

OUTDOOR
CLASSROOM
DAY



STEAM OUTDOORS
RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS & PARENTS



Improving children's education and mental health through outdoor learning

In short

Nature Play WA is seeking \$2.8 million over three years from Treasury to support a nation-wide expansion of the Outdoor Classroom Day initiative in the interest of supporting the mental health and education of Australian children in early learning centres and primary schools, in a COVID-19 impacted world.

[Outdoor Classroom Day](#) spearheads the growing Australia-wide movement to improve student academic achievement and mental health through outdoor learning. And with more than 1.1 million kids registered by more than 10,000 teachers, it has become one of the country's most supported education campaigns in just five years.

What's next

With the support of Federal Government of Australia we want to leverage the community engagement with Outdoor Classroom Day to improve Australian children's academic achievement and mental health outcomes by providing year-round resources and support for teachers to teach science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) in their schoolyards and beyond – and linking to existing federally supported STEM programs like Early Learning STEM Australia, Curious Minds, and Little Scientists.

Through Outdoor Classroom Day, we will be calling on Australian schools to STEAM Outdoors.



Community support

More than 1.1 million Australian school children have been registered to participate by their teacher or school since 2017, when Nature Play WA and its partners began delivering the Outdoor Classroom Day movement.

In 2021 alone, more than 145,000 Australian children were registered to participate in the day from schools in every corner of the country from Christmas Island to Campbelltown, and Bruny Island to Broome.

In Western Australia more than 50% of all primary schools have taken part in the campaign. A survey taken of participating teachers from the 2017 campaign indicates a strong understanding among Australian educators that outdoor learning, and play, is fundamentally important to children's concentration, social skills, imagination, creativity, and overall happiness.

We know from that same survey that a third of the schools who have taken part in Outdoor Classroom Day have increased the time they spend in outdoor learning during the rest of the year, and 85% want to increase the time they spend in outdoor learning. The full report can be found at [here](#).



Why it matters

Research shows that increasing time in outdoor learning and play leads to greater physical activity and positive impacts on children's mental health, social and emotional wellbeing, increases physical activity, and contributes to academic success.

With COVID-19 continuing to impact the mental health and learning of Australian children, finding effective and productive ways to support children has never been more important.

Mental Health benefits

In WA, for example, only 38.8% of WA primary school aged children reach the recommended 60 minutes per day of physical activity (PA), and a further 44% have been identified by their parents/carers as requiring special help with their mental health.

Physically active children are less likely to suffer from acute or chronic health problems like diabetes and high blood pressure and they also have enhanced psychological wellbeing and reductions in stress, anxiety and depression.

Australian children spend more than 50% of their waking hours at school from Monday to Friday. But with a crowded curriculum the opportunities for schools to increase children's PA through traditional means like sport and physical education are limited.



The outdoor learning approach, promoted through Outdoor Classroom Day, takes a different approach. Rather than trying to squeeze PA around the curriculum, this program focusses on the 80% of the time children spend at school which is mandated for instruction. It will support teachers and school communities to replace largely sedentary instruction with active, outdoor learning.

Learning and academic success

The outdoor learning approach also has a significant impact beyond PA, and has been shown to increase children's motivation to learn and improve their academic achievement. Nature Play WA has also seen significant increased academic engagement from Aboriginal children when learning is conducted outdoors.

A recent study of 40 schools across the US indicates teaching outdoors results in wide-ranging, positive effects on student learning. The study found that outdoor learning improves student achievement in social studies, science, language, arts and maths. Students and teachers also reported other significant effects including: development of problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making skills; increased enthusiasm and engagement in learning; and gains in summative measures of educational achievement such as standardised test scores and grade point average.

Sources e.g.: Barker et al., 2014; Beyer et al., 2015a; Bragg et al., 2013; Dolinsky et al., 2011; Gill, 2014; Gray et al., 2015; Hinkley, 2008; Lachowycz & Jones, 2011; Little & Wyvie, 2008; Malone & Waite, 2016; Payne, Townsend & Foster, 2013; Tremblay et al., 2015).

https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/U_Z/Who-is-being-active-in-Western-Australia
Australian Early Development Census, 2016

https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/U_Z/Who-is-being-active-in-Western-Australia
American Institute for Research, 2005; Waite et al., 2016; Winterset al., 2010)



The support we need

To improve STEAM education and have a positive impact on the wellbeing of primary school aged children through Outdoor Classroom Day and STEAM Outdoors, Nature Play WA and the not-for-profit organisations it partners with around the country, need financial support at a Federal level to cover the cost of a team of dedicated outdoor educators driving the program, creating resources, and running professional development for teachers around the country.

