

Wet weather activities



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Wet weather activities



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Wet weather activities



Introduction

Farm visits should not be put off because of wet weather. If the children are sensibly dressed they will still enjoy a farm tour, even though it might be necessary to re-think the route slightly and to make the most of sheltered areas.

It is a good idea, though, to have a bank of activities available which might be useful if they can't get out to run around at lunchtime or if the weather really is dreadful and you have to curtail a tour.

The activities in this booklet require some planning and preparation but once you have all the resources available and have tested them a couple of times, they will no doubt become old favourites!



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Scarecrow making

Resources required

Timber frame, old clothes, string, paper plates/card, felt tips, stapler, lots of straw

Space required

Small farm shed or covered area

Instructions

Pre activity: attach timber arms (about 2feet long) to body (about 5 feet) with screws/nails (ensure no sharp points that might cause injury).

Children to stuff straw into clothes and 'dress' scarecrow. Make face with paper plate/card, staple to timber frame (Adult activity!) Think of name, compose rap/poem/organise fashion show/etc depending on how much time needs to be filled!

Comments

Loud rock music helps the fashion show! It helps if someone can demonstrate how a model walks down the 'cat walk'

Suggested by

David Thompson farmer

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Historical Objects Consequences

Resources required

A selection of objects from around the farm. These could be old pieces of equipment, things picked up in fields – old coins, horse shoes, buckles etc.

Space required

Enough indoor space for the class to spread out and work in small groups

Instructions

Each group picks an object

How do you think it was made?

What is it made from?

Is it damaged or worn away?

How old do you think it is?

What do you think your object was used for?

Are similar objects in use today?

Who do you think might have used it?

Do you think it would have been used every day?

Do you think it is valuable?

The group then starts to construct a story about the object. The group leader sets the scene and then each child in turn continues the story – a bit like consequences

Comments

Start collecting interesting objects so you have them to hand!

Suggested by

Meg Hart

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Characters on the farm

Resources required

Old buildings around a farmyard

Pencil and paper to jot down ideas

Space required

Enough room to walk around the buildings without going outside a fairly confined space

Instructions

Have a good look at the barns etc - all old buildings.
What are the first **descriptive** words that come to mind?

Think about:

the shape and size of the building
the colour and condition of the stone and wood
the appearance of the floor and walls
what evidence is there of farm equipment in the barn?
how much of the interior can you see?
who do you think might have worked in here in the past? Think about the characters of a working farm and what they might have been like

Use what you can see and your imagination to create a character and describe him/her

Children then work in small groups and describe their character to each other

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Comments

Any farm buildings can be used as long as they are sheltered and have something different about them that will inspire imaginations. Dwellings (farmhouse/farm cottages) could also be used

Suggested by

The ideas came from work done with Shiplake college on Collings Hanger Farm, Buckinghamshire



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How a combine harvester works.

Space required: Enough room to walk around a Combine Harvester and do the activity as a group in front of the machine

Introduction: Imagine a field of golden corn in the summertime. (Show image or a field). The crop in this field is wheat. We use the seeds (known as grain) at the top of the plant (the ear) to make products like bread and cereal, but the rest of the plant (the chaff) is inedible and has to be discarded. The farmer needs a machine that will separate the grain in the ear from the chaff, and that machine is called a combine harvester. (A large poster or the combine itself can be used to show the class the size and the complexity of the machine.)

How many of you have seen a combine harvester working? But do you really know how it works in order to separate the grain?

We are going to investigate how a combine works using a human model: you!

1. Cereal crops are gathered at the front of the combine which has a cutter bar with a big knife to cut the crop. The knife works from side to side like this..... so for the start of my human model I am going to need someone to be the cutter bar.....
2. Next we need a slowly rotating wheel called a reel which pushes the crop down towards the knife so that there is an even flow of crop into the combine with all the ears facing the same way and the crop is not tangled. Our combine needs a reel, a kind of revolving comb. Altogether the cutter bar and the reel is called the header.

