

ACTive Citizenship in KS4: A Nature Park Guide

The National Education Nature Park aims to support, engage and empower young people to become positive change makers together, contributing to responsible action in relation to the issues of climate change and biodiversity loss.

National Curriculum Alignment

As a statutory subject in the National Curriculum, Key Stage 4 citizenship requires learners to ‘develop their skills to be able to use a range of research strategies, weigh up evidence, make persuasive arguments and substantiate their conclusions. They should experience and evaluate different ways that citizens can act together to solve problems and contribute to society’ (DfE, 2013). Through drawing on the pillars of the National Education Nature Park that have informed the curriculum resources (Figure 1), the Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT) Key Stage 4 ACTive Citizenship Toolkit (link), and the National Education Nature Park engagement cycle (Figure 2), learners can be supported to take action in relation to an issue that impacts on nature and the community of their school site.

Figure 1. The National Education Nature Park three-pillar approach:

1. Knowledge and skills - Building on prior knowledge, promoting skill building and challenging misconceptions
2. Working together to make change - Opportunities for action in collaboration with peers or the local community
3. Developing resilience - Promoting learner voice, communication skills and wellbeing

Figure 2. The National Education Nature Park process:



Association for Citizenship Teaching (Home page)

The National Education Nature Park programme aligns with the ACTIVE Citizenship Framework advocated by the Association of Citizenship Teaching (Accessing these resources requires free registration):

Knowledge and Understanding

The Nature Park resource library will build a bank of resources to support learners to know about climate change, biodiversity issues, solutions and actions on a local, national and international level.

Citizenship Concepts

Threaded through the curriculum resources and Nature Park programme, activities have been chosen carefully to support community cohesion, responsibility for the planet and the people on it, and an emphasis on listening to and acting for different needs and backgrounds.

Skills and Aptitudes

A key component of the Nature Park curriculum and engagement programme is to ensure learners are supported to justify action and perspectives by gathering relevant information and critically evaluating evidence. Within the science and geography-driven curriculum units, learners at this key stage should be confident in drawing on scientific data and geographical fieldwork to explore issues and ideas for change.

Values and Dispositions

Underpinning the Nature Park programme is the importance of supporting learners to be aware of how they and others feel in relation to current and future climate and biodiversity issues, and to know how to respond positively through making positive change together.

Using the Key Stage 4 ACTIVE Citizenship Toolkit

In collaboration with ACT, a focused unit supporting the completion of an active citizenship project on climate change and biodiversity issues is in development. To get started now, the ACT toolkit steps can guide learners through a GCSE citizenship project:

- **Choose a question or issue**

Learners can choose an area of climate change and biodiversity that they care about. Drawing on the following two videos may help them choose an action:

- o IPCC Sixth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2023
- o Royal Society video with David Attenborough, Venki Ramakrishnan on the Dasgupta Review

- **Carry out initial research**

A GCSE requirement is that learners carry out two types of research:

- Primary research to find out the views of different members of their school community
- Secondary research to find out more about the issues and possible inspiration for interventions and solutions

- **Consider different viewpoints**

For Nature Park interventions, it is suggested that learners work together and consider both needs of nature and needs of different members of their community. Nature Park planning and decision-making activities can support learners to draw on these viewpoints.

- **Plan your action**

The 'Making Decisions' phase of the Nature Park process guides learners to use and interpret data they have collected to make evidence-based decisions and consider how they could be carried out. For example, by making use of guidance on how plants and nature can provide solutions to broader issues, they can work together to plan changes that could be made on the school site to benefit nature and people.

The ACT toolkit resource provides a worksheet to create a project plan.

- **Carrying out the action informed by research**

As suggested by the Nature Park, this might involve planting and growing, habitat creation or improvement, and fundraising and communication campaigns to raise awareness, spread the work and turn ideas into reality. A suggestion in line with the ACT curriculum framework is to encourage learners to draw on the skills and knowledge of others.

- **Assess the impact of the action and evaluate the process**

As suggested by the toolkit, learners can reflect on whether their action had (or will have) an impact. The Nature Park approach includes considering how impact can be measured in relation to both people (e.g. Do people enjoy the site more?) and nature (e.g. Has biodiversity increased?).

The following ACT resources give further guidance

- Active Citizenship: Types of Action
- Key Stage 4 Citizenship Studies Action Worksheets



National Education
Nature Park and
Climate Action Awards



For more quality-assured learning resources visit
www.educationnaturepark.org.uk

Led by



Natural
History
Museum

With



RHS

THE
ROYAL
SOCIETY

Commissioned by



Department
for Education

Partners



Learning
through
Landscapes



Manchester
Metropolitan
University



NBN Trust
Making data work for nature



Royal
Geographical
Society
with IBG
Advancing geography
and geographical learning



UK Centre for
Ecology & Hydrology

Working with



esri UK
THE SCIENCE OF WHERE