Useful Websites

Neal Fun <https://neal.fun/> A really weird but wonderful site with loads of information to explore.

Top Marks <https://www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games/hit-the-button> Brilliant for practising maths skills.

French Games <https://www.french-games.net/> Learn new French words and practise old ones.

National Geographic Kids <https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/> A huge variety of up – to – date information with photos and quizzes about the natural world.

National Gallery <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/must-sees> Zoom in on ancient masterpieces.

How Stuff Works <https://www.howstuffworks.com/> Vast amounts of information about everything!

Guinness World Records <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/> Watch videos and read about real – life record breakers.

Oxford Owl <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home> Stacks of maths and English resources to use at home. Several ebooks to read at home.

Cbeebies <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies> Some great learning games, quizzes and several topics to explores.

BBC Bitesize <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary> Animations, activities and games to support all areas of the curriculum.

Shaun’s Game Academy <https://www.shaunsgameacademy.co.uk/> Based on the Shaun the Sheep animated character, this website allows you to design your own game and learn how to code.

British Council <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/short-stories> Listen to and watch dozens of short stories before completing activities about them.

European Space Agency <https://www.esa.int/kids/en/home> Loads of things to do about space.

Going for walks

Take a bucket or a bag. Fill with: anything interesting, manmade things, natural things, green things, smooth things, spiky things, etc. You could put the different ideas for what to collect in a ‘hat’ and pick one at random each time you go out.

Stick a strip of double sided sticky tape to a bookmark- sized piece of card. Go on the hunt for things to stick on. Can you make a pattern? What won’t stick? What sticks most successfully? You could go large and make a crown another time!

Make a nature picture. Look up Andy Goldworthy for some inspiration! Go back the next day to see if it’s still there – take a photo for comparison.

Take binoculars/ Magnifying glasses and a notebook – what did you see and where did you see it?

Go on a left- right walk. Begin the walk by taking the first left turning, then the next right turning, and so on. For a variation you could take a coin to flip every time you get to a junction – heads for left, tails for right.

Take some paper and tape (on a dry day!) and go for a ‘noticing’ walk. Use all of your senses to *really* notice things – then write a sign for others to notice them too – ‘STOP! This blossom smells amazing – smell it.’ ‘STOP! Have you seen this spiders web?’ ‘LOOK! There are three different colours on this petal – can you spot them?’

A dice walk: The dots on the dice are a special code whereby each number represents an instruction. For example: 1 = child chooses which way to go, 2 = parent chooses, 3 = go left 4 = go right 5 = go straight on 6 = turn back. Children could invent their own codes once they have the hang of it!

A time travelling walk. Look up old photos of your area. You could choose a selection and plan a route to see them all. When you get to each point on a photo, have a good look to pinpoint the differences. What changes are there? Look for the clothes people were wearing compared to now or the lampposts, TV aerials, neighbouring buildings (or lack of), etc. It would be interesting to have some photos from the town and some of the countryside. Which has changed more?

In the Garden

Create a potion lab. Collect containers, funnels, jugs, spoons, water, food colouring, bicarbonate of soda and vinegar. You could also use glitter, poster paint, flour, rice, oil – anything you have. When you’ve made your potions DO NOT EAT THEM but create labels for them – ‘unicorn potion’/ ‘fly to the stars potion’ and so on!

Have a scavenger hunt. This is sometimes known as ‘tidying up’ but children are generally more up for it if you write/ draw a list of things to collect and tell them where to put them. For a variation, you could draw up a list of things for them to find which may take a little while: a stone with a hole/ a four- leaf clover.

Make nature rubbings. Use wax crayons and paper to investigate textures of bark. In the absence of trees or large shrubs, try fences and walls. You could cut the rubbings into interesting shapes to make some bunting or use on the front of a greetings card.

Have a bear hunt! Hide several soft toys (exceptionally well!) for them to search for.

Start a mini vegetable/herb garden. You can grow things pretty much anywhere – old wellie boots work well with some holes drilled in! Radishes grow very quickly and basil will germinate in a day or two. Find some sticks or stones to write labels on. (Outdoor pens available online or use acrylic paint pens)

Water painting. Find something that goes darker when wet- slabs, fences, bricks, get a brush and water and off you go! Rollers are quite fun too if you have them.

Chalk art. Chalk can be left outside and never needs to be sharpened. It will wash off in the next downpour.

Have a snail race. Self- explanatory and quite fun if you can deal with the slime!

Play ‘Kim’s Game’ with objects in your garden.

When it’s a little warmer, go stargazing. Set up a cosy area outside, lie on your back and spot stars! You could find a sky chart online to learn a few names of constellations. Keep a moon diary.

Collect as many stones as you can. Now build them in to a tower – how tall can you get it? Does it make a difference if you change your base stone? If there’s more than one person you could have a competition – or see if working together helps you get a taller tower.

Rock painting. You can get some acrylic pens (THESE STAIN) relatively cheaply online. Paint your stones- you could have a theme or just allow creative freedom!

