

Looking after our pond?

If you don't look after your pond it will gradually fill up and disappear. Have a look at the plants which live in and around your pond and decide how you need to look after them so that your pond stays healthy.

Date: _____

The water level (the distance from the top of the water to the top of the side of the pond) is _____ cm.

This is:

- Higher than normal
- Normal
- Lower than normal

The water depth (the distance from the top of the water to the bottom of the pond) is _____ cm

We are looking at the plants: In the water On the edge of the pond Around the pond

Name of plant	Number of plants	Area they cover

Draw a plan of your pond and mark on it where the plants have grown.

We have found the following creatures:

Creature	How many?	Creature	How many?	Creature	How many?
Pond snail		Tadpole		Water spider	
Frog		Newt		Pond skater	
Frog spawn		Great diving beetle		Water boatman	

School grounds focus:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How can we get there?
- Making the changes
- Using your grounds

Curriculum focus:

- Science
- PSE / Citizenship
- Geography / environmental studies

Purpose of this activity:

- To observe the cycle of life in a pond.
- To maintain your pond.

Equipment / materials needed:

- Suitable outdoor clothing.
- Nets, pale-bottomed trays to make observation easy.
- Sources from which to identify plants and creatures.
- Ways to measure and record the water level, i.e. tape measures or a fixed scale in the pond.

Preparation:

- Discuss the role that ponds play in a healthy ecosystem and which plants and animals need a body of water to survive.
- Look at how a pond that is not maintained will gradually fill up with plants, silt and debris and eventually disappear.

What to do:

- This activity is best planned to take place on two separate occasions so that pupils can measure changes in water level (both the depth at specific points, and the drop from edge to water surface) and plant growth.
- Divide the pupils into groups and give them a specific task, e.g. measuring the water level / depth, listing and counting the water plants or the pond edge plants or the surrounding dry land plants.
- After repeating this exercise at a later date, compare the results and decide:
 - which plants need to be removed or thinned out;
 - whether to top up the water level.

Extension:

- Plan a pond maintenance day when your findings will be used and combine it with pond dipping to discover what creatures are also living in the water.
- Remember to leave removed plant material at the side of the pond to allow creatures to return to the water.
- If you don't have rainwater to hand, don't use tap water to top up the pond without letting it stand for a few days first.

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