

Plan and take an action

Lesson at a glance

Pupils reopen their audit and research notes and name the gap their grounds still show. The class makes one evidence-based choice — pollinator patch, bug hotel, or marked wild corner — then freezes a shared board plan with jobs and two success signs. Outdoors, a staged crew builds that single action at the agreed spot while support roles manage materials, boundaries and the plan clipboard. Back inside, pupils complete the Investigation Journal record of what was done and why it should help living things.

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

Days ahead: get principal/caretaker sign-off on the outdoor spot; collect native/pollinator-plan seed or plugs (or supermarket chives/thyme), clean bottles/box frame, tubes, dry stems. Day before: stage three labelled option trays by the door, print the Journal page, check weather and boundaries. Morning: fill the watering can; have 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 build only: no running with tools; adult makes difficult cuts; mind nettles and brambles; no tasting plants or seed; wash hands after soil; count tools back before leaving the spot.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Journals open from the audit and research sessions. Thirty-second pair glance: what problem did we find, and what could we do? Keep it light — surface the gap and the will to act; do not start building. 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?’ Teach biodiversity action pinned to pupil answers and one plain example (e.g. bug hotel for missing dry shelter). Name evidence-based choice and success sign lightly as coming next — do not stack all three definitions here.
- **Agree our action:** Whole-class decision, not three projects. Put only the options you can resource on the board. Pairs justify from journal notes for one minute, then take short evidence quotes. Steer toward the gap match, not the loudest preference. Restate the winner and the outdoor spot in one clear sentence.
- **Plan from the evidence:** Freeze the board plan large: exact spot, materials, staged group jobs, two success signs (at least one near-term check Part 4 can honestly see). Pupils jot only action, spot and two checks in the Journal. Before leaving the room, photograph the board or copy it to the plan-checker clipboard — do not go out without that portable copy.
- **Build the action:** Restate boundaries, meeting signal and tool rules. Run one shared build with a 4–6 pupil hands-on crew while others hold runner, boundary-watch, plan-checker or sign roles; rotate the crew once if time allows. Budget ~3 min exit, 10–11 min build, 3–4 min tidy and return. If incomplete, stabilise, mark and record honestly rather than rush.
- **Record what we did:** Wash hands and settle first. Oral rehearsal stem — We built... because the audit showed... I helped by... Later we will look for... — then full Journal write-up of action, spot, reason, own job, two success signs, and any honest outdoor change.
- **Success signs and tidy finish:** Bridge to Part 4: lock the two success signs and the leave-undisturbed rule before pack-away. Name what would make the later check unfair (trampling, mowing, moving the hotel). Note any caretaker message needed.

What it should show

One shared, clearly marked action at the agreed spot: edged damp pollinator strip with seed/plugs in; or stable bug hotel with open horizontal tunnels off wet ground; or staked wild corner with a simple class sign. Journal shows action, audit reason, own job and two realistic success signs. Odd ‘failure’ is usually an honest incomplete build or a wildlife check set too soon for seed — record the real state, do not force a finish.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **Any green idea is equally good** — ‘Let’s just plant flowers because it looks nice.’ — Send pairs back to their audit page for thirty seconds: ‘What gap did we actually find?’ Pin the winning justification to that evidence, not to preference.
- **Wildlife must appear straight away or the action failed.** — Match success signs to season and materials: near-term checks are seed germinating, plugs alive, hotel dry and stable, corner still unmown — save ‘more bee kinds’ for later if flowers are not open yet.
- **Each group should make its own version of the action.** — Restate before going out: one class build at one micro-site. Assign concrete support roles so every pupil has a real job without crowding the spot.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Offer the stem aloud: Our audit showed... so the best action is... because...; assign a concrete support job (materials runner, boundary watch, plan-checker tick list). • Oral rehearsal of the Journal stem before writing; scribe key words on the board from the shared plan.	• Name one risk (weather, mowing, disturbance) and how the plan handles it when justifying the choice or finishing the Journal.	• During the build, name a living thing they hope will benefit and why this design suits it; add how a later check could become unfair if the site is disturbed.

Cross-curricular hook

Link to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and Geography local-environment work — native species and a real school-grounds change, not a generic craft.