higher end and watch it flow down the slope and collect at the other end.

Step 2. Gather natural materials for dam-building.
What materials will you use?

Step 3. Build a dam across the middle of your 'stream'.
How will you construct your dam?

Step 4. Slowly pour water in at the top of your slope.
How long does it take for the water to arrive at the other end?
Does it all get through?
Does the water level change above the dam?
Did the water break your dam?

Step 5. Can you improve your dam so that it holds water for longer?
Try using different materials in different combinations to rebuild and test your dam.
Time how long it takes using different combinations.

Step 6. Put some leaves or debris in your water, and pour in at the top of your slope.
Can you use your dam construction to clean the water?
What happens?
Do the leaves get through?



Resource 12 - Beaver Board Game



Resource 13

Beaver Board Game



Rules

The game begins at the beaver lodge.
(Top left)

Roll the dice and move along the track.

When you land on a  or a 
draw a corresponding card, read it aloud and
follow the instructions.

Whoever reaches the end first, wins.



You will need

Game Pieces	Dice
Resource 12 - Beaver Board Game Resource 14 - Beaver Game Cards Resource 15 - Blank Game Cards	

Beaver Board Game Instructions

Beavers have to leave their parents' territory at around two years old. Can you create your own cards to show the dangers and threats facing these young beavers?

1. Copy the game board (**Resource 12**).
(Enlarge to A3)
2. Research the dangers that may face young beavers when they move out into the big wide world.
3. Create your own scenes of life beaver cards (**Resource 15**).
You will need to create 6 positive cards and 10 danger cards (see **Resource 14** for examples).
Put the completed cards face down, and place near the game board.

You may wish to put a  or a  on the back of each card.
4. Once you have prepared your cards and game board, enjoy playing the game.
5. Remember to keep to the rules and wait to take your turn patiently.

Roll the dice and move your own game piece along the track carefully.

Have Fun!

Resource 14

Beaver Game Cards



Snack



You come across some tasty inner bark and enjoy a snack. Your energy is boosted.

Move forward 2 spaces



Rain



It rains and the water level rises. You make good progress.

Move forward 1 space



Tricky situation



You're stuck in the mud.

Go back 1 space



Poacher



A poacher has set a trap to try and catch you. You narrowly avoid it.

Skip a turn



Hygiene



You grease your fur. You swim faster as a result.

Move forward 1 space



Shortcut



You discover a faster route and make quick progress.

Move forward 3 spaces



City ahead



This way leads to the city - you are afraid of humans.

Back to the previous junction



Road



You have to cross a road!

Roll again

1 - 3 You're lucky, move 1 space forwards.
4 - 6 A car hits you, you're out...



Feast



You find tasty plants on the river bank and swim faster as a result.

Move forward 3 spaces



Fox



A fox finds you, you escape back into the water.

Go back 2 spaces



Another Beaver



This area is already occupied and the other beaver chases you away.

Go back 2 spaces



Hunger



You swim in a canal and find nothing to eat.

Back to the previous junction



Willow Trees



You enjoy nibbling on willow trees. Now that you're full, you make quick progress.

Move forward 3 spaces



Dry season



Water levels have gone down and you make slow progress.

Skip a turn



Dog



An off-lead dog is approaching. You take a detour to escape it.

