

# Let's Go Outdoors!



# Explorers



## Tune in at the towpath: Exploring your senses by the canal

Spending time by the canal is a wonderful way to relax and enjoy the natural world around us. This activity helps you and your family slow down, pay attention to your senses, and discover the little wonders that often go unnoticed. It's all about being present in the "here & now" and noticing how it makes you feel.

### What does being present mean?

Being in the present moment means focusing on what's happening right now. When we're truly present, we can really enjoy our surroundings. Our minds are free from worries about the future and thoughts about the past. When we focus on the present, our bodies and minds can feel much calmer, which is great for our wellbeing!

Here are three ways you can explore being present by the canal:

#### Option 1: What can you see?

##### A nature scavenger hunt



**Things you need:** Your eyes (Optional: Paper and pen to tick off items)

- 1. Find a comfortable spot:** (Remember: Stay Away From the Edge) with your family beside the canal.
- 2. Look around slowly:** Take a few moments to look around you carefully. What do you notice?
- 3. What do you see?** Work together as a family to see if you can spot the following things. For each item you find, talk about what you see and how it makes you feel.

Something green

Something moving (not water or people)

Something still

Something tall

Something small

A reflection in the water

A pattern in nature

Something that makes you smile



#### Think about it:

Which of these things did you find easily?

Which were harder to spot?

What other interesting things did you notice?



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## Option 2: Creating a canal sound map

### An enhanced exploration

**Things you need:** Paper and colouring pens or pencils.

- 1. Find a quiet spot:** (Remember: **Stay Away From the Edge**) with your family beside the canal.
- 2. Prepare to listen deeply:** Before you start drawing, take a minute or two for a Sound Relaxation. Close your eyes gently (if you feel safe and comfortable). Take three slow, deep breaths. With each exhale, focus on the sounds around you. Notice the layers of sound – are there sounds that are close by and others that are further away?
- 3. Open your eyes and draw your map:** On a piece of paper, draw a simple circle or shape in the middle to represent where you are sitting. This is the centre of your sound map.
- 4. Map the sounds with detail:** As you hear different sounds, draw symbols or write words on your paper in the direction you think the sound is coming from. Include some of the details you noticed:



Think about the different qualities of the sounds:

#### Rhythm:

Are the sounds steady, repeating, or irregular? (e.g., the steady drip of water, the irregular flap of a bird's wings).

#### Pitch:

Are the sounds high or low? (e.g., a high-pitched bird song, the low rumble of a distant boat).

#### Volume:

Are the sounds loud or quiet? (e.g., a loud splash, the quiet rustling of leaves).

#### Source:

Can you guess what is making the sound? (e.g., wind, insects, people, water).

- Bird singing:** Draw musical shapes and maybe add a little description like “high-pitched trill” or “soft warble.”
- Water sounds:** Use wavy lines, and perhaps note “gentle lapping,” “splashing,” or “trickling.”
- People talking:** Draw speech bubbles and maybe indicate if the voices are near or far, loud or quiet.
- Boats passing:** Draw a small boat shape with an arrow showing its direction and note if it's a “distant hum” or a “loud engine.”
- Wind in the trees:** Use swirly lines and maybe add “gentle rustle” or “strong whoosh.”
- Insects buzzing:** Draw tiny dots with wiggly lines and perhaps note “high-pitched buzz” or “low hum.”



Distant chit chat!

