The Great Outdoors
Chatterbooks activity pack
**The Great Outdoors**

**About this pack**

Here are books, activities, and discussion ideas, to take you out and about in The Great Outdoors – in real life and in your imagination.

The themes in this Chatterbooks pack include:

- Outdoor activities and adventures: gardening, camping, hiking, sport, picnics
- Nature and wildlife
- Exploring new places and environments
- Enjoying, sharing and making the most of the world we live in

At the start of the pack are general session ideas and for many of the featured titles there are further activity and discussion suggestions.

Get reading, talking, and doing things, in The Great Outdoors.

**The Great Outdoors** is brought to you by The Reading Agency and the publishing partnership **Children’s Reading Partners**.

**Chatterbooks** is a reading group programme for children aged 4 to 14 years. It is coordinated by The Reading Agency and its patron is author Dame Jacqueline Wilson. Chatterbooks groups run in libraries and schools, supporting and inspiring children’s literacy development by encouraging them to have a really good time reading and talking about books.

**The Reading Agency** is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more through programmes for adults, young people and children – including the Summer Reading Challenge, and Chatterbooks. See [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

**Children’s Reading Partners** is a national partnership of children’s publishers and libraries working together to bring reading promotions and author events to as many young people as possible.

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The Great Outdoors

Get together a collection of books for your group to browse and read and talk about, covering all the aspects you can think of for The Great Outdoors, getting ideas from the books and activities featured in this pack.

Things to talk about

What do people like doing best outdoors?
Ask each person to find/bring a book about their favourite thing to do outdoors – and talk briefly to the group about the book and their activity.

Which outdoor places do people like going to?
You could talk about favourite towns and beauty spots; or different kinds of environments such as the sea, hills and forests, woodland, gardens.

The Great Outdoors – the best things, and the worst things!
Imagine you’re camping, or on a hike.
Make a list of all the things people love about this – and a list of all the things they hate – e.g. when it rains!

Adventures in The Great Outdoors
Has anyone had any adventures? – fun or scary things that have happened to them when out exploring somewhere? Talk about adventure stories where people get cut off by the rising tide (e.g. Binny for Short by Hilary Mackay), or lost in caves (e.g. The Tunnels of Tarcoola by Jennifer Walsh), or face gangs of smugglers/criminals! (e.g. Enid Blyton Adventure and Famous Five books).

Things to do: Warm up activities

Packing my backpack

Everyone sits round in a circle and someone starts off by saying: “I’m going hiking on the coast path (or ‘in the mountains’, ‘through the jungle’, ‘across the desert’ – wherever you choose!) and in my backpack I will take a bottle of water…”

The next person then repeats the sentence and adds an item for the backpack – e.g. a bottle of water, spare pair of socks… Everyone takes a turn, remembering and repeating all the things that have been said, and then adding another item to the list. If someone forgets something on the list, then they are out. The winner is the person who hangs on in and remembers everything. See how long a list your group can come up with!
**Unscramble The Great Outdoors.**
Here are some words all scrambled up. See how many you can unscramble to find things you can do in The Great Outdoors. The pictures should give you a clue – but watch out as they’re not in the right order either! *(You could also do this activity without the pictures)*

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More activities

The Great Outdoors Quiz  (N.B. a few have more than one answer)

1. What should you do if you see a snake?
   a. Push it away with a stick
   b. Throw a stone at it
   c. Back away slowly and give it lots of room

2. You’re lost in the jungle and need to find drinking water. What’s the safest thing to do?
   a. Find water in a fast-flowing river
   b. Get your water from bamboo
   c. Drink un-boiled water from a pool in some tree roots

3. In The Jungle Book Shere Khan is
   a. A leopard
   b. An African tiger
   c. An Indian tiger

4. How many legs do spiders have?
   a. Six
   b. Four
   c. Eight

5. Which trees usually lose their leaves in winter?
   a. Deciduous trees
   b. Conifers
   c. Taller trees

6. How can a lizard escape when seized?
   a. It wriggles and slithers
   b. It sheds its tail
   c. It has a poisonous bite
7. What is a toad tunnel?
   a. A hole burrowed by toads underground
   b. A tunnel under the sea for toads to go to other countries
   c. A tunnel under a road specially made as an underpass for toads