Tuff Tray Ideas

A tuff spot or tray is a really good investment. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Faithfull-Spot-Board-Mortar-Mixing/dp/B003UGICF6/ref=pd_sbs_201_2/261-3457517-1010234?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=B003UGICF6&pd_rd_r=d1c9daa5-8b7e-4594-9c8a-55ecbaeebe1c&pd_rd_w=Dmr09&pd_rd_wg=Mw9Ss&pf_rd_p=96cae456-8d7a-4bc1-91c7-9b20b4dfd7c9&pf_rd_r=H4R0JFJ8Z2QX411AB25Q&psc=1&refRID=H4R0JFJ8Z2QX411AB25Q>

They can be used inside or out for thousands of different things. They do come in different colours but I prefer black because you can chalk on there and it shows up really well. The internet is awash with suggestions (Pinterest) for what to put on here so I’ll just include a few of our favourites.

Draw a road and play with cars. You can add railways, signs, motorways, crossings – anything! Add some brio bridges for extra excitement.

Fill with shaving foam. Add cars/ animals/ dinosaurs/ tools/ kitchen equipment/ biscuit cutters.

Colour some rice and hide ‘treasure’ – sequins/ little toys. Pour several drops of food colouring on to dry rice in a food bag or tub. Give it a good stir and allow to dry. You can add essential oils too, if you have them! Lentils can be used in the same way.

Cereal farm. Weetabix make really good fences, shredded wheat can be food for the animals, cornflakes hay for them to sleep on. Add animals and play! Dried spaghetti is really good fun and dried cannelloni makes excellent tunnels for the animals to play in but it might be a plan to save that for eating for the time being.

Chuck a load of cooked spaghetti on there and watch them enjoy running it through their hands. (Again, perhaps not until Tesco has re- stocked).

Moon sand. 8 cups of flour and 1 cup of baby oil. Feels amazing and smells even better. Add some toys/ containers if you wish.

Make lots of jelly and let them play bare foot in it. (A good one for outside).

Draw 3 different shapes on the spot and have them search the house or garden for things the same shape to put inside. This can be made harder for the older ones by adding a trapezium or parallelogram!

Make a ‘polar scene’ with tin foil on the base, arctic animals (if you have them), ice cubes, cotton wool, maybe some fairy lights. You could freeze little dolls’ or figures’ feet into ice cubes and take them on an ice rink. Some effort is required here but they will be busy for ages!

Similar idea but with dinosaurs. Add some greenery/ bits of log for the herbivores to hide in and eat. A large rock would make a great perch for the pterosaurs.

Have a recycling centre. Three containers labelled plastic, metal and cardboard (for example) – add your recycling and let them sort!

A car wash/ doll wash. Lots of soapy water, scrubbing brushes, toothbrushes. Another one best for outside!

Inside Activities

Keep a diary. This pandemic will be something they can tell their grandchildren about. I wonder how many ‘isolation diaries’ might show up on The Antiques Roadshow in years to come! For reluctant writers, an adult can write what they have done during the day and they can write a sentence or draw a picture of their best part of the day.

Let the children loose on the inside of a cupboard door. Give them paints, pens, fabrics, anything crafty you have. It’ll be a masterpiece you can enjoy every time you open the airing cupboard!

If you have any old shoes, get the craft materials out with some glue… you can turn an ordinary shoe into a work of art!

Collect the inside of toilet rolls and kitchen rolls over a few days (unless you’re using newspaper by now…) Add some cereal boxes or whatever you have in the recycling bin, a handful of marble and some tape. You’re ready to make your own marble run!

Create an alien planet and its inhabitants. Consider: Name of planet, a flag, some animals, the language, some alien writing, money, jobs – anything else you can think of. You could create a holiday brochure for anyone wanting to visit/ Draw and write a postcard as if you had visited.

Design a bad taste outfit for someone going to a bad taste party. Make the colours and patterns really clash! You could make a collage of all of your ideas using old fabrics or cut up magazines.

If you could travel in time where would you go and what would you take with you to show people? Write a letter to the owner of a time machine to ask him or her to take you.

Project Ideas

In the afternoon once they are tired out from exercise and school work, it’s a good idea to let them work independently for a while. If they were at school, they would be doing some kind of topic work with relatively little adult input.

If you know what topic would be covered at school, then you can go with that. But you’ll have most success if your child choses something that really interests them.

Some ideas for topics:

**History**: World War Two, The Tudors, The Victorians, Ancient Egyptians…

An historical figure, e.g. Florence Nightingale, Winston Churchill, Rosa Parks…

**Geography:** A particular country or continent, flags, volcanoes, earthquakes

a particular habitat: rainforests, deserts, polar lands, mountains…

**Science:** Space, a particular animal or plant, a famous scientist…

**Standalone:** Roald Dahl (or another author of choice), pirates, dragons, toys, magic, fairy tales, Salvador Dali (or another artist) …

Once you’ve chosen your topic start by creating a spider diagram of *everything you already know*. Use a whole page. Don’t worry if there’s not much on there – you can add to it as you go along. Use different colours to show what you’ve learned.

Next, write a list or mind map of things you’d *like to find out*. You’ll then have a list of questions which will form the basis for your project.

The third part of the plan involves writing down how you are going to find the answers to your questions. You’ll need to include some book and internet research but also think beyond that. Could you phone a relative or friend to ask for ideas/ anecdotes/ conduct and interview? If you’re trying to find out how something works, could you make a model? Conduct experiments?

Now you are all planned you are ready to start your project. Remember to include: non- fiction, fiction, diagrams, drawings, photographs, paintings, models, as well as anything else you create or use to answer your questions.

Keep everything in a folder and add to the initial spider diagram as you go along. Keep going until you feel ready to choose another topic.