Go back 3 spaces



Timber

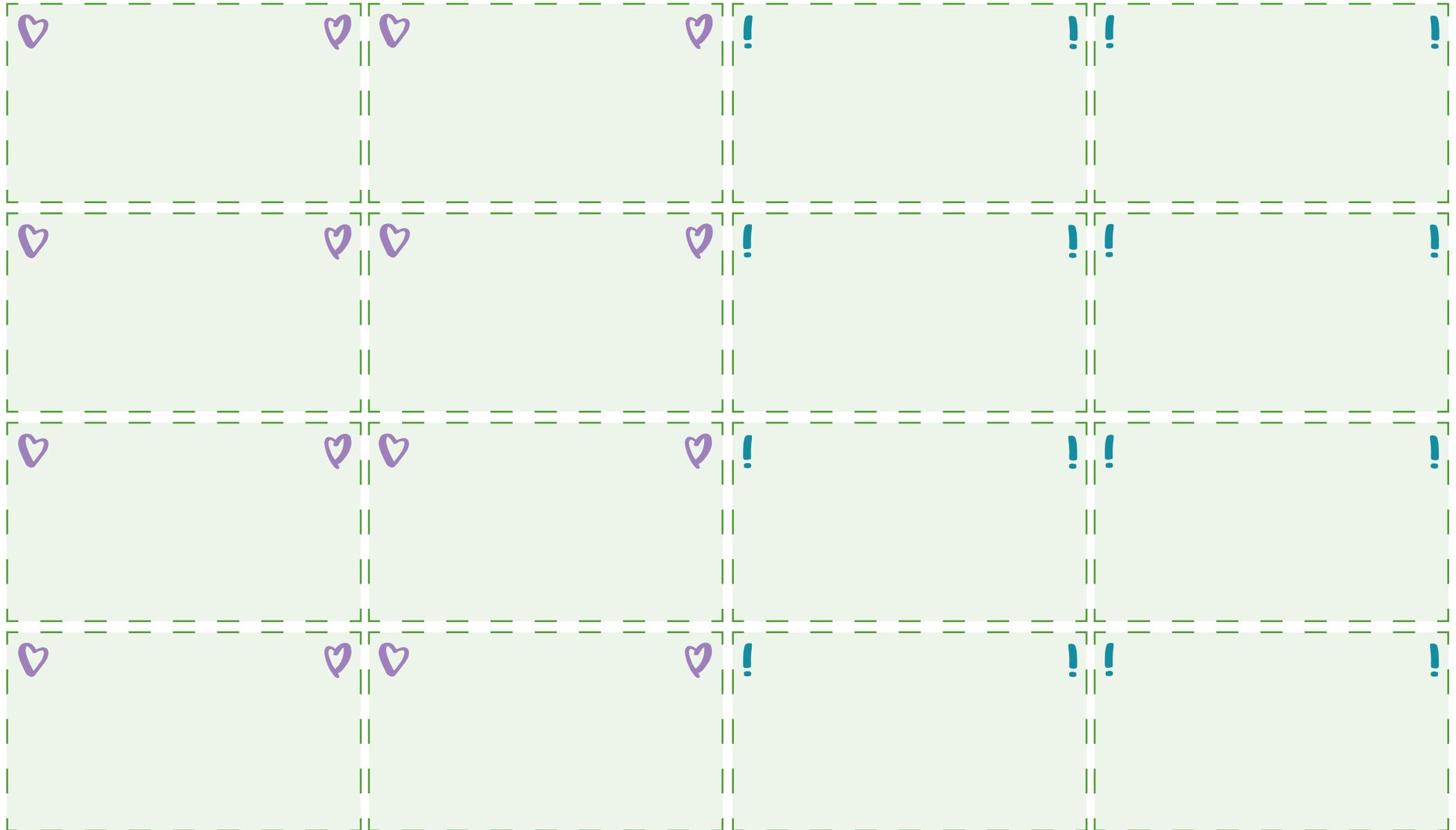


You fell a tree, but it gets stuck in other trees. You get help from other beavers.

Skip a turn

Resource 15

Blank Game Cards



Resource 16a

Connection Cards

Beaver



Beavers are herbivores and eat plants like grasses and tree bark.

Owl



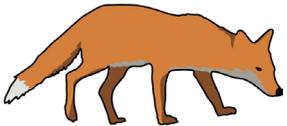
Owls are omnivores and their diet includes earthworms, beetles and small mammals.

Blackbird



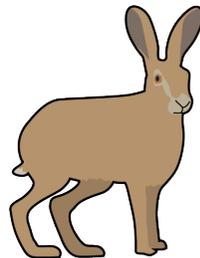
Blackbirds are omnivores, and will eat worms, spiders, fruit and seeds.

Fox



Foxes are omnivores. They will eat invertebrates, fruits, small birds and mammals.

Hare



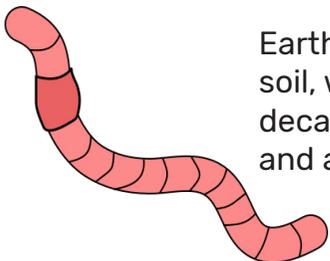
Hares are herbivores. Their diet consists of leaves, grasses and berries.

Hedgehog



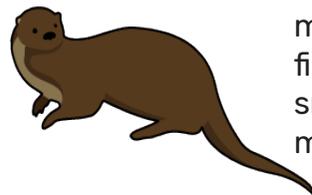
Hedgehogs are omnivores and will eat insects, fruits, mice, frogs and small birds.

