



Minibeasts
and Leaves

Sort leaves

Age: 7-14

Topic: Biology

Time: 1 hour



What should learners already know?

- Different species of tree have different leaves.
- Leaves can vary in shape, colour, size and texture.

What equipment will I need?

- White cloth or sheet (one per group).
- Extension: Tree or Leaf ID guide.

How will learners explore this?

1. Go out into the school grounds, or another suitable green space with vegetation, such as the local park.
2. Split the class into small teams of 3 to 4 children. Encourage each child to go into the space and bring back at least 5 leaves (which are already on the ground, do not pick any from living plants!).
3. Each child can bring their leaves back to the team. The team should lay each leaf out onto the white cloth. Children should now discuss and agree as a team how they will sort the leaves they have collected into groups. Will they focus on size, shape, colour, or factors to do with touch like texture or hairiness?
4. Once the whole class has completed this, encourage children to go and look at how other groups have sorted their leaves. What differences do they notice?
5. Extension: use a tree or leaf ID guide to identify what species of tree your leaves have come from. Encourage children to look at some of the terminology used to describe leaves; what do they notice about the ways that leaves are described?

How can we show the learning?

- Challenge children by asking them to explain their leaf-sorting process: What qualities did they use to sort the leaves? Why do they think these are important?
- How did other groups sort the leaves? How was this different from how your group sorted them?
- Encourage children to think about the different senses they used to sort leaves; sight, touch, and maybe even smell. Which senses do children think are the most useful for identification? This is a useful place to reflect on the fact that all senses are important for identification; we do not want to rely on sight, factors like smell and touch can be just as important!



Extension:

If children used the ID guides, encourage them to compare the different species that they found leaves from.

Compare the number of leaves from each species. Challenge children by asking them why some trees may produce and shed more leaves than others.



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