

Exploring and developing the themes in the book
"Planet Earth Needs Our Help"

Notes for Schools/Education Centres - links to the Primary National Curriculum 2013 (UK)

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Planet Earth Needs Our Help
Meeting the Needs of the Primary Curriculum

[Sections in RED are direct quotations from the Primary National Curriculum 2013]

Language and literacy

- 4.1 Teachers should develop pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject.
- 4.3 Teachers should develop pupils' reading and writing in all subjects to support their acquisition of knowledge.

Planet Earth Needs Our Help is a stimulating resource which encourages reading and listening skills, develops vocabulary (4.4), the communication of ideas, and reasoning, and provides a basis for a number of creative writing and artistic activities. The text provides useful material for comprehension, whilst the illustrations stand alone, to offer a range of opportunities for composition and creative writing. The pages are photocopiable and can be adapted to create worksheets to assess and develop specific language skills.

For older pupils, the topic can be used as a basis for discussions and the consideration of differing viewpoints. (4.3) The writing they do should include narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations: such writing supports them in rehearsing, understanding and consolidating what they have heard or read.

The book is particularly written to engage readers with the following speaking skills: Statutory requirements for Key Stage 1:

- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others

The accompanying notes suggest activities which aid reading comprehension:

- develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
- being encouraged to link what they read or hear read to their own experiences
- becoming very familiar with key stories and fairy stories
- discussing word meanings, linking new meanings to those already known
- discussing the significance of the title and events
- making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done

- predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far
- participate in discussion about what is read to them, taking turns and listening to what others say
- explain clearly their understanding of what is read to them.

In Key Stage 2, these themes can be developed, using Planet Earth Needs Our Help as a starting point for more detailed exploration of its subject and themes (especially where pupils are familiar with the book from KS1)

- listening to, discussing and expressing views about a wide range of contemporary stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently.
- develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
- writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)
- writing about real events
- writing for different purposes

Science

The vivid illustrations in Planet Earth Needs Our Help can be used to encourage observational skills (Year 1). For example, the early pages in the story book, and suggested activities in the notes accompanying the book, link to the Statutory Objectives for Year 1:

- identify and name a variety of common wild and garden plants, including deciduous and evergreen trees
- identify and name a variety of common animals including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals
- identify and name a variety of common animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores
- observe changes across the four seasons
- observe and describe weather associated with the seasons...

For Year 2, the book introduces the concepts of habitat and of the basic needs of animals and plants.

- explore and compare the differences between things that are living, dead, and things that have never been alive
- identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other
- identify and name a variety of plants and animals in their habitats, including micro-habitats
- describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food.
- find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)

The pages in the book about ‘what we can do’ could lead into discussion of everyday materials.

For KS2, the book can provide an introductory stimulus for discussion of how we can observe and record climate change, and of simple explanations of processes.

- asking relevant questions and using different types of scientific enquiries to answer them
- setting up simple practical enquiries,
- making systematic and careful observations and, where appropriate, taking accurate measurements
- gathering, recording, classifying and presenting data in a variety of ways to help in answering questions
- recording findings using simple scientific language, drawings, labelled diagrams, keys, bar charts, and tables
- reporting on findings from enquiries, including oral and written explanations, displays or presentations of results and conclusions
- using results to draw simple conclusions, make predictions for new values, suggest improvements and raise further questions
- identifying differences, similarities or changes related to simple scientific ideas and processes
- using straightforward scientific evidence to answer questions or to support their findings.

Again, the illustrations can be used to consider rocks, soil, fossil evidence, light reflection (and absorption).

- explore the requirements of plants for life and growth (air, light, water, nutrients from soil, and room to grow)
- identify that animals, including humans, need the right types and amount of nutrition, and that they cannot make their own food; they get nutrition from what they eat
- describe in simple terms how fossils are formed when things that have lived are trapped within rock
- recognise that soils are made from rocks and organic matter.

For Year 4, the key concepts of living things in their environment, and environmental change, are easily introduced.

- recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things.
- identify the part played by evaporation and condensation in the water cycle and associate the rate of evaporation with temperature.

Art and Design

Planet Earth Needs Our Help not only uses vivid and high quality artwork as a basis of the illustrations, it can provide a starting point for the pupils' own creative work.

- to use a range of materials creatively to design and make products
- to use drawing, painting and sculpture to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination (KS1)

Creative activities in KS2 could include all types of 2D and 3D work, but also book design and creating learners' own fact or fiction works. This approach overlaps with the Design and Technology curriculum, where discussion of re-use and recycling could lead to simple processes of designing and making things.

Geography

- understand the processes that give rise to key physical and human geographical features of the world, how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time [*our emphasis*]

There are numerous opportunities to use the book as a starting point for Geographical work: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, the water cycle, and natural resources.

- identify seasonal and daily weather patterns in the United Kingdom and the location of hot and cold areas of the world in relation to the Equator and the North and South Poles (KS1)
- describe and understand key aspects of:
- physical geography, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle (KS2)

History

The illustration of the mammoth links to the topic of neolithic life, whilst the general topic of natural (as opposed to anthropogenic) climate change can be introduced in considering the rise and decline of several civilisations.

- events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally (KS1)
- changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age
- late Neolithic hunter-gatherers

Additional resources that may be useful to you and feedback form:

There is an illustrated, narrative & video of this story, which can be accessed via my website. This can be used for children to listen to, whilst following the words and images in the book.

There are also additional free handouts and notes that can be downloaded via the website.

A power point version of this story is also available on request.

Please use the feedback form on the next page to make notes and let me know if this resource will be suitable for primary schools and education centres as it presents now. If you think it could be improved upon to assist teachers in the classroom and/or education centres, please say in the comments section.

You can find a link to a feedback form on my website www.planetearth.freeplay.me.uk

Thank you.

FEEDBACK notes: "Planet Earth Needs Our Help" A resource pack for schools and education centres

WHAT WORKS (please say why)	WHAT DOESN'T WORK (please say why)	comments or suggestions