



Practical, fun
and engaging
activity ideas

Primary

Introduction

Welcome to this collection of ideas to help support you with home learning activities. There are lots of suggestions, as well as useful facts. You may wish to dip into this selection, modifying and adapting them to your child's interests and to your context. There is an overarching theme of spring but this is a catalyst and your activities could lead into all kinds of new directions.

These learning opportunities are about shared experiences and about having fun. Nature activities may be limited to your garden, window box or a book but so many new skills and insights can be acquired. Be creative and utilise what you have around your home. Always risk assess carefully and ensure children are supervised. Have fun with descriptions and incorporate a lexicon of language, a wonder of words and a fountain of fabulous facts.

Nature is really incredible and even if we cannot be really close to it, we can marvel at its magnificence.

Coming Out Of Hibernation



Some animals hibernate during the colder months of the year because it is hard to find enough food to eat and they struggle to survive the cold weather. Spring marks the time when these animals come out of hibernation. **Some of the animals that hibernate are hedgehogs, turtles, frogs, snails, bats, dormice and ladybirds.**

Fun Facts

- When animals are hibernating, they are not actually sleeping. Their heart rates and breathing slow down and their body temperature drops. For example, a hedgehog will slow its heartbeat down from 190 beats per minute to just 20 beats per minute.
- Hedgehogs normally hibernate for five or six months during the colder months.
- When snails hibernate, they attach themselves to a surface and cover themselves with their slime.

Activity Ideas

1. **Build your own hibernation home.** During autumn, hibernating animals prepare safe places where they will stay until winter ends. Think about what you would need if you were going into hibernation. What would you make sure you had with you or had done before hibernating? Using fabric, pillows, anything in your house, build a hibernation home that would keep you safe during the winter months.
2. **Create a hibernating box.** Use a cardboard box and design a hibernation box for one of your toys. Think about how to make it safe, comfortable and warm for them during the winter months. Talk about this together whilst you create it and explain why different things are needed.
3. **How to prepare for hibernation.** Imagine you have been asked by a family of hedgehogs to write a step by step instruction list for hibernation. What do they need to do to prepare? Think about what they need to build, eat, and do before hibernation begins. You could illustrate your instructions too.
4. **Animal fact file.** There are a lot of animals that you will start seeing more of now that they are coming out of hibernation in spring. Choose an animal that hibernates over the winter and create a fact file all about them. Try to find out as many facts as you can, such as what they eat, where they live, and how they are adapted to their environment, etc. Draw pictures, write about them or why not present your own nature programme all about the animal.



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Fascinating Frogs



Most frogs hibernate during the winter months. When the weather gets warmer during spring, they come out of hibernation. Spring is breeding time for frogs, so you can expect to see a large number returning to ponds.

Fun Facts

- Frogs absorb water through their skin so they do not need to drink.
- Many frogs can jump 20 times their own height.
- A group of frogs is called an army.
- The biggest frog in the world is the Goliath frog. It lives in West Africa and can weigh more than 7 pounds.

Activity Ideas

1. **Research the lifecycle of a frog.** Draw the lifecycle and label the different stages. Be sure to include the keywords spawn, tadpole and frog.
2. **There are lots of stories and songs all about frogs, such as 'The Frog Prince' and 'Five Little Speckled Frogs'.** Create your own frog themed story, poem or song. There are lots of words that rhyme with frog, so you could also try and make it rhyme.
3. **Frogs are well known for jumping.** Practise your best frog jumps and see how far you can jump. Work out a way to measure the distance of your jumps and record these. See if you can increase the distance by practising daily.
4. **Cut out and make some large lily pads.** Write different things that you are learning on them, such as numbers, letters, tricky words, maths problems, spellings etc. Place the lily pads around the room and you can jump from one lily pad to another. Children could jump between letter lily pads to spell out words, jump on tricky word lily pads to practise sight reading, or you could make it into a game by having answers on them, for example to maths calculations. Someone can shout out a calculation e.g. 4×2 and you must find the right answer and jump on that lily pad.
5. **Frogs are adapted to suit the environments that they live in.** Draw a picture of a frog and then label all of the ways that you can see that they are adapted to their habitat. You could think about their legs, bodies, feet, shape etc.



Minibeasts



Many minibeasts either hibernate or spend the winter as eggs or pupae so the best time of year to find these creatures is when the weather is warm from late spring into summer.

Minibeasts are invertebrates, which means they are animals without backbones.

Fun Facts

- There are more than 25,000 different types of invertebrate living in the UK.
- The stag beetle can grow up to 8.5cm long – that's giant for a beetle.
- The largest earthworm ever discovered in the UK was 40cm long.
- He was named 'Dave'.
- Slugs have four noses but only one foot.