Annual financial requirement to deliver Outdoor Classroom Day and STEAM Outdoors				
Requirement	Cost	Plus on-costs	#	Total
Educators (average teacher's wage)	\$86,922	\$99,960	8	\$799,680
National coordinator	\$95,000	\$109,250	1	\$109,250
Marketing and web	\$45,000		1	\$45,000
TOTAL				\$953,930



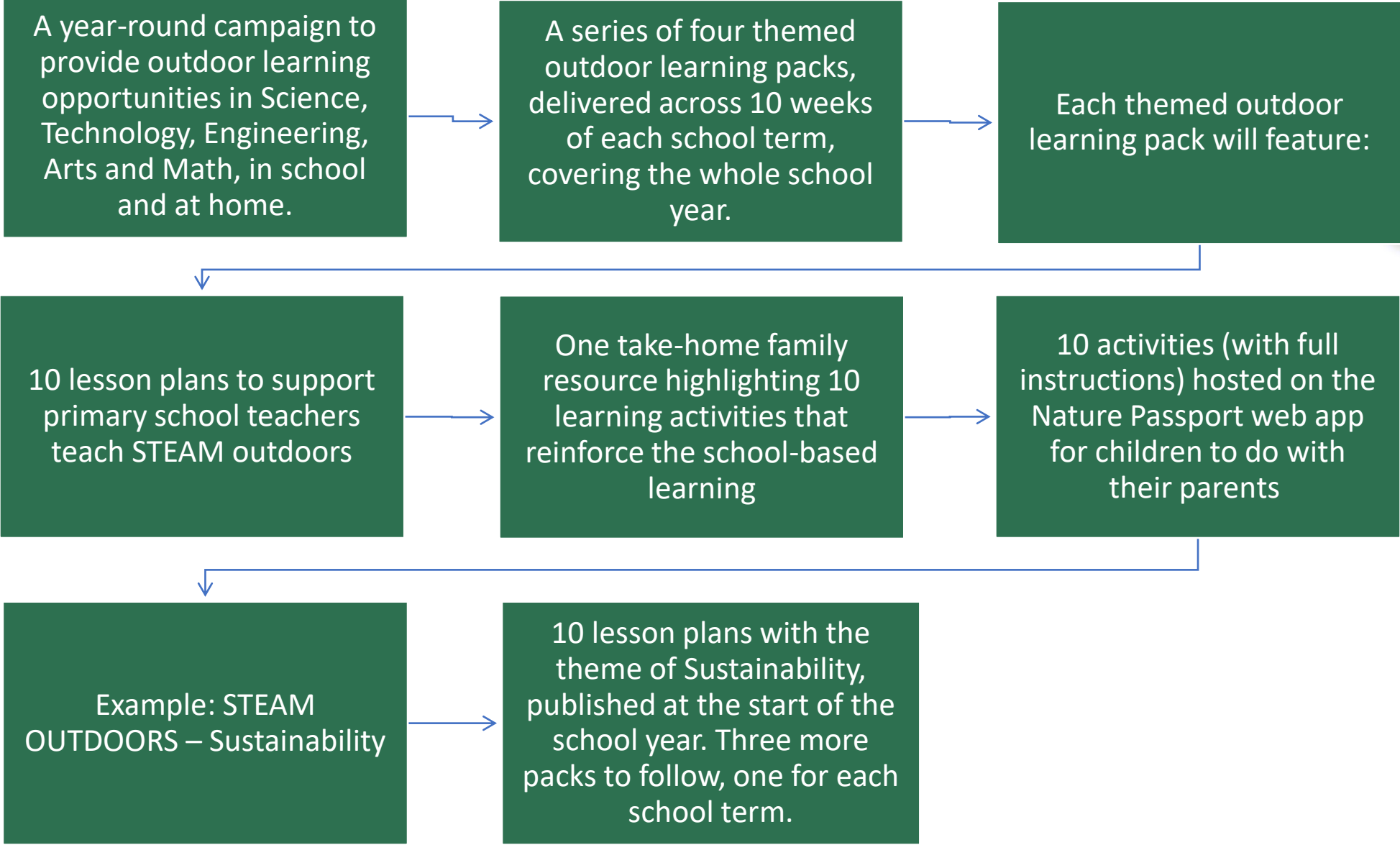
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STEAM Outdoors, what's involved?



