

School Pocket Adoptions



Welcome to the Canal & River Trust Teacher's Pack for School Pocket Adoptions. Our research shows that spending time by water really does make us feel happier and healthier. And where better to instil positive mental and physical wellbeing than in our young people?

School Pocket Adoptions provide an opportunity for school communities to take 'ownership' of their local area; to work with us to improve it; and to connect to the people, history and nature linked by this blue/green ribbon in our landscape.



The core project

The core project forms a whole year Design & Technology activity, where pupils become project managers of small-scale improvement works at a waterway location.

How it works:

Plan the project

1

Choose adoption site.
Complete documents and prepare for your first site visit.

Page 3

Launch the project

2

Pupils visit a site near their school, assessing the current environment and relevant issues.

Page 4

Redesign your site

3

Pupils redesign the space, improving it within design criteria. Create moodboards and sketches to share ideas.

Page 5

Project management

4

We carry out the works together, under pupil direction. There is no cost to the school. Pupils are invited to see the work in action.

Page 6

Evaluate & activate

5

Pupils can make a final visit to celebrate, assess improvements, and share their learning experience with others.

Page 7

How far you take the project beyond this is up to you! There are lots of opportunities to link the project across the curriculum, and this pack is full of ideas and resources to help you plan schemes of work relevant to your pupils.

All aspects of the project and the resources provided are FREE!

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Initial key actions

1. Please fill in the **Partner Group Registration Form**.
 2. Please fill in a **Photo/video Permissions Form**, for all those taking part.
- (Both forms will be provided by your regional learning & skills co-ordinator.)

Project evaluation

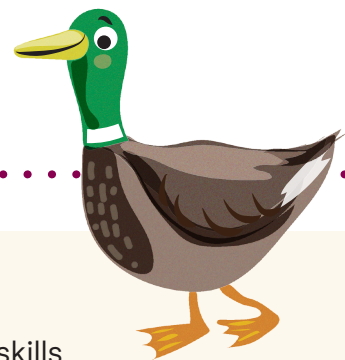
So that we can measure the **impact** of School Pocket Adoptions and improve them for the future, we request that each group takes part in some data collection:

1. Teachers take part in a telephone **interview** and online **questionnaire** before and after the project, organised with our research partners Kids Connections (approx. 30 mins).
2. Teachers complete an **activity log** throughout the project.
3. Pupils complete **classroom assessment** before and after the project (this is a quick online survey).
4. Select and **assess a ‘control group’** - i.e. carry out the Pupil Assessment with another class that is not taking part in any of the activities (approx. 10 mins).

Legal considerations

- Our Explorers Education programme is mostly led by keen volunteers who have a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm. They are DBS checked and trained in Safeguarding, water safety, all practical activities and more. They are supported by a learning & skills coordinator from the Trust, however a group’s staff are expected to be responsible for their children at all times, and volunteers are present as guides only. Please consider this when risk assessing and planning first aid provision on any trips.
- Partner Groups are covered by the Trust’s Public Liability Insurance, as long as all activities have been planned and agreed by the Trust in advance.

Your Project



1. Plan the project

What you need to do



1. **Discuss** the project and the possible adoption sites with your learning & skills coordinator.
2. **Pre-project interview** – Our research partner Kids Connections will be in contact to complete a pre-project telephone interview and quick survey.
3. **Planning** – Use this pack and online resources to plan around the topic as you usually would – there are plenty of options to link the project across the curriculum.
4. **Book a water safety assembly** – This can be done directly with your learning & skills coordinator or through the [website](#). If you prefer, you can use the [free, online teaching resources](#) to run your own water safety lesson.
5. **Book a date for your first visit** to the canal with your learning & skills coordinator – the more advance notice the better for each visit.

Teaching resources

Search our online library at canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers/resources for a large variety of teaching resources to help you to plan lessons and canalside visits:

- [Plan a Visit](#)
- [All About Canals](#)
- [Life on the English Waterways](#)
- [Canal & River Habitats Challenges](#)
- [Waterways Today](#)
- [Building & Carrying](#)
- [Travel & Transport](#)

Our topic specific [learning bundles](#) are a good source of themed ideas, activities and information, these include: [Water safety](#), [Build a Canal](#), [Canal and River Habitats](#) and more!

