



What it's all about...

During this guided activity day children will:

Learn about these special protected places in Ireland and around the world;

Understand their value and importance for both biodiversity and the economy;

Ask important questions about how we as humans impact these places;

Explore their role in caring for and protecting the National Park;

Get creative in solving problems and designing new ideas for the National Park as it grows and changes.

This day brings together Strands of the Geography, Science, SPHE, Maths, Visual Arts & Maths curriculum for 5th & 6th Class. It will touch on a range of Strand Units such as; sense of place and space, human environments, natural environments, environmental awareness and care, maps and geographical skills, measurements and data interpretation, citizenship, conservation and media education.

Children will get the opportunity to gain skills in observation, recording, questioning, problem solving, imagination, design and creativity, oral literacy and working in a team.

Engage

Trigger: The group will meet at the entrance to the National Park and be given their challenge for the day. They are asked to imagine that they are in charge of the National Park and have important decisions to make on how to improve it – for both visitors and nature. They will be asked what they think National Parks are and look at a range of media representing these places as an introduction. Tourism and its value to the economy and the Wild Atlantic Way will be explained and discussed, as will Nature Conservation and Biodiversity.

Wondering: The groups will have the chance to meet and interview a National Park Staff member to hear first hand experiences of people who work here.

Exploring: The group will take a guided tour of the National Park and will think about:

Habitats – important living things that make their home here and how these places are managed;

Visitors – exploring who visits the Park and what experiences they are looking for;

Information – How the park is presented and communicated through advertisements, maps and photos;

Space, distance and capacity – how people move around the park and the impact they have on the the landscape;

Buildings – Materials, design and heritage value.

Investigate

Question: How do we look after the National Park for the future and still allow so many people to visit?

Predicting: Children will work in groups to brainstorm what they think will happen to National Parks in the future. They will discuss how their ideas could be investigated or proven. They will compile a list of possible problems and also opportunities facing National Parks – in particular Glenveagh. They will consider the size of the park, the visitor numbers, the location of and length of its trails and how these things might impact nature and wildlife in the future.

Investigate: Children will discuss and plan with how they would solve the problems identified. They will look at how to better protect habitats and species, and still give visitors a great experience. They will use visual arts to design and plan how they think the National Park should look and operate in the future.

Sharing Results: Children will feedback, share and discuss their solutions and ideas.

Taking the Next Step

Applying Learning:

Children will be supported to think about what they will do after their visit to the National Park. This can be done as part of the visit or lends itself well to a follow up session back at school. Sharing their learning with families and friends is a great way of raising awareness about these special places.

Making Connections:

A vital and simple connection to make is between us as humans and our dependence on the planet. Nature was here first and we need it for so many things to survive. Our National Parks belong to all of us and looking after them is the responsibility of us all. Caring for our heritage and biodiversity starts at an early age and what better place to start teaching this message of 'protection' than in one of our stunning National Parks.

A visit to the National Park can link to a wide range of subjects in the curriculum. It can also help with your Green Schools flag and Discover Science Award. It also might help stimulate ideas for projects back at school.

Thoughtful Actions:

Ask children for ideas on how they can take action? Can they write a letter or article, make a video, or speak up on behalf of their National Park?

Reflections For Teachers & Follow Up

- Make a 3d model of the children's designs for the park or the types of buildings it might need in the future.
- Apply learning about Glenveagh National Park and investigate another national park in Ireland or elsewhere in the world. It's a great theme for group projects and offers fantastic cross curricular links. Have fun contacting a National Park in another County – there are over 3000 to choose from!
- Pick up on issues of waste, water, energy and transport in a National Park and link to your Green Schools flag work back in school.
- Consider visiting the National Park more often as a class / school if you are nearby. Carry out your own investigations particularly in the SESE subjects. Thinking mathematically is also fun – measure distance, area, visitor numbers and do a project showing this data.
- Send us your artwork, designs, ideas and feedback on the National Park – we love to display what your school has done and hear your opinions on what we can do better for the future.