

Plan and take an action

Lesson at a glance

Open with audit and research journals open so pairs name the grounds gap that still needs fixing. Teach biodiversity action with one worked example, then steer a whole-class evidence-based vote among a pollinator patch, bug hotel or wild corner. Agree a shared board plan with spot, jobs and two success signs, copy it to a clipboard, and run one staged outdoor build. Pupils wash hands, then write the full account and checks on the Investigation Journal page.

Learning objectives

- Choose one biodiversity action justified by the audit and research
- Plan and carry out the action safely in the school grounds
- Record what was done and why it should help living things

Before the bell – prep

Several days ahead: family bottles/box frames, caretaker agreement on the outdoor spot, native or Pollinator-Plan seed/plugs (chives/thyme work). Day before: confirm the site, gather the three-option kit, print the journal page, check weather. Morning: fill the watering can; stage three labelled trays by the door; one clipboard for the outdoor plan copy.



Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	provided printable	plain paper ruled into plan / what we did / success signs notes
clipboard for outdoor plan-checker copy of the board plan	1	class	classroom	stiff cardboard and a bulldog clip, or a clear phone/tablet photo of the board plan shown by the teacher
pollinator-plan-friendly or Irish-native wildflower seed packet (or small plant plugs)	1	class	garden centre or All-Ireland Pollinator Plan recommended supplier	supermarket herbs such as chives and thyme as a nectar strip, or unsprayed local wildflower seed collected with permission
hand trowels	1	group	school kit	old sturdy spoons reserved for gardening
watering can with water	1	class	classroom	large bottle with small holes in the cap
clean plastic bottles or a small wooden box frame for a bug hotel	3	class	brought from home	a cardboard shoebox inside a plastic crate, kept under shelter
bug hotel fillings (cardboard tubes, dry hollow stems, pine cones, dry leaves, corrugated card)	1	class	outdoors	rolled newspaper tubes and dry twigs only
garden string or twine	1	class	hardware shop	strips of soft fabric or wool
wooden stakes or short garden canes	4	class	hardware shop	thick twigs pushed firmly into soil
A4 card and permanent marker for a weatherproof class sign	1	class	classroom	laminated scrap paper or a reused plastic lid labelled with marker
round-tip scissors	1	group	classroom	one adult-managed scissors station





Safety watch-point

Staged outdoor work only: no running with tools, teacher makes force cuts, mind nettles/brambles, no tasting plants or seed, wash hands after soil work, count every tool back before leaving the spot.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Keep this to three minutes. Journals from the audit and research sessions stay open; pairs name the gap and the wish to act. Do not let design talk start yet — protect the evidence step. If only one or two options are resourced, say so now.
- **Science that helps living things:** Lead with ‘Which gap is the strongest reason to act today?’ Pin biodiversity action to pupil answers and one plain example only. Mention evidence-based choice and success sign are coming; do not stack all three definitions here. Head off ‘any green idea is fine’ by sending them back to their own audit gap.
- **Agree our action:** Whole-class decision, not three projects. Board the options you can resource. One-minute pair talk from journal notes, then short justifications. Steer toward the option that matches the evidence — pollinator patch for few flowers, bug hotel for little shelter, wild corner for short grass with no cover. Restate the winner and the outdoor spot in one sentence.
- **Plan from the evidence:** Build the shared board plan before anyone leaves: exact spot, kit materials, staged group jobs, two success signs. Teach success sign as you name the checks — at least one near-term sign the next session can honestly see. Light journal jot only (action, spot, two signs). Photograph the board or copy it to the plan-checker clipboard; do not go out without that portable copy.
- **Build the action:** Seated first: restate boundaries, meeting signal, tool rules, handwashing, and one shared build. Outdoors, rotate a 4–6 pupil hands-on crew while others run materials, boundary watch, plan-checking or sign-marking. Ask which living thing the design is for and whether it still matches the audit gap. At tidy-up time, make what is there stable and marked rather than rushing a finish; count every tool back.
- **Record what we did:** Wash hands and settle, then write. Capture action and spot, audit/research reason, the pupil’s real job, two success signs, and any honest outdoor change. Offer the oral stem We built... because the audit showed... I helped by... Later we will look for... before pencils go down.
- **Success signs and tidy finish:** Say the two success signs aloud and agree what must stay undisturbed — this is the measure baseline for the next project session. Pack tools, store spare natural materials dry, label the action, and note any caretaker message (do not mow the strip; leave the wild corner).

What it should show

One shared, stable action at the agreed spot that matches the audit gap: edged damp mini-patch with seed/plugs in; dry bug hotel with open horizontal tunnels; or a staked unmown wild corner with a class sign. Journals name action, reason, job and two realistic success signs. Odd result: a decorative build with no link to the audit, or a later wildlife check that cannot yet be observed (e.g. bees on unsprouted seed) — rewrite the near-term sign.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **Any green idea is equally good — the fun option wins even if the audit did not show that gap.** — Send pairs back to their journal for thirty seconds: ‘What did we actually find missing?’ Pin evidence-based choice to the justification that quotes the audit or research.
- **Wildlife should appear straight away, or the action failed.** — Match success signs to season and materials. Near-term = seed damp and marked, plugs alive, hotel dry and stable, corner unmown. Later wildlife counts only if enough time has passed.
- **Each group should make its own mini version at the site.** — Restate before going out: one class build, staged jobs. Only the hands-on crew works the micro-site; everyone else holds a named support role from the board plan.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Give the sentence stem aloud: Our audit showed... so the best action is... because... • Assign a concrete named job (materials runner, boundary watch, plan-checker tick) rather than open design talk.	• After the build, add one risk the class reduced (e.g. marked edge so it is not mown) on the journal page. • Fold watchers in with: Which living thing is this for? Does this still match the audit gap?	• Name one risk (weather, mowing, disturbance) and how the shared plan handles it before going out. • On the journal, note any honest change from the board plan and why it still serves the audit gap.

Cross-curricular hook

Link to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and SPHE care for the local environment when the class names why the chosen spot must stay undisturbed.