2. Launch the project (Autumn term)

What you need to do



1. **Launch the project with pupils** – we have a [video](#) and a [letter](#) from our CEO to use in class, inviting your pupils to get involved.
2. **Introduce the canals** – you can book free classroom workshops that help to do this, including our Build a Canal activity which uses handling items, photos and models to tell the story of how and why canals were built. Book online or through your learning & skills coordinator.
3. **Hold your first visit to the canal site** to evaluate and document its current condition. Advice on how to run a visit to the waterside, including risk assessment, is in the resources section below. You may wish to discuss, or change, the [Site Evaluation](#) criteria with the children before the visit.
4. **Update** the [Activity Log](#) with all recent learning activities.



Extension ideas



1. **Use our online learning bundles** to explore different aspects of the canal life.
2. **Survey** the towpath users or the pupils' families – what is their opinion and usage of the canal and the specific site? This could link to data handling lessons.
3. **Document the current site** – this could be visually using photography or art, through descriptive writing, by rating PSHE issues, creating 'sound maps' or story walks.
4. **Lead a debate** about one of the social issues that pupils have become aware of – for example: Should bikes be allowed on the towpath? How could we stop littering? Is graffiti art or criminal damage? Write a news report on the debate or issue.
5. **Map the local area** – what's within 1km of school? What is good about it? What could be improved? Which areas or resources are most important to local people? Use the [trail tool](#) on our website to produce a guide for other pupils.



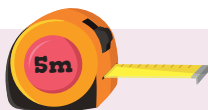
3. Redesign your site (Autumn term)

What you need to do



1. **Explore** the [design constraints and considerations resource](#) with the children. You may wish to create a list of design criteria to guide their ideas.
2. **Pupils redesign the space** to improve on their evaluation of the site. Do your pupils wish to make the canal more accessible by improving surfacing or adding benches, improve signage and information for visitors, improve the environment for nature by carrying habitat improvements or improving their place for people by adding inspiring artworks?
3. **Workshops** – We may be able to co-organise workshops with useful organisations, such as artists or nature space experts. Talk to your learning & skills coordinator to see what is available.
4. **Present the designs** as labelled drawings with surrounding mood boards. See our [Mood Board Guidance](#) for an example. Designs can be done individually or as groups – We would like to see all the designs and we will choose which to implement (more on this process below). Designs should be submitted to your learning & skills coordinator. You may wish for the class, or a panel of pupils and staff, to select a 'Top Five' designs. This will provide positive feedback and meaning to the pupils, as well as give the Trust an idea of your priorities. All designs will still be considered.
5. **Update** your [Activity Log](#) with all recent learning activities.

Extension ideas



- **Consultation** - Expand the design process by consulting other canal users or experts before designing.
- **Write** an instructional piece or letter to accompany your designs, requesting we carry out the work.
- **Write** a persuasive piece to convince us your design is the best.
- Investigate different ways of presenting the site or design – use diagrams, plans, models, CAD, online imaging sites etc.
- **Invite** a local landscape architect or similar into school to find out about their job, to do a workshop or help with their designs.



What we'll do

- A panel from the Trust will review the designs presented and decide with our colleagues what is possible, and we will reply to school for consultation on our plans.
- Unfortunately, we cannot promise to undertake the complete designs due to [practical constraints](#), but we will endeavour to achieve the flavour of the designs. This may be by choosing one specific design, or by picking ideas from a range.
- We'll let you know when we plan to complete the work and set up a date in the Spring Term for pupils to visit the site again with Explorers volunteers.

4. Project management (Spring term)

What you need to do



1. [Plan the second visit](#) to the canal site on the dates agreed with the your learning & skills coordinator, to see the improvements happening. There may also be opportunities for pupils to carry out some of the works, this will be agreed in advance with your learning & skills coordinators.
2. Pupils can prepare and ask questions - what's going well? Not well? Why those materials? What steps are taken to ensure H&S for staff? For the public? Use this opportunity to ask people about their job role too.
3. Document the works as before, using photography or art etc.
4. Update your [Activity Log](#) with all recent learning activities.



Extension activities



- **Plan a guided walk** with the Explorers volunteers to the nearest lock for a demonstration. You could include a specific focus, like looking for wildlife and habitats; looking for historical features; positive and negative aspects of the canal; or a physical activity trail!
- **Science** – Test the materials that have been seen, such as testing which material lets water through (clay lines the canal); or are best for the towpath (resistant to wear); or are strongest for bridge building. Take a look at our STEM resources in our [Learning Bundles](#) for ideas
- **Use the topic of fixing or building a canal to inspire maths investigations:**
 - How many bricks do I need to build a bridge, steps or to edge a path?
 - What weight of different materials could I get on a boat or barge?
 - Link to multiplication/perimeter and area/weight/capacity.
- **Create a job advert** (persuasive writing/non-fiction writing) for a canal worker.
- **Write a news report/blog/vlog** about what is going on down by the canal for the school newsletter – these could also go onto the Trust's PR channels, such as our social media, newsletter and blogs.



