

*This learning resource was created by LEEDS 2023 Year of Culture as part of The Wild Escape project, in partnership with Art Fund and Leeds Museums and Galleries*

## **The Wild Escape: Beaver Learning Resource**

**Who this resource is for:** KS2 learners

**What materials you'll need:**

- Beaver facts, printed worksheet or web resources
- Sticks or old twigs, cardboard, blue or white tack
- Paper, pencils or coloured pens

**Aims & objectives:**

The activities in this resource are designed to take 2-3 hours but can be adapted depending on your group and setting.

Learners will:

- Explore a native UK creature.
- Learn about its natural habitat, ecosystem and threats to its environment.
- Use this knowledge to create an artistic response which can be entered into The Wild Escape online exhibition.

**Curriculum links:**

*Art & Design: to improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture with a range of materials [for example, pencil, charcoal, paint, clay]*

*English: pupils should become more familiar with and confident in using language in a greater variety of situations, for a variety of audiences and purposes, including through drama, formal presentations and debate.*

*Biology: explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment. Recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things.*

**Useful links:**

- [MyLearning resources on animals and their homes](#)
- [Learning resources on beavers](#)
- [Rewilding Britain resources about beavers](#)
- [RSPB resource on beaver reintroduction in the UK](#)
- [Video about beaver re-introduction in Devon](#)

**Activities:**

1. Using one of the web sources above, set learners a comprehension exercise about beavers, their homes and habitats and the benefits of these creatures to their



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environment. Then you could host a quiz about beaver benefits! Here are some questions you could ask:

- Q: What is in a beaver’s front teeth to make them stronger?
  - A: Iron
  - Q: What is a dam?
  - A: A wall made of twigs and mud in a canal or river.
  - Q: What does a dam do to help the flow of water?
  - A: It can slow it down reducing the flood risk and it helps contain water in a drought.
  - Q: What do beavers eat?
  - A: They are vegan and eat plants, grasses, twigs and leaves.
  - Q: Which fish benefit from beavers being in the environment around them?
  - A: Salmon
  - Q: What is a beaver’s home called?
  - A: A lodge
2. Learners could extend this exercise and work together in groups to create either a poster, leaflet or presentation about why beavers are so important and beneficial to their environment.
  3. Introduce the idea of extinction to learners. Recalling prior learning ask learners which other creatures they know who are now extinct (e.g. dinosaurs, dodos, sabre toothed tigers.) Talk to learners about the reasons animals become endangered or extinct – for example, their environment changing, catastrophic events, or predators. Beavers were hunted nearly to extinction 400 years ago and have been successfully re-introduced in the UK. You could watch the video about beaver re-introduction in Devon.
  4. Ask learners to think about what a beaver’s perfect environment would look like. After talking with their learning partners, you could make a whole class collage using craft materials, paper, card, fabric, colours or recycled materials. Learners could do this individually or in groups.
  5. Using small twigs or cardboard, ask learners to add a dam into their environment.
  6. Finally, ask learners to create a design of a beaver, using paper or card and coloured pens or pencils.
  7. Add the designs of the beavers into the imagined environment the learners have created!