Activity Ideas

1. **Research the lifecycle of a butterfly.** Create your own diagram to represent the life cycle of a butterfly from egg, to caterpillar (larvae), to pupa, then butterfly. Illustrate your lifecycle and add any facts you know about caterpillars or butterflies.
2. **Make a model or picture of a minibeast.** Choose a minibeast that you would like to make, draw or create. You could make it trickier, by designing it with moving parts. Think about the legs, wings or body and how it moves. Design and plan your model first, thinking about how you will make the parts move, for example a ladybird with wings that move side to side.
3. **Look outside your window.** Imagine that you are a minibeast out there exploring the world. You could be a ladybird, a woodlouse, a worm. Write about a day in your life as this minibeast. Where will you go? What will you do? Who will you meet? What does it feel like when a human comes near?
4. **Create a minibeast hotel in your back garden.** Research the habitats that minibeasts like to live in. They particularly like there to be lots of nooks and crannies to explore. Using what you find out, design and make your own minibeast hotel. Start off by making a solid structure (you could use bricks, pallets, wood). Then fill your hotel with lots of natural materials, such as dry leaves, grass, stones, straw, pine cones, old logs or moss.
5. **Welcome Dr Dolittle.** Imagine you are Dr Dolittle (a Dr who can speak to animals) and you have the opportunity to meet a minibeast. What would you ask them? What do you think their answers would be? Try creating a magazine report of your interview with a minibeast, or why not create an audio or video recording and use your best minibeast voice to take on the role!

Spring is a fascinating time for seeing birds. Some birds will be coming back from migration and some will be busy making nests. **Try looking and listening out of the window and see if you can see or hear any birds.**

Fun Facts

- Birds are vertebrates (animals with a backbone).
- There are around 10,000 species of bird worldwide.
- Some birds have hollow bones which helps them to fly.
- Some birds can't fly, such as the penguin and ostrich.
- Owls cannot move their eyes and they rotate their heads instead (look online for a picture of owls' legs too – fascinating!).



Activity Ideas

1. **Birdwatch.** Take a look out of your window and see if you can see any birds. Try and identify these birds and write down the names. Over time, create a tally chart of how many times you see different birds. Which bird is the most common where you live?
2. **Create a bird word search.** Research the names of different birds you might find in spring and create a word search with the names. How many can you hide in your word search for someone else to find?
3. **Create a bird nest.** Birds spend a lot of time creating a safe and secure nest to protect their eggs. Try and build your own bird nest with natural materials you find in your back garden. You could use grass, twigs, moss, but be sure to wash your hands afterwards.
4. **Bird Nest Baking.** Using chocolate, shredded wheat or cornflakes, and some chocolate eggs, create your own edible nests.
5. **Create a fly away story.** Birds migrate in the winter months to warmer climates. You can research which birds migrate by looking online or in books. Get imagining and think about where you would like to migrate to if you could, and write a story about where you go, what you see and what happens.
6. **Create your own wings.** Birds can fly anywhere with their wings. Design and create your own set of wings for you or a toy to wear. What colour will they be? What size? And where will they take you?
7. **Make a bird box or a bird feeder.** There are some great instructions from the RSPB about how to make a safe bird feeder, so have a look online and see if you can make a feeder that will bring birds flocking to your garden.

Baby Animals



During spring you often see a lot of baby animals around, particularly if you visit a farm. Animals have their young in spring because there is lots of food available and the longer days mean that they have longer to find food for their young.

Fun Facts

- The amount of daylight affects how many eggs a hen lays. This is why hens lay more eggs in spring and summer when the days are longer and lighter.
- A ewe is pregnant for approximately 5 months.
- Lambs can recognise their mothers from the sound of their bleat.
- Horses and cows sleep while standing up.



Activity Ideas

1. **Baby Animal Names.** Make a list of all the animals you can think of. Research, find out and write down the names used for their young (babies), for example sheep – lambs. Turn this into a poster and illustrate it with lots of pictures.
2. **Animal Counting.** There are lots of different ways we can use animals to help us count. For example, different animals have different numbers of legs to count. Chicks have 2 legs, so pick a number from 0-100 (if you want to go bigger than 100, go for it!) and count in twos from that number. Try drawing pictures of chicks to represent your number sequence. Lambs have 4 legs. Again, pick a number, count in fours and draw pictures to represent your sequence. You could use a 100 square to help.
3. **Collective Nouns.** We call different groups of animals by different names. For example, we call a group of sheep a flock. List as many animals as you can think of and then find out the collective noun for a group. How many can you find? You could create a quiz for your family too and see how many they know.
4. **Farm Videos.** A lot of farms share videos online about the baby animals and let you experience farm life even when you can't get there yourself. Have a look online for local farms that are sharing videos, such as the new lambs or the chicks hatching.
5. **Animal arts and craft.** There are lots of different ways you can draw or make animal art. Let your imagination lead you and see if you can create different pieces all linked to animals and their young. You could draw a picture of an animal using sketching and shading techniques. You could use a paper plate and creatively turn it into a baby animal. You could also make homemade pompoms with wool and turn them into a fluffy animal. Or why not make animal masks or practise your sewing skills by creating a fabric/felt animal.