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3. The cutter bar runs the entire length of the header underneath the reel. Its teeth (sometimes called mowing fingers) open and close repeatedly to cut off the crops at their base, a bit like a giant electric hedge cutter sweeping along at ground level. We need four more mowing fingers...
4. Then once the crop is cut we need to get it away from the header and inside the combine so we need an elevator. The cut crops are fed toward the combine by spinning screws and travel up a conveyor to the processing mechanism inside the main part of the combine.....
5. Now we come to the business part known as the threshing mechanism. This is the area that actually separates the grain and is in 2 parts called the drum, which spins very fast and the concave, which doesn't. The crop is forced between the drum and the concave and this action rubs the grain from the ear and strips away the straw very fast. So we need someone to be the drum and concave..... With this rubbing action, the grain falls through the concave and into the next section.
6. Once the grain is threshed it still has small bits of straw and chaff mixed in with it so the combine has a set of shaking sieves and a fan to remove this unwanted chaff. Any big bits are shaken over the top of the sieves while the grain falls through and any small and light bits of chaff are blown out of the back of the combine by a fan. So you have guessed it, we need a sieve and a fan.....
7. After the threshing process there is still a large quantity of straw inside the combine that needs to be removed. It passes along conveyors called straw walkers that jiggle the straw out towards the back of the machine. Straw walkers please.....

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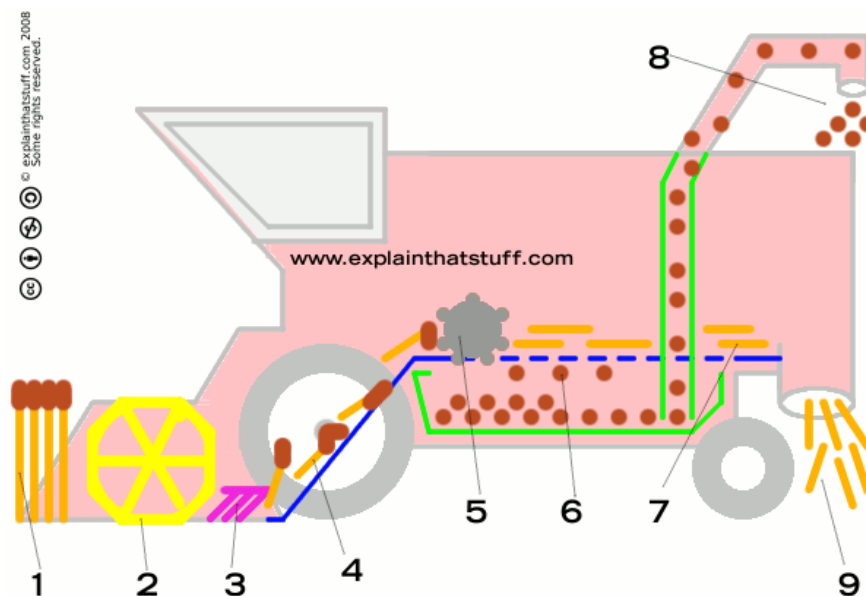
8. When the clean grain falls through the sieves it needs to be stored on the combine so another elevator lifts the grain into a storage tank. Two people please to act as an elevator and a tank..... When the grain tank is full it needs to be emptied and a tractor with a trailer on the back pulls alongside the combine. The combine has an emptying auger and spout, a kind of revolving screw in a tube that pulls the grain out of the tank. We need someone to be the spout.....
9. The unwanted straw chaff tumbles from the back of the machine. The straw is baled up by a baling machine and used for animal bedding. Tumbling chaff please.....

So let's see if our human combine will all work together if we start it up and you all do what you are supposed to do! Let's run through the process again quickly.....

And that (very simply) is how a combine harvester works.

For more background information see:

www.explainthatstuff.com/howcombineharvesterswork.html



This activity was devised by Robert Peers of Views Farm near Oxford as his presentation during a CEVAS course . It is suitable for KS2 pupils.