8. When you get stung by a nettle, how can you straightway ease the pain?
   a. Rub the sting with a dock leaf
   b. Take an aspirin
   c. Wash the sting in cold water

9. What happens if you cut a worm in half?
   a. It turns into two worms
   b. The two bits join together and grow again
   c. It dies

10. A den is:
    a. Someone called Dennis
    b. A special place you can build outside to get closer to nature and the outdoors
    c. The lair of a wild animal

11. If you are in a bathyscape you are:
    a. Exploring the depths of the ocean
    b. Being portrayed in a picture of the sea
    c. Having a bath

12. What does it mean if your hair stands on end when you’re in a thunderstorm?
    a. You’re very scared
    b. You’re about to be struck by lightning
    c. A giant is lifting you up by your hair...!
A Chatterbooks ‘Great Outdoors’ hike
Take your group on a ‘Great Outdoors’ hike – this could be a special trip into the countryside, to the beach, or maybe a local park or country park.
Use at least one session to plan your hike – where you will go, what you will see and do, what you need to take. Make a check list together.
Your group could make special notebooks for their hike, to jot down and sketch the things they see and do. Do take photographs if possible.

It would be great to have blogs of your ‘Great Outdoors’ hikes for the Chatterbooks web page – you can contact Lynne.Taylor@readingagency.org.uk

Enjoy the Outdoors indoors
Set up a Chatterbooks campsite indoors – maybe in your library or classroom – then get your imaginations going.

1. Make a tent/den using sheets, blankets or large curtains, draped over chairs – see http://www.wikihow.com/Create-an-Inside-Tent
2. Or see if people have pop-up tents which they can bring in
3. Make a pretend campfire, with red & yellow & orange tissue paper screwed up and placed on a light box, or with a torch beneath.
4. Have some campfire treats to eat and drink – marshmallows, trail mix, juice
5. Act out/role-play some of the activities you would do at camp – travelling to the site, hiking, catching fish for supper
6. Have a go at some useful camping skills and activities – such as laying trails and tracking with twigs, leaves and stones; a scavenger hunt; eying knots (see Charlie Merrick’s Misfits by Dave Cousins) – or you could listen to tapes of birdsong and try to identify different birds
7. Best of all, sit round the fire and tell jokes and stories! Ask everyone to bring a favourite story to tell, or a favourite book to read a bit from.
8. And sing campfire songs. (You can find some ideas on these sites: http://www.songsforteaching.com/campfiresongs/; http://www.girlguidingsurreyeast.org.uk/g-campfire.html)
The Great Outdoors: Books to get you out and doing!

Picture Books

Rebecca Cobb  The Something  Macmillan  978-1447271819
When a little boy's ball disappears down a mysterious hole in the garden, he can't stop thinking about what could be down there - a little mouse's house? Maybe even a dragon's den. An imaginative adventure with a humorous and realistic twist.

Rebecca Cobb lives in Falmouth. She is also the author of Aunt Amelia, and has illustrated books by Richard Curtis, Helen Dunmore and Julia Donaldson.

What other creatures could be under the ground?

Katie Daynes & Christine Pym  How Do Flowers Grow?  Usborne  978-1409582137
This stylish, highly illustrated, interactive book introduces nature and science using a friendly lift-the-flap format. Text is kept to a minimum. It’s a great introduction to one of the fundamental themes of biology, and although it’s a board book aimed at younger children, it has lots of information which older children would enjoy.

Katie Daynes writes educational books for children. She loves tackling new subjects and has written about everything from trucks and toilets to space and Churchill. Christine Pym has illustrated The Tail of the Whale written by Ellie Patterson and shortlisted for the Booktrust Early Years Award. She lives in Derbyshire.

You could use this book to inspire your group to make their own lift-the-flap board books about a subject of their choice.