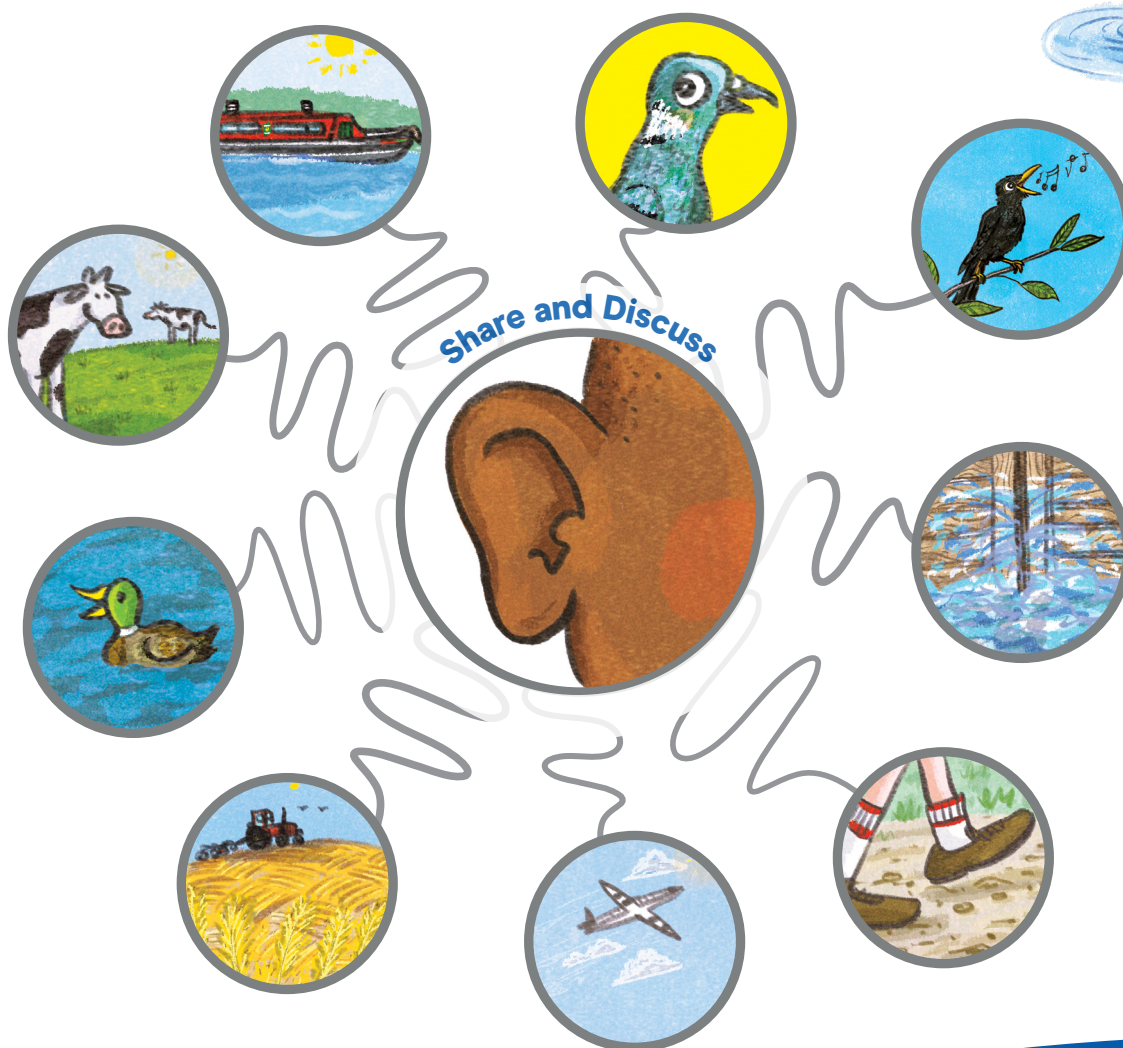


Gentle lapping...

**5. Listen and layer:** Continue to listen for a few more minutes, adding any new sounds you hear to your map. You can even layer sounds – for example, if you hear a bird singing while the wind is rustling the leaves, you can include both on your map.

**6. Share and discuss:** Once everyone in your family has created their sound map, share them with each other.

- What was it like to really focus on the sounds? Did you notice sounds you usually tune out?
- What were the most surprising or interesting sounds you heard?
- How did you represent different sounds on your map? Did anyone use similar symbols?
- What did the sounds help you to feel? (peaceful, curious, alert?)