Earthworm



Earthworms eat soil, which includes decaying roots, leaves and animal manure.

Otter



Otters are carnivorous mammals. They eat fish, invertebrates, small birds and small mammals.

Water



Entire ecosystems depend on water. Wildlife, humans and plants need water to survive.

Resource 16b

Connection Cards



Badger

Badgers are omnivores and eat earthworms, insects, small mammals, seeds and berries.



Small Tortoiseshell

Butterflies are herbivores. They drink nectar from flowers. As caterpillars, they eat leafy greens and grasses.



Grasses

Grasses produce their own energy from sunlight. They need water and nutrients from the soil to grow.



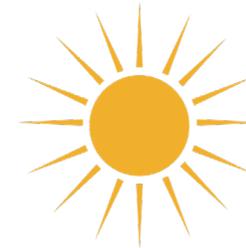
Frog

Frogs are carnivores. They eat insects such as flies and moths, as well as invertebrates such as worms.



Red Kite

Red Kites are carnivores and scavengers. They feed on small mammals such as rabbits, hares, mice, voles and invertebrates.



Sun

The sun provides energy in the form of light, called solar energy.



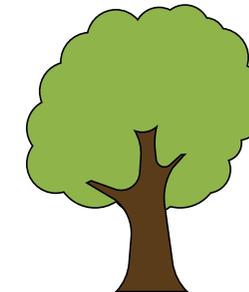
Wood mouse

Mice are omnivores. They eat plants, grains, insects, bark and even other small animals.



Grass Snake

Grass snakes are carnivores. They prey mainly on amphibians, such as toads or frogs.



Trees

Trees need water to survive. They produce their own food through photosynthesis, using energy from sunlight.

Resource 17

For / Against Beaver Reintroduction

Beavers introduced from other countries could carry diseases that may be harmful to the wildlife in Shropshire.

It is expensive to reintroduce species.

Beaver reintroduction may increase levels of tourism in the area, which could boost the local economy.

Dams created by beavers can cause unwanted flooding in fields and areas surrounding rivers.

Beavers fell trees for food and to build dams or lodges. This can open up the woodland canopy allowing other plant species to grow because extra sunlight can reach the ground.

Humans have a moral duty to protect animals. Beavers are a part of our national heritage.

Beavers can eat farm crops and vegetables from nearby fields, such as maize.

Beaver dams can clean water and reduce pollution by trapping silt and storing sediment, nutrients and pollutants in their ponds.

Beavers can reduce the risk of flooding by increasing the ability of the landscape to absorb and retain water, which reduces peak flow downstream.

Beavers can tackle drought by slowing the flow of water and retaining water in wetlands.

Beavers are a keystone species, and can promote an abundance of wildlife in their habitat, especially insects.

Beaver dams can provide spawning grounds for fish as well as a hiding place from predators.

Beaver dams can sometimes be a barrier to fish travelling upstream.

Beavers can help tackle climate change. Wetlands created by beavers are carbon sinks, increasing carbon stored in the area.

Felled wood provides homes for invertebrates.

Increasing the tourism level to areas where beavers live may cause more pollution and littering issues.

Resource 18

Beaver Reintroduction Role Cards

Landowner

Farmer

Angler

Member
of the Public

Local
Councillor

Natural England
employee

Hotel
owner

Road and railway
employee

Student

Wildlife
enthusiast

Conservation
organisation
employee

Farming Union
employee

Hiker

Fireman

Teacher

Forester

Resource 19

Beaver Reintroduction Debate

A local council meeting has been arranged for members of the public to find out more about the proposed reintroduction of beavers in your area.

What is your role in the community?

How may beavers affect you?

Do you believe beavers are important to your local environment?

What questions do you have for the other community members?



Resource 20

Historical Evidence of Beavers in Britain



Neolithic and Iron Age people used the beaver's front teeth as woodworking tools.

Gold mounted beaver incisors were found in Anglo-Saxon burial mounds. It is believed these were amulets and that people of that time thought it would protect the owner's teeth.

Radio-carbon dating of a stick gnawed by a beaver shows they lived in the River Tyne in Northumberland – until the 1300s.

In 1789, a payment of 'twopence' for a beaver head was recorded in a church warden's accounting book, at Bolton Percy, near York. The payment was made to a Mr John Swail. This was known as a bounty payment for animals considered to be 'vermin'. At this time, beavers were thought to be vermin and therefore could be hunted by law.

