

Learning the Landscape through Language

RESOURCE SHEET 2 – ANIMALS IN SHROPSHIRE

This is an exercise that the whole class could do together, or that children could work on in groups. Print and laminate the animal cards, so that the image is on one side, and the text on the other (if you think the children might turn the cards over, perhaps produce two sets, one without the text).

Exercise one – part one

For class work, hand out one card to each child, so that they can see the image of the animal. In turn, ask them to tell the class what their animal is, and whether they think they might find it in Shropshire. Let the children keep the cards, but record (on a white board or similar) which animals are commonly found in Shropshire and which are not. Now ask the children what they know about each of these animals (this can be done as a whole class), and whether they have ever seen these animals in Shropshire. Make a note of their answers. They could talk about, for example:

- Where they have seen the animal (in a field, in the zoo, on TV)
- Where the animal might live
- What kind of habitat the animal needs (mountains, fields, water, underground)
- What kind of animal it is (farm animal, pet, wild animal)

Exercise one – part two

Using all of the cards, ask the children to think about how they might put the animals into groups. Different types of group could be:

- Birds
- Domesticated animals
- Farm animals
- Fish
- Animals that are extinct or rare in the UK

How many ways are there to group these animals? Ask the children to think about classification.

Focusing on the unusual animals (which will probably be bear, crane, eagle, eel, hawk, raven, wildcat and wolf), ask the children where they think these animals are found today.

Now, tell the children that all of these animals were at one time seen in Shropshire. Ask them to look at the back of the cards, and read out what it says. How do we know that these animals once lived in Shropshire? Why do they think that these animals no longer live in Shropshire?¹ Talk about the settlement of the Anglo-Saxons. Why did they name places? Why do you think they named places after these animals? Think about:

- Animals as resources (eels and cranes could be eaten)
- Animals as predators (would a farmer like having a wolf as a neighbour?)

¹ Note the reintroduction of wolves at Mainstone!

- Animals as prey (animals were hunted: e.g. badger, deer, fox, wolf, wildcat, hare, rabbit, woodcock)

Exercise two

Working individually or in groups, ask the children to focus on one of the unusual/extinct animals. Ask them to look at a map of Shropshire and think about:

- Where might this animal have lived?
- What sort of landscape would it have needed to survive (e.g. woodland, mountains, water)

In groups, ask the children to conduct some research on one of the animals, and perhaps create a poster or collage with the information they find. This could include:

- When was the animal seen in Shropshire?
- Where did it live, and what was its habitat?
- What might be the reasons for its extinction/disappearance?

Field-Trip

WolfWatch UK at Mainstone might be a good place for a related field-trip.

These exercises support the following aspects of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 2:

Geography

- Name and locate...geographical regions [of the UK] and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features (including hills, mountains, coasts and rivers), and land-use patterns, and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time
- Understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom
- Describe and understand key aspects of physical and human geography (including types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources)

History

- Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses
- Britain's settlement by the Anglo-Saxons (Anglo-Saxon invasions, settlements and kingdoms: place-names and village life)
- A local history study

Science

- Gathering, recording, classifying and presenting data to help answer questions
- Explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment

- Recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways
- Use the local environment to explore and answer questions about animals in their habitat
- Recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things