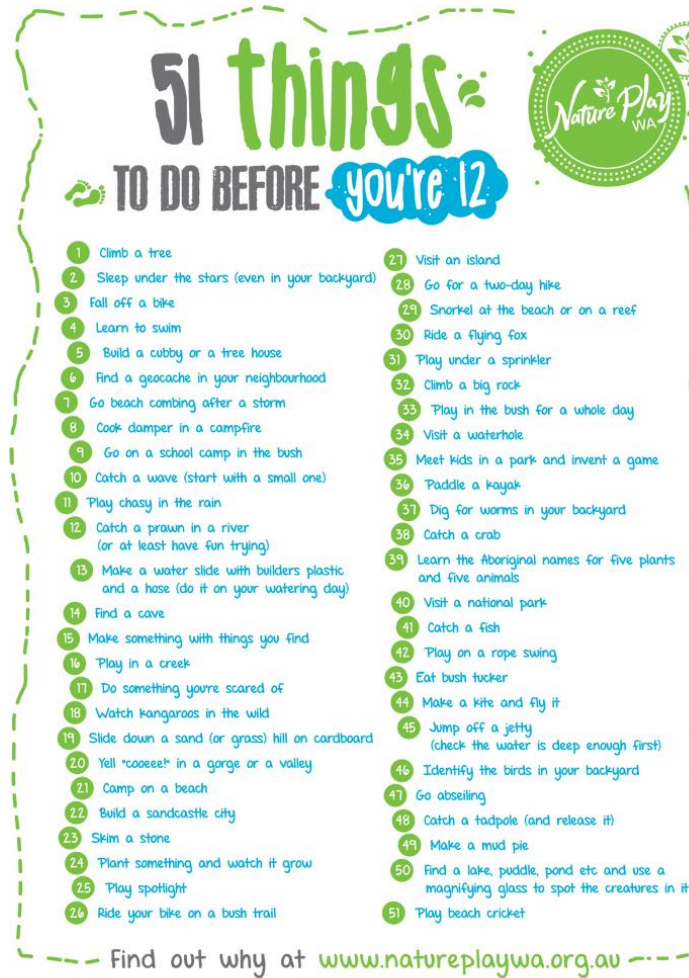
STEAM OUTDOORS



Examples: Things to Do Resources

Drawing inspiration from the proven success of:
My Outdoor Classroom Day Nature Passport Pack,
51 Things to do Before You're 12, and
25 Things to Do - Seasonal resources

STEAM Outdoors offers a year-round opportunity for teachers to engage primary school aged children, and parents, through useful and practical resources on sustainability, and providing chances to link these lessons and missions with making positive change in the world.



51 things TO DO BEFORE you're 12

1 Climb a tree
2 Sleep under the stars (even in your backyard)
3 Fall off a bike
4 Learn to swim
5 Build a cubby or a tree house
6 Find a geocache in your neighbourhood
7 Go beach combing after a storm
8 Cook damper in a camp-fire
9 Go on a school camp in the bush
10 Catch a wave (start with a small one)
11 Play chaotic in the rain
12 Catch a prawn in a river (or at least have fun trying)
13 Make a water slide with builders plastic and a hose (do it on your watering day)
14 Find a cave
15 Make something with things you find
16 Play in a creek
17 Do something you're scared of
18 Watch kangaroos in the wild
19 Slide down a sand (or grass) hill on cardboard
20 Yell "cooeee!" in a gorge or a valley
21 Camp on a beach
22 Build a sandcastle city
23 Skim a stone
24 Plant something and watch it grow
25 Play spotlight
26 Ride your bike on a bush trail
27 Visit an island
28 Go for a two-day hike
29 Snorkel at the beach or on a reef
30 Ride a flying fox
31 Play under a sprinkler
32 Climb a big rock
33 Play in the bush for a whole day
34 Visit a waterhole
35 Meet kids in a park and invent a game
36 Paddle a kayak
37 Dig for worms in your backyard
38 Catch a crab
39 Learn the Aboriginal names for five plants and five animals
40 Visit a national park
41 Catch a fish
42 Play on a rope swing
43 Eat bush tucker
44 Make a kite and fly it
45 Jump off a jetty (check the water is deep enough first)
46 Identify the birds in your backyard
47 Go abseiling
48 Catch a tadpole (and release it)
49 Make a mud pie
50 Find a lake, puddle, pond etc and use a magnifying glass to spot the creatures in it
51 Play beach cricket