Chris Judge  The Great Explorer  Andersen  978-1849394017
When a famous explorer goes missing in the North Pole, his son, Tom, decides he must find him. And so a daring adventure, with many challenges, begins, across the treacherous icy terrain of the North Pole.

Chris Judge is an illustrator and painter based in Dublin. His work has appeared in advertising, newspapers, magazines and exhibitions around the world. His debut picture book, The Lonely Beast, won the Irish Children’s Book Award in 2011.

Have a look at this Youtube trailer for this book
Jeanne Willis & Jenni Desmond  The First Slodge
Little Tiger  978-1848690394
Once upon a slime, there was a Slodge. The first Slodge in the universe. She saw the first moon and stars, the first fruits and flowers. "Mine, all mine!" she said. But what if there was not just one Slodge ...but two? A story with the message that the world belongs to everyone.

Jeanne Willis has written over 250 books for children of all ages, from toddlers to teens. Her work has won numerous prizes, including the Red House Children's Book Award, the Nestle Children's Book Prize and the Silver Smarties Prize. She lives in London.

Jenni Desmond is an illustrator, artist and picture book author living in London. Her first picture book Red Cat, Blue Cat won the Cambridgeshire 'Read it Again' Picture Book award 2013.

John Yeoman & Quentin Blake  The Bears’ Water Picnic  Andersen  978-184390040
The bear has organized a picnic on the river for his friends. Everything is going swimmingly until they are disturbed by a loud croaking noise from among the lily pads. It's the frogs! The friends don't fancy the noise, so they move on to a quieter part of the lake. Unfortunately they soon find themselves stuck on a sandbank, and only the frogs can help them!

John Yeoman’s collaboration with Quentin Blake began in 1960, resulting in a long list of children’s books, including The Bear’s Winter House and The Boy Who Sprouted Antlers.

Quentin Blake taught illustration for over twenty years at the Royal College of Art, of which he is an honorary professor. He has won many prizes, including the Eleanor Farjeon Award and the Kate Greenaway Medal, and in 1999 he was appointed the first Children’s Laureate. In the 2013 New Year’s Honours List he was knighted for services to illustration.

The bear carefully picked up the fat frog. ‘We’d very much like to share our picnic with you, he said, ’if only you would stop going awrk, awrk.’
‘We can’t, awrk, awrk,’ said the frog cheerfully. ‘In that case,’ said the bear with a sigh, ‘I think we shall have to move to a quieter part of the lake.’

Another picture book story about a water picnic is Mr Gumpy’s Outing by John Burningham. Read this as well with your group and compare the two stories.
Fiction about The Great Outdoors

Tom Avery & Kate Grove (ill.)  
*Not As We Know It*  
Andersen  978-1783442263

Jamie and Ned are twins. They do everything together: riding their bikes, beachcombing outside their house, watching their favourite episodes of *Star Trek*. But Ned is sick, and one day, he may leave Jamie behind. When they discover a strange creature on the beach, Ned wants one more adventure and decides to keep him secretly in their garage. Jamie begins to hope that the creature might bring some miracle, and stop his brother from going where he can no longer follow . . .

Tom Avery has worked as a teacher with children in inner city schools in London and Birmingham. In 2010, his debut novel, *Too Much Trouble*, won the Diverse Voices Book Award. He lives in North London.

Kate Grove lives in London and is Art Director of Fiction at Andersen Press.

I breathed deep. I smiled once more. Somehow life would continue. I knew now, as certain as the sea’s song. ‘Boldly go,’ I whispered, and I turned back towards home, towards life.

*Star Trek* is Ned’s favourite film series and inspires much of his and Jamie’s approach to life: ‘Their continuing mission to explore strange new places, to seek out new life and junk on the beach. To boldly go’. (p7)  

Talk about books and films which inspire the people in your group.

Enid Blyton & Rebecca Cobb (ill.)  
*The Island of Adventure*  
Macmillan  978-1447262770

For Philip, Dinah, Lucy-Ann, Jack and Kiki the parrot, the summer holidays in Cornwall are everything they’d hoped for - until a dangerous adventure awaits them in the abandoned copper mines and secret tunnels beneath the sea.

