



Texture mapping

Have you ever thought of all the different features and surfaces around us? Each of them look and feel different. Use your sense of touch to explore and make a map of an outdoor space, taking notice of what you can touch, and what it feels like. This activity provides an introduction to getting to know a space through a creative form of 'mapping' and connecting to nature through the senses.

This activity encourages children and young people to use their sense of touch to make a conceptual map of an outdoor space, taking notice of what they can feel, and where.

Teaching time

15–20 minutes

Learning outcomes

- Use their sense of touch to tune into and explore the natural world taking notice of the diversity of textures within their immediate surroundings
- Spend time outdoors in nature and share how they feel when interacting with nature
- Record and interpret observations (using simple language, drawings, diagrams, basic maps, keys, bar charts and tables)
- Record where things are spatially in relation to one another

Step by step

Before heading outside, start with a simple exercise to introduce the idea of mark making: What would a rough texture look like on paper? How could you show a smooth texture? What would something spiky look like? Or something dry, or wet? How can the pressure of a pencil, or different lines and shapes communicate different textures and surfaces?

Gather your class in an area outside, with their paper and pencils.

Draw yourself in the middle of your map. Start to walk around and explore the area you are in, stopping to take notice of the things you can touch and how they feel – leaves, trees, flowers, the ground beneath your feet, any human-made objects.

Then start to draw the things you are feeling and where they are in your space on your map.

Draw different lines, patterns or symbols for each texture – does it feel rough or smooth, spiky or fuzzy, hot or cold, wet or dry? Try and make the same feeling with your pencil.

Try and fill your map with all the different textures you can feel. Where are they in the space?

Adapted from the Campaign for School Gardening, RHS

Green Skills



Suitable for

Early Years
Key Stage 1
Key Stage 2
Key Stage 3
Key Stage 4

Location

Outdoors

Season

Spring
Summer
Autum
Winter

What you'll need

Plain sheets of paper
Clipboards
Pencils

Key vocabulary

Record
Map
Senses

Support and extension opportunities

Depending on age and learning style, this activity could vary in length – some younger learners may enjoy up to five minutes of focused mapping, whereas older groups could create a more detailed map and spend longer on the task.

To cater for different needs, learners could work in with a buddy to describe what they are touching to the other, thinking about how they would communicate what they can feel.

An alternative way of delivering this activity could be to create rubbings of the textures you have found using wax crayons – describe what textures you found!



Step by step (continued)

To round up, open a discussion about what different things the group touched and felt – create a tally or map back in the classroom of how dominant different textures were - e.g. hard ground, smooth leaves, rough bark, etc. Were there more natural textures noticed or human-made? What does this tell us about our site?

Reflection

How did different textures make you feel? (calm, happy, irritated, curious?)
Did you notice any textures you liked or disliked? Were there certain areas of your site that featured more enjoyable textures than others?



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