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“Fibs, Lies and Tall Tales”

Resources required A selection of objects, these could be historical items relating to the farm, natural materials or in a woodland setting children could find their own natural treasures

Space required Enough room for the class to spread out and work in small groups

Instructions Each child chooses an item (or finds their own). They then make up the biggest fib or whopping lie relating to that object. (Stress that telling lies is not usually a good thing to do, but when you are making up a fictional story then it's OK.)

You may have to give an example *“This piece of horse harness was found in the field and came from Dick Turpin’s horse Black Bess. He lost it when he was galloping away after robbing the stage coach”*

The children work in small groups of about six, each child telling their tale to the group and between them they decide which they like the best or even join some tales together to make one really good one

The class then comes back together and each group tells their tale to the rest of the Class. This means everyone takes part but the group only has to listen to a few really good stories rather than 30!

Suggested by Bobbie Harvey, FACE East Midlands

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Quick Quizzes

Resources required

- Pre prepared quiz questions (see ideas below)
- Optional items to illustrate quiz questions
- Optional photocopied quiz sheets

Instructions

2 ideas for quizzes:

True or False, interweave some funny questions such as 'A sheep's coat is made of feathers -true or false?'

Quiz question examples:

Which of the following is made from wheat? Bread, Yogurt, Eggs

Which of the following is not made from barley? Vinegar, Crisps, Beer

Comments

Good idea to get the children working in teams and giving team discussion time before answers

Adjust the level of questions to suit age group and what has been seen on farm

Helpful to have quiz questions prepared ahead.

Excellent way of following up a visit

Can be as energetic or quiet as you wish!

Suggested by: Moya Myerscough

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Seed Planting

Resources Required:

Used newspaper
Sticky labels (could have farm logo on)
Pencils
Soil
Seeds
Paper potter
Shallow container to put paper pots in

Space Required:

clear area to work and move in. Preferably area that can be swept up easily

Instructions:

This activity is useful for all key stages depending on children's abilities. It allows the pupils to make a pot out of newspaper (good recycling) and to plant some seeds. They can then take the pots back to school and watch the seeds grow

Wrap length of newspaper (approx. 30cm long by 20cm wide) around the paper potter. Leave approx. 4cm overhanging the end of the potter. Fold this extra piece of paper over to form the base of the pot. Place a sticky label over the end of the newspaper to stop it unravelling. The label can have the pupils name on so they can identify their pot once back at school

Fill the pot half full with soil. Then place seeds in soil

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Comments:

It is useful to link this activity to the school garden or the allotments if there are any. You can also talk about arable farming as “planting on a very large scale”. To link to the curriculum you can include the parts of the plant and their purpose as well as what plants need to grow. You can use props or pictures to support this. You can also link to pollination, season, seasonal foods, food miles etc

Instead of using a paper potter you could use old washed out yoghurt pots

Paper potters can be bought from garden centres or from the internet and range from £8 - £12 each. However, you may be able to get a local wood turner to make you a set much more cheaply

Suggested by

Katy Pallas, FACE North West



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Build a Tree

Resources required : None

Space required Flat area of dry ground

Instructions This activity works well for groups between 15 and 35. The activity is all about how trees work, make food and grow. The aim is to make the group into a functioning tree, building outwards from the centre of the tree to the bark



Suggested by Bobbie Harvey, FACE East Midlands, based on Joseph Cornell activity.

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- **Bark** The bark protects the tree from disease, desiccation and attack by animals and fungi. **The leader can then make the whole tree work by shouting out the commands and maybe pretending to attack the tree as a wood boring beetle**
- **Heartwood** Gives the tree strength and support. The heartwood is old and dead but well preserved. For this you need, tall, strong people
- **Taproots** Anchors the tree to the earth. The taproot burrows deep into the ground and holds the tree upright. You need one person to sit at the base of the heartwood and face outward. **Lateral roots** - Draw water from the tree all around up fine capillary tubes. The roots must cover as wide an area as possible. Need people with long hair. Lay them on the ground around the heartwood with hair at the edge of the circle. Spread out their hair so it covers as much ground as possible. **Roots draw up the water. When the tree starts "working" you repeatedly say "SLURP"**
- **Sapwood** Lifts the water from the roots to the rest of the tree. Lifts hundreds of gallons of water a day by capillary action. For this you need people to form a circle round the heartwood, facing inwards. (Make sure they do not tread on the roots.) **When the tree starts "working" you say "whoosh" with a pumping action of the arms**
- **Live wood (cambium/phloem)** The cambium is the growing part of the tree, just outside the sapwood, the phloem, inside the bark, carries the food made by the leaves to the rest of the tree. Stand in a circle facing inwards around the sapwood. **When the tree is "working" put arms in the air and flutter fingers like leaves. Bring down the food repeatedly saying "whoo"**