Enid Blyton’s books have been among the world’s best-sellers since the 1930s. They are still enormously popular - including her *Famous Five* and *Secret Seven* series.

They swam back to the shore, took off their wet things, set them out to dry in the sun, and put on their dry clothes. Then they sat down to enjoy the sandwiches, chocolate and fruit that Aunt Polly had prepared for them. They lollled in the sun, tired with their swim, hungry and thirsty, enjoying the food immensely. ‘Food’s gorgeous when you’re really hungry,’ said Lucy-Ann, taking a huge bite at her sandwich.

Here’s a line from another of this ‘Adventure’ series:  
An adventure was one thing - but an adventure without anything to eat was quite another thing. That wouldn’t do at all. *Valley of Adventure*

Talk about favourite food for a picnic – and does food always taste better in the open air?!
Dave Cousins  *Charlie Merrick’s Misfits in I’m a Nobody, Get Me Out of Here!*  OUP  978-0192738233

‘HELP! Somebody get me out of here! This is all a HUGE MISTAKE! I can’t believe we ended up in this mess! Well ... actually I can. To be honest I’m not at all surprised. This is EXACTLY the kind of thing that ALWAYS happens to us!’

Charlie and his gang have ended up at the ‘GO WILD!’ survival camp for a whole week. They’re in the middle of the forest - with three days to make it back to base camp. But there's a rumour that a wild beast is on the loose; rival team, the Wild Warriors, are pinching their stuff; and Charlie and Nature just don't mix! They will have to use all their skill and guile to survive. Fun graphic presentation and lots of survival tips!

Dave Cousins completed his first novel in the back of a van, while touring with his band (who were almost famous!) Author of *15 Days Without a Head*, he lives in Hertfordshire.

‘This week will teach you some of the skills you’ll need to survive without these modern luxuries – skills our ancestors would have known as a way of life.’

Enjoy the Misfits’ adventures, and have a go at making a tarp shelter, and a paper cup for foraging. And there are handy guides for collecting rainwater, tying knots – and checking up on your wee! Make sure you drink plenty of (boiled) water!

Gillian Cross  *Mozart’s Banana*  Barrington Stoke  978-1781123676

When Alice Brett moves from the city to a little village school, she’s never seen a real live horse before. And famous village resident Mozart’s Banana is not just any old horse - he's crazy! The children are banned from riding him, but when Sammy Foster dares Alice to get on Mozart’s Banana’s back, she takes it very seriously...

Particularly suitable for struggling, reluctant and dyslexic readers aged 7+

Gillian Cross has been writing children's books for over thirty years and has had various jobs including working in a village bakery and being an assistant to a Member of Parliament. She won the Carnegie Medal for *Wolf* and the Smarties Prize and the Whitbread Children's Novel Award for *The Great Elephant Chase*.

For weeks and weeks, Alice leaned on that gate and stared at Mozart’s Banana as he trotted round the field. Every now and then, he stopped and stared back at her with his great, melting eyes. That was all. But she didn’t miss a day, rain or shine.

Talk about getting to know different animals, their characteristics, and how to approach them: e.g. dogs (can be trained); cats (usually go their own way!).
When a raven drops a white feather at the doorstep on the day of your birth, it is a symbol of your destiny. You are a Whisperer - a guardian of the wild. Many years have passed since the people of Meridina last knew war, but a shadow has settled over the kingdom. When Alice and her companion, Storm, sense a demonic presence in the forests, they send for help. With the entire balance of the natural world at stake, will Alice and Storm have to face the demons alone? This book explores the ideas of how we need to protect the wild.

Kris Humphrey has been a cinema projectionist, a blood factory technician and worked at an animal sanctuary in the Guatemalan jungle. He has recently completed the MA in Writing for Young People at Bath Spa University and A Whisper of Wolves is his first book.

Alice looked west, picking out the ruins of forts and castles in the foothills. Now abandoned, they had been built during Queen Amina’s reign, when war had raged against the seemingly unstoppable Narlaw. But the queen had banished them, bringing peace to Meridina for more than a hundred years.