April Showers

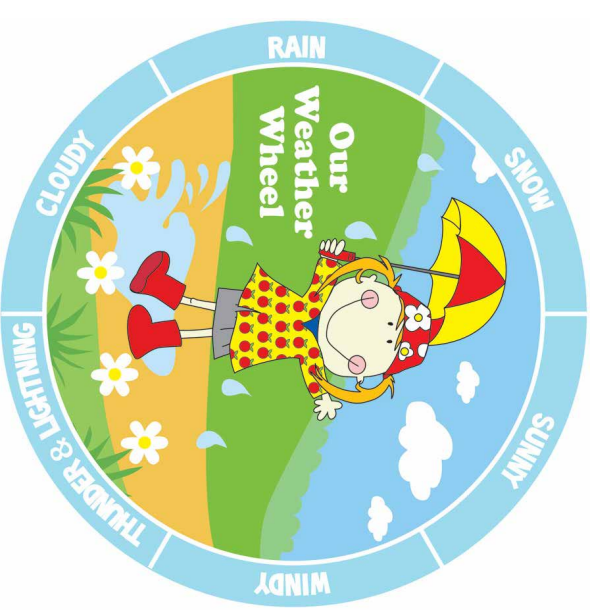


“March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers”

Proverb

Fun Facts

- Raindrops are usually drawn as a teardrop shape. In reality, when they first form high in the sky, they are actually a spherical shape. As they fall, their shape changes and the bottom of the raindrop flattens so they end up in a shape more like a jelly bean.
- Antarctica is the driest continent, averaging only 16.6cm of rain per year.
- Raindrops fall at an average speed of around 14mph, with larger raindrops falling as fast as 20mph.



Activity Ideas

1. **Make your own rain gauge.** Rain gauges are used to measure the amount of rain. You will need a plastic bottle (e.g. soft drink bottle), some stones or pebbles, tape, felt tip pen and a ruler. Carefully cut the top off the bottle (with adult supervision). Use a ruler and pen to mark a scale in cm up the side of the bottle. Start with '0' about 5cm from the bottom, so that you can calibrate your rain gauge. Place several small rocks in the bottom (for weight) then fill the bottle with water to the 0 mark (this means you have a 0 starting point). Place the top part of the bottle facing downwards into the gauge to act as a funnel (no cap on). You can tape the funnel and bottle together if you want. Position the bottle carefully outside. It needs to be on a flat, open area, away from trees. Wait for the next rain and observe and record the rainfall.
2. **Water Cycle.** Rain is an important part of the water cycle. Research the water cycle and draw a diagram or create a model to explain it. Try to include these key words; evaporation, condensation and precipitation.
3. **Investigate waterproof materials.** Choose a toy, such as a teddy bear or action figure and set up a science investigation to find the best waterproof material to make a poncho for the toy the next time it rains. Using water, test different materials that you could use, such as fabric, plastic, paper and decide which works best. Once you have decided on a material to use, you can get busy creating the poncho!
4. **Create a rainy day picture.** Have a go at blow painting with straws using liquid watercolour paint or watered down paint to make it easier to blow. Drop some paint onto a piece of paper and use a straw to blow the paint around into different patterns. Try this activity with different shades of blue, and create a rainy day picture by adding clouds, landscapes or umbrellas after the paint has dried.
5. **Write a 'senses' poem about rain.** Think about what it looks like, sounds like, feels like and smells like.

Rainbows



Rainbows are common in spring when the sun is low in the sky and we get a lot of rain! Rainbows are formed when light shines through water, like when the sun shines through rain. This light is bent and reflected, causing all of the colours that we see.

Fun Facts

- A rainbow is in fact a full circle of light but they look like arches when we see them from the ground.
- Sir Isaac Newton (in the 17th century) set out the idea that there were seven colours in a rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet (ROYGBIV).
- Since then, it has been confirmed that the seven colours are the ones that are visible, but there are also a whole range of others colours present too. Each hue blends into the next, so there are so many colours that we can't count them all.