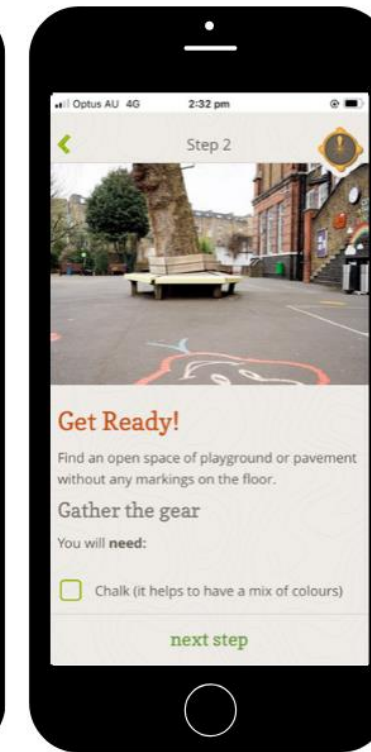
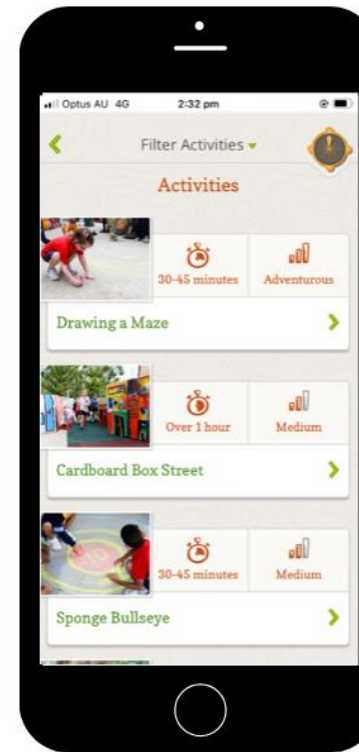
Find out why at www.natureplaywa.org.au



25 THINGS TO DO IN SUMMER

1 Find a quiet river, stream or lake to dangle your feet in the water & daydream.
2 Have an ice sledging race down a steep, grassy hill (ice sleds available from ice suppliers).
3 Play Nature Play Bingo! Download the Nature Play WA app & get finding.
4 Make your own icypoles with seasonal fruit & yoghurt - freeze & enjoy!
5 Explore geocaches in your area - a digital treasure hunt for the whole family.
6 Create Christmas decorations from natural materials (see our blogs for how-tos)
7 Build a sandcastle (or city!) & decorate with seaweed & natural treasures you find.
8 Camp out overnight - pitch a tent or sleep under stars.
9 Explore some urban nature. Find small spaces of nature in the city.
10 Build a cubby in your yard - a cool space to escape the heat.
11 Go for an early morning walk. How many different sounds can you hear?
12 Hire a kayak or paddleboards, or a surfboard or boogie board out & hit the water.
13 Find a spot you've never been to.
14 On your watering days, play under the sprinklers while the garden gets a drink.
15 Get muddy! Get the mud kitchen into action or hose down your sandpit for some messy fun!
16 Go mountain biking. (check "Things To Do - Cycling" section of our website for info.)
17 Teach yourself a new skill. Ride without training wheels, cross the whole monkey bars without stopping or practise your cartwheels.
18 Visit a national park (use Explore Parks WA's Parks Finder).
19 Explore rock pools at your favourite beach. How many sea creatures can you spot?
20 Try spelunking! Discover one of the many beautiful caves around WA.
21 Go on a family bushwalk (check the "Things To Do - Hiking" section on our website for trails).
22 Draw a target on the footpath in chalk, fill a bucket with water & use wet sponges for target practise. Can you hit a bullseye?
23 Go fruit picking - discover what fruits are in season.
24 Create a nature "treasure" box & add something to it from each adventure. How many can you collect over the holidays.
25 Visit as many nature playspaces as you can! (download Nature Play WA app to find one near you!)

Examples: My Outdoor Classroom Resources



Promotion – Social Media

Outdoor Classroom Day Australia Facebook Page

Posts

99
posts

Overall Engagement

9.5K
engagements

Page Impressions

449K
impressions

Overall Engagement by Type

Reactions 7.1K

Shares 1.4K

Comments 1.1K



Outdoor Classroom Day Australia

Published by Hootsuite [?] · 8 November at 10:38 ·

Thank you to the thousands of teachers, educators and parents who have supported the Outdoor Classroom Day Australia campaign in 2019, and shown their passion for taking our children's learning and play outdoors! Outdoor Classroom Day is more than just one day of learning outside; it's a global campaign to drive change, to improve the mental and physical health and wellbeing of our kids, and support them in an engaging and positive learning environment. To the 2,700+ schools and early learning centres who took 314,500+ children outdoors to learn and play, we thank you!