See the Chatterbooks activity pack for A Whisper of Wolves

Rudyard Kipling, with J Kipling and C & W Drake

The Jungle Book  Macmillan  978-1447273073

The Jungle Book is a collection of Rudyard Kipling’s animal stories, interweaving moral lessons with classic tales. They include the stories of Mowgli, a boy raised by wolves in the Indian jungle, and Toomai of the Elephants, the story of a young elephant handler. This edition is illustrated with the original line artwork by J. Lockwood Kipling, and C.I.E and W. H. Drake.

Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay in December 1865. He returned to India from England shortly before his seventeenth birthday to work as a journalist. The Jungle Book was first published by Macmillan in 1894.

(Mowgli) grew up with the cubs….and Father Wolf taught him….the meaning of things in the Jungle, till every rustle in the grass, every breath of the warm night air, every note of the owls above his head, every scratch of a bat’s claws as it roosted for a while in a tree, and every splash of every little fish jumping in a pool, meant just as much to him as the work of his office means to a business man.

Choose an excerpt from one of the Mowgli stories in this book – preferably including Bagheera the panther or Baloo the bear – and read it aloud to your group, then talk about the story and answer any questions. Have a look at part of Walt Disney’s film The Jungle Book (ASIN: B00CSFXCYQ) and compare how the story is told in the two formats.
Gill Lewis  *Scarlet Ibis*  OUP  978-0192793560

Red asks, 'Will we always be together?'

'Always,' I say. 'Just you and me in that little boat, watching the scarlet ibis flying back to the Caroni Swamp.'

Scarlet’s used to looking after her brother, Red. He's special - different. Every night she tells him his favourite story - about the day they'll fly far away to the Caroni Swamp in Trinidad, where thousands of birds fill the sky.

But when Scarlet and Red are split up and sent to live with different foster families, Scarlet knows she’s got to do whatever it takes to get her brother back . . .

**Gill Lewis**'s first novel *Sky Hawk* won many awards including the UKLA Children’s Book of the Year and was shortlisted for the Red House Children’s Book Award, Waterstones Children’s Book Prize and the Branford Boase Award.

'Always,' I say. 'Just you and me in that little boat, as evening falls, watching the scarlet ibis flying back to the Caroni Swamp.'

Scarlet’s brother Red collects the feathers of different birds – these are some of the birds, see if you can find out what their feathers look like: magpie, blackbird, blue tit, guinea fowl, herring gull, house sparrow, mallard, ostrich, rock dove, song thrush and parakeet.

Red dreams of going to Trinidad and seeing a scarlet ibis: find out too about this bird.

**Alexander McCall Smith**  *Good Dog Lion*  Barrington Stoke (Little Gems)  978-1781123720

A beautiful, heart-warming story set in Africa about a young boy and his yearning for a pet dog. Timo and his mother have almost no money - but that does not matter too much, because Timo has his mother and she has him. They have their little house, their friends and neighbours - and the world about them. All of that can be enough for happiness. There is one more thing, though, that Timo would like to have ...a dog! High quality cream paper and a special easy-to-read font ensure a smooth read for all.

**Alexander McCall Smith** is the author of the successful *No 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency* series, as well as children’s books including *The Akimbo Adventures* and *The Perfect Hamburger*.

*They stood very still. The African bush is full of sounds. There are insects that whirr and shriek. There are birds that cry and chatter. There are things that you cannot see that make sounds you can hardly hear.*

*Have a go at the maze puzzle, and the riddles on the end-papers of this book.*
I came here to warn you. Before it's too late.

When their uncle Sylvan pays an unexpected visit, young water voles Kale and Strife know something exciting must be about to happen. But soon they'll be running for their lives, as a new danger threatens to destroy everything and everyone they care about. They will need all their strength and courage to survive their journey into the unknown.

Will they ever make it back home again?

This follow-up to the highly-acclaimed novel, The River Singers, will transport readers into a vivid world of riverbank creatures, where excitement and danger are never far away.

Tom Moorhouse lives in Oxford and when not writing fiction he works as an ecologist at Oxford University’s Zoology Department.