Activity Ideas

1. **Create a mnemonic.** One traditional mnemonic for remembering the colours of the rainbow in order is 'Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain'. A mnemonic is a tool that helps us to remember certain facts – in this case it uses the first letter of each colour. Try and write your own mnemonic for remembering the colours of the rainbow.
2. **Research the science behind why we see rainbows.** Create an information poster to help teach others.
3. **Rainbow Story.** One of the most shared rainbow myths is that there is a pot of gold to be found at the end of a rainbow. Imagine you see a rainbow in the sky, and head off to find the end. What do you find when you get there? Write a story all about your adventures and whether there really is a pot of gold or something else? (If your child is not ready to write a full story independently, tell the story out loud and write it together, or draw a comic with short captions)
4. **Become an artist and create your very own rainbow.** You could make it as big or as small as you like and think about different artistic techniques to use. You could use handprints, finger painting, dots using a cotton bud, collage materials, potato stamping, shading, watercolours, chalks ... the options are endless!
5. **Skittles Rainbow.** Take a packet of Skittles sweets and arrange them in a rainbow pattern around the outside of a white plate or flat bottomed dish. Carefully pour water into the centre of the plate until it just covers the skittles. Watch and wait as a rainbow appears.
6. **Go on a rainbow scavenger hunt around your house or outside.** Try to find an item for every colour of the rainbow. Are there any colours you can't find?



Sowing and Growing



Spring is a time of year that we start to see signs of new life in many plants with blossom on trees, new shoots growing, leaves turning green and flowers starting to grow.

Fun Facts

- Plants produce the oxygen that is in the air we breathe.
- The Guinness World Record for the tallest sunflower is 9.17m and was grown by Hans-Peter Schiffer in Germany.
- 85% of plant life is found in the ocean.
- The fastest growing plant is a type of bamboo that can grow up to 91cm in a day.

Activity Ideas

1. **Decorate a plant pot.** If you have an old plant pot at home, give it a makeover and decorate it ready for planting. Alternatively, if you don't have a plant pot, there are lots of things you can repurpose, such as teapots, old teacups, pots and pans, jars, buckets etc. See if you have something at home you can upcycle into a plant pot.
2. **Plant it.** If you have seeds at home, get planting and watching them grow. If you don't have seeds, there are lots of things you can plant from food in your kitchen. Seeds from apples, lemons, peppers and tomatoes can all be planted by rinsing them, allowing them to dry out and then planting. You can also plant potatoes that have started to sprout by planting them with the shoot facing up in the soil. Onions can be planted too by cutting the bottom off the onion, and planting this in potting soil! If you do have sunflower seeds, why not plant them and see if you can beat the world record!
3. **Parts of a flower.** All the parts of a flower are very important and have their own jobs in helping a flower to grow. Draw a picture of a flower and then label the different parts and their jobs. Try to label the roots, stem, leaves, petals and flowers.
4. **Spring Plants.** There are lots of flowers and trees that people associate with spring including daffodils, tulips and bluebells. Have a look out of your window or if you go for a walk, what flowers or trees do you see? Draw a picture of the plants you see and identify and name them. Keep a record during spring of how these plants change and see what you notice.
5. **Vincent Van Gogh.** Look up the famous painting called 'Sunflowers' by Vincent Van Gogh. Let this inspire you to create your own sunflower painting or you could create an original masterpiece by choosing another flower to draw or paint.
6. **Beautiful Blooms.** There are so many ways you can make flowers using paper and a few craft materials. Egg boxes, coloured cake cases or tissue paper can all make great flowers. Explore and see if you can model a flower out of materials you have at home. You can also make coiled paper flowers by starting with a circle of paper, cutting the circle into a spiral towards the centre and then curl the paper round starting at the outside into the middle. Finally, glue the end of the curl to secure it.



Seasons



Spring is one of the four seasons.

