

Themed Activities: **Snail Trail**

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Ask children to devise the questions they need to answer in their observations and put them on display

**Learning Objective**

To make close observations and learn about the lifestyle of a familiar animal – the snail.

**Starting Points**

- Go on a snail hunt around the school. This is best done on a damp day. Ensure that the snails that children gather are kept safely. An ideal home is a plastic aquarium containing the stones and plants on which the snails were found.
- Look at the snails in detail, the patterns on their bodies and shells, and name the different parts of the body. Use a hand lens. Draw and colour the different patterns correctly.
- Talk about the life cycle of a snail and create a leaflet about it.

**Make**

- Make a border and a background of leaf prints. Ensure that there are different shapes and sizes and different shades of green.
- Ask each child to make and colour a large snail with a coiled shell. The snails need not be accurate, but should represent the basic shapes, colours and sizes in relation to the background. Cut round the coil so that it is free. Attach the shells to the display with a foam body for the snail.
- Add other details to the display using collage materials such as a wall, flowers, grass and plant pots.
- Use white paint to show the trail of each snail through the leaves.
- Add questions devised by the children, ensuring that some allow for investigations and the other research.

**Activities**

- Compare two mini-beasts, using good photographs, for example a bee and a fly; a ladybird and a woodlouse. In what ways are they the same? In what ways are they different?
- Ask questions about one of the animals. Encourage children to begin their questions with different words, such as what, how, when and which. Children often overuse the why questions. Why questions cannot be investigated, requiring a secondary source to find the answers.
- Provide groups with different shells. Ask them to describe the shells and what they think the animal that lived inside was like. Give them some modelling clay/plasticine to model what they think the animal might have looked like. Make observational drawings of the shells.

**Develop and Extend**

- Make a poster from collage materials to show the life cycle of a snail.
- Place live snails on black paper and observe the trail they leave. What makes the trail? Do snails always leave a trail? Try other colours of paper. On which does it show up best? Always return snails to the wild afterwards and talk about handling creatures carefully.
- Can snails smell? Place a snail in the middle of a sheet of paper and place some things around it, including only one smelly food. Does the snail go towards or away from the smell? Does it do this more than once? Try other smells. Discuss the results. If the snail did go towards the smelly food, how can we be sure it was the smell? Could it have been the colour that attracted it? Try another test using similar colours and one smell. Avoid using food with high salt content as it may kill the snails.

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Snail Trail

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