Simon Mendez is a published author and an illustrator of children's books and young adult books including I Love You, Sleepyhead and Little Bear and the Wishing Tree.

Rain lashed the Wetted Land. It bent the reeds and flattened the sweet-grass. It pired into the dykes until the water seethed with it. The onslaught was ceaseless: no sound but rain, no colour but grey, and no scent but wetness. The world was rinsed clean of everything else.

Water voles live in burrows, tunnelled in the river bank next to slow-moving, calm water. Find out which other creatures live near or in/on the river. Draw a picture of a river and add in pictures of these animals, birds etc, with notes about each creature.
Non-fiction – Things to do

Nicola Davies & James Lovelock  
**Gaia Warriors**  
Walker  978-1406312348

This book has interviews with "Gaia Warriors" all over the world who are working in fashion, architecture, conservation, research, the law and food; who are campaigning for people to switch off lights, cycle more, fly less; who are trying to live differently and to change minds – and having fun doing it!

**Nicola Davies** is a zoologist and has produced and presented radio and TV programmes, including *The Really Wild Show*. Her books for children include *Poo*, *Extreme Animals* and *Ice Bear*. She lives in Abergavenny.

**James Lovelock** is the originator of Gaia theory, inventor of the electron capture detector (which made possible the detection of CFCs and other atmospheric nano-pollutants) and of the microwave oven.

'We must be the change we want to see in the world.'  
**Mahatma Gandhi**

Have a look at **the Met Office** for good clear information on the science of climate change.

Mick Manning & Brita Granström  
**Wild Adventures**  
Frances Lincoln  978-1847804365

This book is packed with exciting outdoor activities for children and the whole family, to encourage awareness of the natural world, to develop self-sufficiency skills – and to show how much fun it is to explore nature. The activities include: tracking skills; wildlife spotting; foraging for wild food and cooking outdoors; stargazing; outdoor games; how to mimic birdsong; and making art from nature finds. With full-page pictures, and a glossary at the back, this is the book you need in The Great Outdoors!

**Mick Manning and Brita Granström** have a unique approach to picture information books: sharing the illustration between them and mixing words and pictures in inventive ways, they have won many awards, including the Smarties Silver Award. They live in Berwick upon Tweed.

See p44 **Nature Tables and Collections** – a great idea for sharing and displaying the things people find in their nature explorations: e.g. fossils, cones, leaves, shells, seed heads.
Abigail Wheatley, Emily Bone & Lisa de John

Gardening for Beginners  Usborne  978-1409550150

Gardening is a great way for children to discover how plants grow - and where food comes from. This is an introduction for absolute beginners, covering all the basics plus lots of hints, tips and ideas. No garden is required as there are lots of ways to grow plants in pots inside, or on windowsills. This book includes detailed instructions on how to grow herbs, salad leaves, tomatoes, potatoes, succulents, bulbs, beans, pumpkins, sunflowers and lots more - and even how to create your own pond!

Have a go at growing bulbs in a jar (p24), or cut and come again salad (p26)!

The Ultimate Survival Guide for Kids  QED Publishing 978-1781716809

QED presents the essential guide to surviving the perils of the modern world – expert tips and a free compass help budding explorers survive difficult, everyday life and death situations. Hopefully you will never face any of the extreme dangers in the first part of the book - but, just in case, here are some ideas about how best to survive! There are 200 full colour images and basic survival tips to make it through the worst scenarios. Ultimate Survival Guide for Kids is an authoritative guide, suitable for home, school, and the world’s most dangerous places! Don’t dare to go out without it!

Some scary situations – e.g. chased by bees or caught in a flood – but you never know, one of them might happen to you! Using this book compile a multiple choice ‘What do you do if....?’ quiz for your group – and then talk through the answers together.

365 Outdoor Activities You Have To Try!  Dorling Kindersley 978-1409348191 - with RSPB

Get outdoors to explore nature, with a new activity every day of the year! Watch shooting stars, build a frog house, or cook using the sun! Here you’ll find 365 outdoor pursuits for the whole year. From easy-to-do garden projects to more ambitious building projects, there’s an activity for all interests and abilities. You'll only need readily available materials such as paper, sand, or soil to complete projects. There are clear step-by-step instructions and photos show you what to do every step of the way. You can use whatever’s at your doorstep and get children and families exploring nature together.