5. Evaluate & activate (Summer term)

What you need to do



1. **Arrange a third site visit** in the Summer Term to evaluate the finished work, using the same criteria as the original evaluation. Risk assess and book the visit with your learning & skills coordinator as before.
2. **Document the new site** (photos/drawings/diagrams) then compare and contrast with your previous records. Don’t forget to share this with your learning & skills coordinator!
3. **Create a ‘snag’ list** – is anything not finished or good enough?
4. **Celebrate and share** (‘activate’) the site and the children’s learning – through newsletters, social media, exhibitions, events on the towpath, production of learning journals, project reports, blogs, a change of behaviour campaign, theatre performance etc.
5. **Update** your [Activity Log](#) with all recent learning activities.
6. **Complete** the end of project evaluation questionnaire and teacher interviews, Kids Connections will again be in touch to arrange this.
7. **Repeat** the online Pupil Assessment activity within a week or two of the project ending. Compare to those at the beginning of the project and help pupils reflect on their learning. Has their knowledge or opinion of the canal changed?’
8. **Repeat** the online Pupil Assessment with the control group.



Extension activities



- **Repeat any surveys** of towpath users or families – have opinions changed? Have their own opinions changed? Link your activity to data handling.
- **Create a ‘Code of Conduct’** for using the towpath to keep sites like this in good condition.
- **Invite parents** down to the towpath for a walk guided by pupils, or to see the pupils’ work.
- **Find out what questions pupils still have** about the canal and local area to prompt future learning.
- **Make predictions** for how the canal may change in the next 5, 10... 200 years. Present these ideas in creative ways.
- **Reflect on and share** what has been learned across the project.
- **Pupils could present their learning** to a panel from the Canal & River Trust – arrange with your learning & skills coordinator.

Cross curricular activities and resources For any time during the project

£ = Extra costs payable by school



PSHE

- Explore [Wellbeing](#) and why being by water improves it.
- Join the [School Plastic Challenge](#).
- Interview someone living on a canal boat.
- Link learning to other positive or social change – run campaigns to reduce litter, seed bomb bare earth, write to local councillors or get families to visit the canal.

PE

- Try out some water sports – you can canoe, paddleboard, white water raft or wakeboard at various canal sites across the UK – [Canoeing and Kayaking near me](#) £
- Include the canal in other outdoor learning ventures – such as Forest School, Scouting badges, Change4Life, or the John Muir Award.

Science Activities

- Why can a horse pull heavier loads on water than on land? Test sliding objects over different surfaces with a forcemeter.
- How would you line a canal to make it water tight? Test the rate of water flowing through various materials held by a filter paper in a funnel.
- Use the STEM learning bundles to find out about [mechanical advantage](#), [hydraulics](#) and [building bridges](#) with real-life examples along our canals and rivers.
- [Explorers can come to school and lead STEM activities, which can be adapted for KS2](#)



History Activities

- Why were canals built? The [Build a Canal learning bundle](#) contains resources to help children learn how and why the canals changed Britain.
- Mark out the size of a working boat's cabin (2m x 3m). Have pupils stand around the edge to become the 'walls'. Pupils could design the inside, or see how many they could sleep in there.

Geography Activities

- Use the [interactive map](#) to explore the waterways and the country – plan a journey and document the key features on the route.

Creative Activities

- Create a class [model of a canal scene](#) from the past – each pupil could make a warehouse/crane/boat with different cargo etc, it could become a class display.
- Try [traditional canal boat art](#) in class.
- More craft ideas can be found in our '[Make and Play](#)' activities.



English Activities

- Debate whether unused canals should be restored or filled in, from a current or historical perspective.
- Use the '[Build a Canal](#)' literacy resource on the [Explorers website](#) to explore life on the canals in the past, then write a diary or story from the perspective of a canal worker – e.g. legging through a tunnel and something unexpected happening.
- Watch the '[The Day the Aliens came to the Tame Valley Canal](#)' and follow along with activities in the storytelling bundle.
- Share learning with others throughout the project – tell younger classes about the project or what they have learned, make presentations to parents, other schools, to go on websites or to show in assemblies.



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Remember to share your activities with us on Twitter and Facebook - @CRTEExplorers