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## Option 3: Texture scavenger hunt

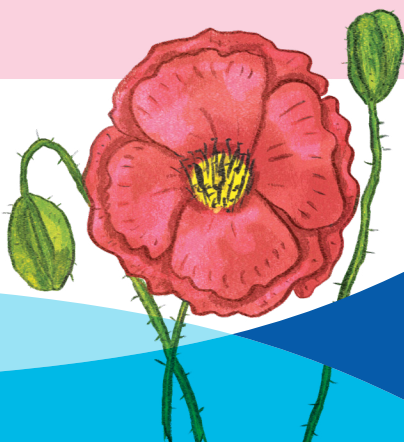
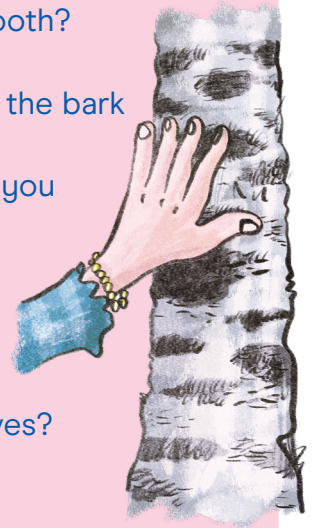
**Things you need:** (Optional) A small container (like a paper cup or bag) to collect non-living, fallen items if you wish.



1. **Find a safe area:** (Remember: Stay Away From the Edge) beside the canal where you can look for different items without getting close to the water or anything that looks unsafe to touch.
2. **The scavenger hunt list:** Work together as a family to find the following based on how they feel or look. For each item, take a moment to really experience it and talk about your observations and feelings.

### Scavenger hunt list:

1. **Something smooth:** Look around for something that feels smooth. This could be a worn pebble, a piece of smooth bark, or even a smooth part of something made by people.
  - How does it feel on your fingers? Cool? Silky? What else feels smooth?
2. **Something rough:** Find something with a rough texture. This might be the bark of an older tree, a textured stone, or a fallen, dry seed head.
  - What does the roughness feel like? Bumpy? Scratchy? How would you describe the texture in more detail?
3. **Something red:** Keep your eyes peeled for something that has the colour red in it. This could be a fallen petal, a leaf that's changing colour, or even a small detail on something made by people.
  - What shade of red is it? Bright like a poppy? Deep like autumn leaves? How does the colour make you feel?
4. **Something that makes you feel calm:** Look around at the environment. What do you see, feel (like the gentle breeze), or hear that brings a sense of peace or calm? This could be the slow flow of the water, the quiet rustling of leaves, the sight of green plants, or the warmth of the sun. There might not be a specific item to collect, but rather an observation or a feeling.
  - What is it that makes you feel calm? Is it a sight, a sound, or a feeling on your skin? Why do you think it has this effect? Can you describe the feeling of calm?



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**3. Share your discoveries:** Once you've explored and found the items on the list, gather together and share what you discovered.

- What was the easiest thing to find? What was the most interesting?
- Were there many different things that felt smooth or rough?
- Did everyone spot the same "something red"?
- Did you all find the same thing that made you feel calm, or were they different? What does this tell us about how we experience nature?

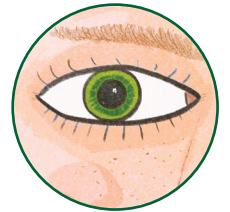


## Bringing yourself back to the present moment

If you ever feel overwhelmed by your thoughts (like feeling worried or upset), you can use your senses to help bring you back to the present moment. Have a go at this:

- **Listen:** What sounds are happening around you right now? Even quiet ones.
- **Look:** What can you see? Notice the colours, shapes, and details. You could even look out of a window.
- **Feel:** What can you feel with your body? The air on your skin, the ground under your feet, the texture of your clothes.

Focusing on your senses can help quieten those busy thoughts and bring you back to the present. This is something you can practice anytime, anywhere.



## Tune in at the towpath: Explore your senses by the canal!

**Ready for an adventure by the canal? Join us for tune in at the towpath!**  
**Share your creations! Tag us with #CanalRiverTrust and #LifesBetterByWater**



# Explorers

Explore more fun activities at [canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers](https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers)  
Let's make memories and celebrate the beauty of our canals together!

