Teacher Resource Sheet

The yard after break

What this lesson is for

Children practise reading physical traces and weighing them against memory, with honest limits on both. The yard just after break is the source, so the work stays concrete and free of names or blame.

In the curriculum (NCCA Primary SEE, 2025)

Stage 3, My locality: Identity and heritage. History: research aspects of the story of their locality and the island of Ireland, including significant events, people, customs and the origins of place names.

Before the lesson

- Arrange supervision for the yard as your school's policy requires.
- Plan this hour to begin as soon as the class comes in from break, so the traces are still in the yard.
- Print one yard sheet for each child; it comes with the lesson.
- Have clipboards and pencils ready to hand out at the end of the read and learn step.

How the hour runs

1. What did break leave behind?	4 min	4. Traces and memories	10 min
2. Read and learn	5 min	5. What can tell us what	10 min
3. Out in the yard	23 min	6. What we learned	5 min

Teaching tips

- Step through the slides and pause on key words like trace and evidence.
- Read the made-up example row on the yard sheet aloud before going outside.
- Walk the yard during the outdoor step and prompt with questions about what each trace suggests.
- When the class sorts the cards on the board, call children up one at a time and discuss each card briefly.

What to watch for

- Children may name who did something instead of describing what happened; steer the talk back to events only.
- Some may try to touch or pick up items; remind them to look only and not touch.
- Memories may disagree; treat this as useful rather than a problem to fix.
- **A common wrong idea:** “A clear trace means we know exactly what happened.” Ask what else the same mark could mean. Keep the sure, fairly sure, or guess circle honest: the yard suggests, it rarely proves every detail.

Help and stretch

- Support: Start the card sort with a clear "The yard shows it" card and think aloud once.
- Extension: Ask which of the traces the class recorded today would sit in each box.

Lesson 4

If you are short of time

The wet-day picture is a stand-in, not equal to real traces. Take three sort cards, not five. Keep the yard sheet and the close.

Background for you

Historians work with leftovers of two kinds: things left behind, and what people remember. Neither is a full story. A chalk line suggests a game was started. It does not name the players or say why it stopped. A memory can fill a gap, or two honest memories can disagree, and both can still be partly true.

Certainty is graded for a reason. Sure means the trace is clear and hard to read another way. Fairly sure means a good reading with room for doubt. A guess is still useful when the class names it as one. What nobody can tell us now matters as much as the rest: some facts left no mark and no lasting memory.

Key words

trace	something left behind that shows what happened
evidence	what we use to back up what we say happened
guess	an idea we are not sure about yet
memory	what someone who was there still remembers

Children will ask

What if I cannot find any traces? Look for small things: a mark, something moved, litter by a bench. One clear row is enough. If the yard is bare, write that and say how sure you are.

Whose ball was on the roof? We do not say whose. Today we only say what happened. Names and blame are not part of the work.

Activity sheet answers

1. Traces Record each trace you can see. Aim for two clear traces. Circle how sure you are in the last column.

Each row needs what was seen, where, what it suggests, and a certainty circle. No names. Example: apple core beside the bench; someone finished a snack there; fairly sure. Two clear rows beat a long list.