Beaver fur was a very popular pelt and was often used to make hats, fur-lined garments, as well as coats. It was useful as it was long lasting and had water repellent properties.

At Sutton Hoo, an Anglo-Saxon burial ground, scraps of a beaver skin bag were found by archaeologists in the burial chamber of Raedwald, King of East Angles. He was the king of an area which we now know as East Anglia. The bag was made from beaver skin for an instrument called a lyre.

The Catholic Church, influenced the diet of the people. For periods of time throughout the year, like Advent and Lent, it banned people from eating meat. They argued that beaver meat was ok to eat as it was a semi-aquatic mammal who had webbed feet and a scaly tail. Therefore, it could be described as a fish and could be eaten during these times!

Beavers produce a substance called castoreum. This is secreted from the glands at the base of their tail. Castoreum was very valuable and was used to add flavour to food and drinks, used to scent perfume and was often used in medicine.

Sources of information:

<https://geographical.co.uk/wildlife/the-return-of-beavers-to-britain>

<https://beavertrust.org/beaver-basics/beaver-history>

<https://theealingbeaverproject.com/a-brief-history-of-beavers-in-the-uk>

<https://treesforlife.org.uk/into-the-forest/trees-plants-animals/mammals/beaver/beaver-mythology-and-folklore>

Resource 21

Stop Hunting Beavers

Imagine you have a time machine and are travelling back to the 6th century. It is your job to convince the Anglo Saxons to stop hunting beavers.

Use this writing frame and the evidence from **Resource 20**, to write down the reasons why beavers were hunted and write some persuasive arguments to convince the Anglo-Saxons to stop hunting beavers.

Reasons **For** Hunting Beavers

Persuasive Argument **Against** Hunting Beavers

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Shropshire Wildlife Trust can deliver educational outreach to schools in Shropshire, based on Bertie & Beryl, the Shrewsbury Beavers.

Please contact us on:
education@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk
if you would like to find out more.

Schools Partnership

Did you know Shropshire Wildlife Trust can support you and your learners in a wide range of exciting and practical ways?

We deliver **expertly led workshops** for school groups - right in your own school grounds, in nearby green spaces, or at our beautiful nature reserves.

We also offer **hands-on teacher CPD**, giving you the skills and confidence to take curriculum learning outdoors.

For schools looking to make a bigger impact, we can work with you across the whole setting to **embed outdoor learning throughout your curriculum.**

We believe every child deserves **equal access to nature**, and we work hard to keep our sessions affordable - securing project funding wherever possible to support schools.

To find out more or to book a workshop

Visit the education pages on our website
Email us at education@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk or
Give us a call on 01743 284 280

Get your own cuddly beaver toy!



Sponsor a Beaver

Treat your wildlife-loving friends, family, class or youth group with a beaver sponsorship and the knowledge that you're making a real difference for wildlife in Shropshire.

What's in the Pack?

With each sponsorship you will receive:
A certificate of sponsorship, an information booklet and a high-resolution photo print of a beaver, perfect for in a frame or on the fridge.

Beaver sponsorships also include a cuddly beaver toy!

Buying a Sponsorship as a Gift?

We can send a gift sponsorship pack to you or directly to the gift recipient, just make sure you select **'this is a gift'** and provide us with the gift recipients name and address in the checkout process.

We can also write a bespoke message to the gift recipient for that personal touch. (Limit 100 characters).

For more information visit our website:
<https://www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/species-sponsorship>

Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) has a vision of a thriving natural world, where Shropshire's wildlife and natural habitats play a valued role in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies, and people are inspired and empowered to take action for nature.

We combine projects across Shropshire (including Telford & Wrekin) with advocacy and campaigning to restore nature and to engage people. We manage over 40 nature reserves and have almost 50 staff, 300 volunteers, and over 9000 members.

SWT is an autonomous charity, but we are increasingly working collectively, as part of The Wildlife Trusts (TWT), to ensure that our local actions have a national impact and help to address global issues.

Love Wildlife, Love Shropshire



**Shropshire
Wildlife Trust**



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



Shropshire
Wildlife Trust

Beavers in Shropshire

Learning Resource 2026

Shropshire Wildlife Trust
193 Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury.
SY2 6AH

Shropshire Wildlife Trust is a registered charity number 212744