Try these ideas with your group: Keep a nature day photo-journal (activity 13); Create a flower flick book (51); Dowse for water (300) – you can use a forked twig, or bent wire coat hangers. And find out more about how dowsing works and what it can be used for.
Non-fiction - Places and exploring

Annabelle Lynch  Let's visit Scotland  Franklin Watts  
978-1445137018

The Let's Visit series aims to encourage young readers to find out about all the great places the UK has to offer, and maybe even get out and experience them for themselves. Along the way, they will pick up some key geography learning. Let's Visit: Scotland explores eight great places to go in Scotland - from rugged Ben Nevis to far-flung Skara Brae. 

Annabelle Lynch is a freelance writer, specialising in young non-fiction.

Read through this book and talk about places in Scotland which people have visited. Look at how this book works, with a kind of ‘scrap book’ style - then collect information and pictures about your own town, or favourite place, and make a group ‘Let’s Visit’ book.

Stewart Ross & Stephen Biesty  Great Explorers  Walker  978-1406348668

From Pytheas the Greek, who sailed to the Arctic Circle without a compass, to Neil Armstrong landing on the moon - here are 14 extraordinary journeys by land, sea and air - each remarkable for the technology behind it, and for the inspiration it gave. Detailed, very informative storytelling, fantastic fold-out cross sections, maps and drawings enable readers to experience the excitement of exploration.

Stewart Ross writes fiction and non-fiction for children and adults. He has some 250 published titles to his name and when not writing, he runs creative and professional writing workshops at all levels in the UK and elsewhere.

Stephen Biesty has worked as an illustrator since 1985 creating information books for both adults and children. He became internationally successful in the 1990s for his best-selling ‘Incredible Cross-Section’ books published by Dorling Kindersley. He lives in Somerset.

Choose the adventures of one explorer from this book, look at the pictures in detail, and note down key points of information. Then write an entry for a log book, diary, or blog, describing one day in this explorer’s journey.
Salvatore Rubbino  

*A Walk in London*  
Walker  
978-1406337792

London - the perfect place for a girl and her mother to spend the day! Follow them in this picture book as they board the classic red bus on a tour of some of London’s most iconic landmarks: the awe-inspiring lions at Trafalgar Square, the ritualistic Changing of the Guard, the whispering gallery at St Paul’s. Fresh, lively paintings and breezy text capture the delight of experiencing London first-hand. And of course, what's London without a little rain?

Salvatore Rubbino is a rising new talent in the world of illustration. He was shortlisted for the Victoria and Albert Museum Illustration Awards for his picture book *A Walk in New York*.

In this book there are masses of snippets of information about London – see if your group can collect more info bites to add to these. They could choose another special London place – e.g. Westminster Abbey; Kew Gardens; Piccadilly Circus; the Shard – and draw and annotate it in the style of *A Walk in London*.

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Tracey Turner  

*LOST in the Desert of Dread*  
Bloomsbury  978-1408194669

Lost in the unbearable heat of the endless Sahara Desert, danger can creep up on you when you least expect it. Alone, you must battle your way through terrifying sand storms, survive life-threatening temperatures and escape hungry animals looking for a fast meal... Or die trying. Packed full of fascinating facts and essential information to get you to safety, *LOST in...* is a new interactive, adventure-packed series in which the reader must choose their own path to survive to the end of the story. Can you get out alive?

More titles in this series are: *LOST in the Jungle of Doom; LOST in the Mountains of Death; LOST in the Sea of Despair*

Tracey Turner has written books for children on many subjects, from rude words to the entire history of the universe. They include 101 *Things You Need to Know*, the acclaimed *Comic Strip series*, and the hilariously funny *World’s Worst Jobs*. She lives in Bath.