<https://outdoorclassroomday.com.au/>

#outdoorclassroomday #outdoorclassroomdayaustralia



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Promotion - Email

- **Promotional Call to Action Emails** - 64 instances of email contact, over 6 months, across 8 states and territories to promote campaign to all primary schools and early learning centres around Australia. **119,877 points of contact made.**
- **Monthly emails to OCDay Registrants** – 6 monthly update emails to all registered educators, highlighting new resources, promoting the importance of play and learning outdoors, and asking them to share the Outdoor Classroom Day story with their colleagues. **3,084 registered educators.**



Promotion - Website

Outdoor Classroom Day Australia

Website:

- 109,511 page views
- 83,326 unique page views
- 38,610 users



51 things TO DO BEFORE YOU'RE 12

Nature Play

1. Climb a tree
2. Sleep under the stars (even in your backyard)
3. Put off a bike
4. Learn to swim
5. Build a cubby in a tree house
6. Find a garden in your neighbourhood
7. Get beach combing (after a storm)
8. Get a jumper in a scumple
9. Live on a school camp in the bush
10. Catch a worm (start with a small one)
11. Play hidey in the rain
12. Catch a prawn in a river (or at least have the trying)
13. Make a water slide with builders plastic and a hose (or in an your swimming pool)
14. Find a cave
15. Make something with things you find
16. Play in a creek
17. Do something sports related of watch kangaroos in the wild
18. Slide down a sand (or gravel) hill on a cardboard 'hot balloon' in a garage or a valley
19. Sleep on a beach
20. Build a sandcastle city
21. Show a snake
22. Plant something and watch it grow
23. Play sprayer
24. Ride your bike on a bush trail
25. Visit an island
26. Go for a bushy bike
27. Sprinkle the beach or on a road
28. Ride a flying fox
29. Play under a sprayer
30. Catch a big rock
31. Play in the bush for a whole day
32. Visit a waterhole
33. Visit kids in a park and swap a game
34. Puddle a heap
35. Dig for worms in your backyard
36. Catch a crab
37. Learn the Aboriginal names for five plants and five animals
38. Visit a national park
39. Catch a fish
40. Play on a rope swing
41. Get both feet wet
42. Make a kite and fly it
43. Jump off a gully
44. Check the water is deep enough first
45. Identify the birds in your backyard (or nearby)
46. Catch a frog (and release it)
47. Make a mud pit
48. Find a lake, pond, park etc and use a magnifying glass to spot the smallest things
49. Play beach cricket

Find out why at www.natureplaywa.org.au

Drawing a Maze Upper Primary Activity 1

My Outdoor Classroom Lesson Plan

Mathematics
Create a maze using patterns, shapes and angles and extend digital technologies (ICT/MSW/201)

Resources:
• Paper (A4 or A3)
• Scissors
• Glue
• Coloured paper
• Ruler
• Stapler
• Markers
• Crayons
• A4 or A3 paper

Introduction:
This activity promotes problem solving, critical thinking and spatial awareness. Instead of putting pen to paper, first think to progress and let students get lost leaving their own way out!

Before You Head Out:
• Consider using a context or the Nature Passport App to take photos and record the activity (see the Reflection/Action sheet for further details).
• As a class discuss what a maze is.
• Have some examples of mazes (paper print outs or hand-drawn mazes printed and have one from a get-it-making them).
• Have a piece to replicate outside on the pavement (there is an example in the 'play' sheet the Nature Passport App). Discuss the maze at which you will visit.
• May encounter while drawing the big maze, and discuss before you head outside.

SCAVENGER HUNT

Scavenger Hunt *your move* more ways to get there

Summary
Students explore their surroundings by taking part in a scavenger hunt and find many things they would only see when walking, rather than when driving past in a car. See links to Western Australian Curriculum at end of this lesson plan.

Year Level: Pre primary - year 6
Teaching and Learning Resource
Parent resource

Learning outcomes
Students will be able to:

- Work as a team to explore their surroundings in a healthy and safe manner
- Use observational skills to find a range of objects
- Understand the variety of items that can be identified in one area

Preparation

- Make copies of the scavenger hunt enclosed or create your own.
- Decide when and where you would like to conduct the hunt with the students. It works well as a group activity and encourages team work and leadership skills.
- If possible, organise cameras so groups can photograph the items found.

Background notes
A scavenger hunt is an individual or group discovery of a (pre-prepared) list of locally found items. It complements the Your Move School program by highlighting the many things students notice when walking and cycling to school, that they miss when being driven. The scavenger hunt has many uses such as:






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