

Explorer Education Programme

Lesson Plan: Organising a Beach Clean



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ORGANISING A BEACH CLEAN

Aim:

The aim of conducting a beach clean is to familiarise students with litter found on the seashore and how to be more environmentally aware. Students should also be introduced to biodegradation of items found on the seashore.

Preparing for a Seashore Safari

Gathering Information and always be familiar with the beach you intend to visit. Consider the following and also see “Planning a trip to the Seashore Check List”.

- Is the beach shallow or steep sloping? This will affect the speed of the tide going in and out.
- Are there a lot of rocks and seaweed on the shore? Children will need to take special care if there is slippery seaweed.
- What time is low tide? Always head to the beach one hour before low tide and work from the waters edge inwards back up the shore.
- Will there be room for a bus to park or turn?
- Are there toilets for the students?
- Is there somewhere for the students to shelter if the weather turns bad?

Safety on the Seashore

Ensure that everyone is aware of the safety requirements on the seashore. (See “Safety on the Seashore Code” and “Seashore Conservation Code”).

- **Gloves** must be worn by all volunteers whilst collecting litter. Also bring sturdy waterproof footwear, waterproofs, suntan lotion, plus food and drink.
- **First-aid kit and Emergency phone** - make sure all the adults assisting know where to find these. Remember that in an emergency, the Coastguard in Ireland can be contacted by dialling **999**.

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- **Don't touch** any containers or drums that may contain hazardous substances, or any unfamiliar objects - notify your local county council.
- **Sharp objects**, such as syringes and broken glass, must be handled with extreme care and placed in suitable rigid containers - **not in rubbish bags** – **Tell students to call an adult if they find any of these items.**
- **Be careful** of slippery rocks, mud flats and other potential hazards, such as lifting items which are too heavy.
- **Avoid disturbing wild animals** - any injured, stranded or dead animals should be reported to adult in charge.
- **Young volunteers** (under 17) must be accompanied by an adult at all times and should have a signed Parental Consent Form.
- **Tides** – you must have details of the tide times. Keep an eye on the water level - don't get cut off by high tides.

Materials:

First Aid kit, mobile phone and whistle

Waterproof shoes or wellies - are a must!

Waterproof parka, jacket etc

Gloves / Rubbish bags

Beach Clean Survey Forms, clip boards and pens / pencils

Wipes for cleaning hands and feet etc.

Activity 1: The Beach Clean survey

Step 1. Split the class into groups. Provide each group with the materials required for the Beach Clean. (The survey form etc will help focus the children if they are ticking off the items they find as they go along, and will also slow them down, reducing the danger of slipping and falling).

Step 2. Go through the different types of litter on the Survey Form so everyone is ticking off the same things as they find them. Get students working in a line from the waters edge back up the shore, with each group responsible for a section of the shore. Get the students to take turns between ticking off the litter collected, collecting it, and carrying the bin bag.

During the Survey the following things should be considered:

- **Every item** of litter within the survey area should be removed and recorded. It is more important that a small area of beach is surveyed well, than a large stretch examined half-heartedly and, as a result, completed inaccurately.
- **Natural debris** such as seaweed and driftwood **MUST** be left on the beach, as this forms important habitats for wildlife.
- **Clean areas** - if on arrival the area you planned to survey is very clean, continue with the exercise and return to the same beach afterwards for another survey to compare the difference.

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- **Tally count** - items should be counted and marked off in fives (i.e. ||||). Please record the total in the right-hand column (See the Survey Form). Be sure to fill in an actual number - words such as 'lots' or 'many' cannot be used in data analysis.
- **Unusual items** - include these in the relevant category on the Survey Form. Make a special note so it can be brought to everyone's attention when back in the classroom.
- **Stranded, entangled or dead animals** – make a note of what you find and notify your local county council. Do not touch and leave dead animals alone.
- **Other pollutants** - note the presence of oil or tar and any other pollutants on a separate piece of paper. Inform your local county council.

Back in the Classroom

Activity 2: Beach Clean Survey Results & Biodegradability

Step 1. Collate the information gathered using the Beach Clean Survey Forms.

- Calculate how much of each item on the Survey Form was found?
- What was the TOTAL amount of litter found on the beach?
- What was the most common type of litter found?
- What was the most unusual item found?

Step 2. Discuss the biodegradability of the items found on the beach. (See the "Explorers Biodegradation - Information sheet").

Step 3. Draw up a graph showing the results

Outcome:

Students will have developed:

- exploration and investigative skills
- collating and calculating information
- an understanding of biodegradation
- teamwork skills