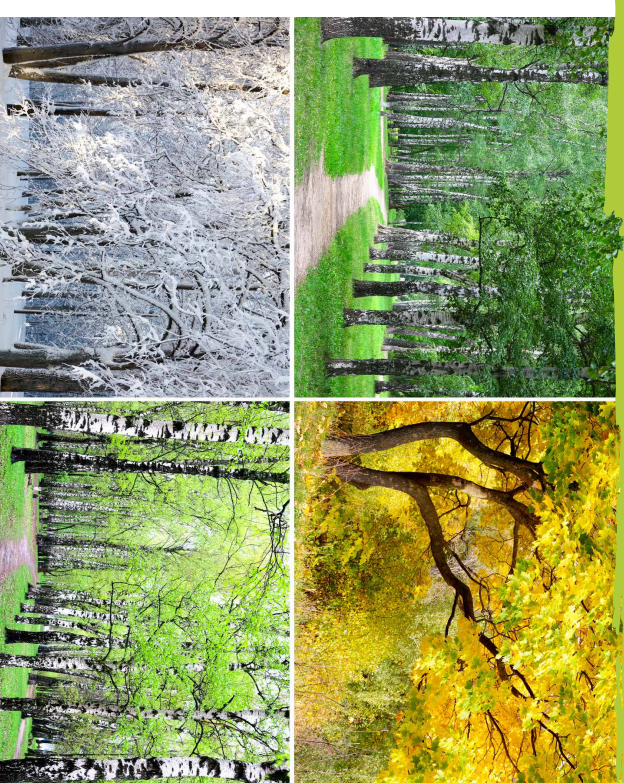
The four seasons are spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Fun Facts

- We have different seasons because of the earth's constant movement around the sun.
- In Australia, spring is in the months of September, October and November.
- Antarctica only has two seasons: summer and winter.
- The coldest temperature ever recorded in the UK during winter was -27.2°C.

Activity Ideas

1. **Is it spring everywhere in the world?** When it is spring in the UK, it is autumn in Australia. Research and find out the reason why we have different seasons throughout the year and why different countries have seasons during different months of the year. Create a leaflet, poster or TV programme to explain this and help to teach others.
2. **Create acrostic poems about the seasons.** In an acrostic poem, the first letter of each line spells out a word. Think about each season and create a themed acrostic poem. Try illustrating these with drawings that represent the season.
3. **Draw the seasons.** Split a piece of A4 paper into 4 rectangular boxes. Label the boxes spring, summer, autumn and winter. Start by drawing a bare tree outline in each box. This can look identical in each box. Then show how the tree will change across the seasons by drawing, colouring, painting or sticking. For example, will it have leaves on it? Will it have any animals living in it?
4. **Which is your favourite season and why?** Think about your favourite season and why you like it. Is it because you can do something you enjoy? Or is it because of a memory you have? Write about your favourite season and include details about why this is your favourite and what you enjoy doing.
5. **Dress for the season.** Most people change what they wear in each season because of the weather. As the seasons change, the clothes we see in shops also change and designers have to bring out new clothes and footwear. Think about the clothes that you would wear and become a designer by planning an outfit for one of the seasons. You could design this on paper, or create the outfits in real life. Either take photos of your creation or draw your outfit designs. Write an explanation about why you have chosen the particular combinations, for example, 'As winter is so cold, the trainers provide extra warmth with ...'. Who knows, you could be designing the next big trainer craze!



Super Spring!



For a lot of people spring is their favourite time of year with so many things to see and experience. Spring inspires people with their creativity and a lot of authors and poets have written about spring. **What do you like about spring?**

Fun Facts

- In spring, baby birds learn to sing by hearing other birds sing. During the first stages, they babble, much like human babies do.
- Your sense of smell can be stronger in the spring because there is more moisture in the air.
- The days get longer and warmer in spring.
- In the UK, the clocks go forward in spring by 1 hour at 1am on the last Sunday in March.

Activity Ideas

1. **Spring word scramble.** Think about everything you know about spring and write a list of words that make you think of spring. Scramble the letters in these words to create your own word scramble for someone in your family. So for example you may give them the letters 'NSPGR' and they would work out the answer was ... SPRING.
2. **Write a song all about spring.** Spring inspires people to be creative. Write a song all about spring and perform it to your family. You could make or use musical instruments and create a dance routine to accompany your song too.
3. **Spring Similes.** A simile is where you describe something as being 'like' or 'as' something else, so for example 'The blades of grass stand tall like soldiers.' Let spring inspire you to create your own spring similes and illustrate them. Can you think of one for lambs, chicks and daffodils?
4. **Create a spring alphabet.** Write out the alphabet down the left hand side of a piece of paper. Try to find a spring themed word or phrase for each letter of the alphabet and write it down. You could then illustrate your alphabet and put it up on display!
5. **Super spring alliteration.** Try to create alliterative phrases about different spring things, for example, "Dazzling daffodils danced at dawn". You could then turn these phrases into a spring poem. You could also make some funny ones too, such as "Larry lamb laughed loudly as he lounged in his limousine".
6. **Spring Quiz.** Create a spring quiz for family or friends with lots of interesting questions all about spring. Run a family quiz and make a spring themed prize for the winner. You could use some of the fun facts from the spring activity cards.

