

Strandline Search

Getting out and exploring the beach as a class will interest children of all ages. Doing a 'beach comb' or strandline search can lead to many fascinating discoveries of items washed up by the tide.

You might find sea shells like mussels and cockles, crab shells, whelk eggs, mermaids' purses and driftwood. You can check what you have found using the identification guide in the 'Your Strandline Search' leaflet in the pack. Copies of the leaflet may be available by contacting Denbighshire's Biodiversity Officer (contact details below). If you find anything unusual or interesting, make sure you report it to the local environmental records centre for North Wales, Cofnod (www.cofnod.org.uk).

For safety reasons it is best to do a strandline search as the tide is going out, to ensure that children cannot be cut off by the incoming tide. Tide tables can be checked at <http://www.climbers-club.co.uk/tides/ci-tidalinfo.html>. Take care with man-made litter, especially sharp objects like glass. Some creatures can also be dangerous, like jellyfish which may sting (live or dead) or live crabs.

What to do:

- ▷ Arrive at the beach when the tide is going out.
- ▷ Instruct the children to stay within a defined area.
- ▷ Locate the 'strand line' on the beach (there may be several). This is a narrow band along the beach where you will find most of what has been washed up by the tide.
- ▷ Walk slowly along the strand line to see what has been washed up.
- ▷ The children can collect some of the items they find. Ask them to collect as many *different* things as possible, rather than lots of the same thing.
- ▷ At the end bring the group together to share what they have found. Try to identify the plants and animals found using the 'Your Strandline Search' leaflet.
- ▷ Return what you have found to the beach.

What you will need:

- ▷ Buckets or bags to collect things in.
- ▷ Copies of 'Your Strandline Search' leaflets.
- ▷ Pens or pencils.
- ▷ Clipboards will make it easier to record what you have found.
- ▷ Camera – taking photos will help if you want to identify something.

Beachcombing Code

When out on the beach, follow these simple rules to make sure that wildlife is not disturbed and the environment is kept clean and healthy:

- Respect wildlife!
- Leave the beach how you found it. Don't add anything and don't take anything away.
- Be aware of ground nesting birds (April – August). If you hear alarm calls you may be near a nest, so move away quickly and carefully. Nests are protected by law.
- When looking in rock pools, put back rocks and seaweed where you found them. Animals need these for shelter.
- Handle any live animals gently and put them back where you found them quickly (don't leave them in buckets for long periods as this may kill them).
- Be aware that some creatures (like jellyfish and crabs) could hurt you. If in doubt, don't touch!
- As a general rule, at the end of your beach comb you should return what you have found to the beach.