You could use these ‘choose your own adventure’ books as the basis of a session activity – lots to talk about!
Non-fiction – Nature

Nicola Davies & Mark Hearld  A First Book of Nature
Walker  978-1406349160

From beachcombing to stargazing, from watching squirrels, ducks and worms to making a winter bird feast, this book - part poetry, part scrapbook of recipes, facts and fragments - is a beautiful reminder that the natural world is on our doorstep waiting to be discovered.

Nicola Davies’ books include The Promise, Ice Bear, Big Blue Whale and the Silver Street Farm series. She graduated in zoology, studied whales and bats and then worked for the BBC Natural History Unit. Nicola lives in Abergavenny.

Mark Hearld is an artist, illustrator and designer based in York. He has exhibited widely with recent exhibitions at the Scottish Gallery and at Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Patchwork pigeons, made of sky,
Catch the rainclouds when they fly.

Lots of the information in this book is written as poems. You could each choose a favourite thing in nature, write a short poem about it and illustrate your poem.

Mike Dilger  Wild Town  Bloomsbury
978-1408173909

Wild Town takes you on a journey through the secret world of wildlife in Britain's towns and cities. With eye-catching photography, fascinating facts, and details on the locals as well as some unexpected visitors, this is the ultimate urban safari!

Mike Dilger is an ecologist, natural history presenter and writer with a life-long passion for British and tropical flora and fauna, of which he has profound experience and encyclopaedic knowledge. He has worked on many TV wildlife programmes, including appearances as wildlife reporter for BBC’s The One Show.

The stunning photographs in this book make great starting points for discussion about the wildlife children can see about them in towns and scrubland.
Vivian French & Jessica Ahlberg  
*Yucky Worms*  
Walker  978-1406328080

Fun, fascinating and wriggly worms! The humble earthworm plays a significant role in the environment, as all farmers and gardeners know, aerating the soil and composting dead matter. Lively pictures and text show how they do this.

Vivian French writes novels and picture books, including *Growing Frogs* (shortlisted for the Kurt Maschler Award), and the *Tales from the Five Kingdoms* series. She lives in Edinburgh.  
Jessica Ahlberg is the illustrator of *Half a Pig* and daughter of children's author Allan Ahlberg. She was a great inspiration to her parents' work, and is the baby featured on the back cover of *Peepol* with Janet and Allan. Jessica lives in London.

See the section ‘How to be a Wormologist’—observation and activity ideas for your group.

Kay Maguire & Danielle Kroll  
*Nature’s Day*  
Wide-Eyed  978-1847806086

Beginning in spring, this first book of nature revisits nine different places, including the farm, the back garden and the woods, during each of the four seasons and explores the changing scenery and animal life. It has informative and fun texts teamed with gorgeous illustrations.

Kay Maguire writes for magazines and websites and is the author of the award-winning RHS *How to Grow Your Own Crops in Pots*. She lives in London.  
Illustrator Danielle Kroll has previously worked with global brands including Anthropologie and Land of Nod. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Choose an environment and a time of year and make a group collage about it, with information items added, in the style of the double-page spreads in this book.

Richard Walker  
*Eyewitness Activity - Nature Ranger*  
Dorling Kindersley  978-0241185407

Look around and discover the wildlife that surrounds you, from studying flowers and secret senses, to the animals that only come out after dark. Learn how to become a wildlife detective and see animals in action. Get building, making and creating: build a bat box, trail animals! Each of the 30 activities have easy-to-follow instructions and specially commissioned photography to help you complete each nature project as you search rock pools or make a simple pond.

Richard Walker is author of DK’s *Encyclopedia of the Human Body*. He trained originally as a zoologist and taught for a number of years before becoming a writer and consultant.

Some activities to enjoy: try ‘Studying flowers’ (p38) or making a shell showcase (p64)
## The Great Outdoors: More Reading

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**Answers**

**Scrambled:** WALK, SKYDIVE, SWIM, BIRDWATCH, CRICKET, ORIENTEERING, FLY A KITE, RUN, FOOTBALL, SURF

**Quiz:** 1c, 2b, 3c, 4c, 5a, 6b, 7c, 8a, 9c, 10b & c, 11a, 12b