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Animals by Numbers

Resources required	None
Space required	Space for children to work in groups
Instructions	A drama activity. Working in groups the children have to become animals E.g. “in twos make a butterfly”, “In fours make a snail” “all 35 make a millipede”
Comments	To make the activity more challenging you could split the children into groups and tell them what to be, and then ask the other pupils to try and guess what the creature is Similar activities can be found in FACE Hands On History resource: Historical drama workshops
Suggested by	Bobbie Harvey, FACE East Midlands Regional Co-ordinator



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Farm mini memory sticks

Resources required

Short sticks (about 10 - 15cms long and 1 – 1.5 cms thick)
Twine or yarn
Various samples of farm produce eg: heads of cereal crops, grass seed heads, straw, hay, fleece.
Natural materials eg feathers, leaves, seeds collected round farm
Small pieces of paper, hole punch, scissors, crayons, pencils etc

Space required

Table top working space to fit numbers of children in group

Instructions

This is a mini version of a journey stick. We usually make them at the end of the visit or as a wet weather activity.
Twine or yarn is round the stick to hold on things to represent different things that have been seen or done on the farm.
Drawings or words can be added on mini labels, for example the child's name, a picture of his/her favourite thing on the farm or a fact they have learnt

Suggested by

Moya Myerscough
This activity was used with some groups visiting Easton College Farm

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On the example in the photograph there is wheat, barley, straw, grass, autumn leaves and seed head, a drawing of a pig and a label about wheat and bread.

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Window decorations

Resources required

Collection of natural materials – wheat ears, seeds, leaves, fleece, feathers, twigs.

Could be collected by the children but do need to be dry!

Transparent sticky backed plastic book covering

Scissors

Space required

Table top space sufficient for the group

Instructions

Pictures or patterns are made out of the natural materials and then sealed between two pieces of the transparent plastic film. These can then be taped to a window or hung in front of the window so the light shines through

Comments

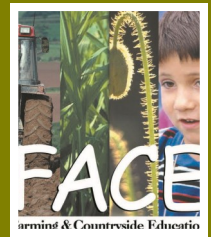
It helps if the children create their designs on pieces of paper the same size as the transparent plastic before they arrange the pieces onto the sticky surface. Once the design is completed another piece of the plastic is laid on top and pressed down to seal

Suggested by

Moya Myerscough

This activity was used with some groups visiting Easton College Farm

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More ideas!

There are many more ideas that you can use as wet weather activities. Some involve craft materials whilst others are physical games to release energy!

Look in the FACE on-line booklets:

Environmental Arts e.g. Precious Things and Acrostic Poems

Games for the Outdoor Classroom e.g. Feed the Animals and the Photosynthesis Tree

Children's Activities at Farm Open Days e.g. Seed pictures and Pine cone animals

Hands on History e.g. Historical drama workshops warm up activities and Victorian Playground Games

Have you thought about making your own model milking cow which is always popular with visiting children?

<http://www.visitmyfarm.org/more-ideas-for-activities/258-howtomakeamodelmilkingcow>

Or have ready some print outs of the cut out farm animals and the children can make their own animals while it rains! Remember to supply scissors and crayons.

<http://www.visitmyfarm.org/more-ideas-for-activities/257-3dfarmcut-outs>

Another fantastic source of activity ideas is the Woodland Trust Nature Detectives site:

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/activities/>