

Insect Hotels

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In this two-part resource exploring making and drawing, students will have the opportunity to create insect hotels using natural materials sourced from their local area. They will go on to create drawings inspired by their insect hotels, experimenting with different materials and mark-making. This activity can be adapted for age groups and can be linked to curriculum topics in science such as mini beasts and habitats. Become a member to access the full post below.



This two-part activity can be spread over 3 1 hour sessions.

Part One: Making

Students will need a selection of natural materials. They can be collected ahead of the lesson or you may want to spend some time at the beginning of the project collecting from a school area or nearby park.

There may be an insect hotel in your local area that students can visit for inspiration.





Materials

- Cardboard box / tubes / corrugated cardboard sheets or scraps
- Leaves
- Moss
- Sticks / twigs / branches
- Grass – Fresh and dried
- Pinecones
- Bark

- Scrap fabric
- String
- Scissors

Each student will need a frame for their insect hotel. I used a cereal bar box, but they can be made waterproof by cutting windows in cartons or plastic bottles. Bear in mind that deep boxes will require more materials to fill them. Younger children may prefer to use a smaller frame for their hotel.



For a neater outer finish students can turn their boxes inside out so that any branding or packaging designs are on the inside. The box will need to be carefully taken apart at the flaps so that it can be reconstructed. Every pre-existing fold will need to be bent in the opposite direction and the flaps glued back in place.

Carefully cut out one of the walls to expose the inside of the box.



Students will need to play around with their natural objects, trying to create compact designs that will stay in without glue or Sellotape. Cardboard tubes are great for adding different shapes into the design, or flat card can be built it into different shapes.



Scoring sticks will give a more precise snap.





Use string to hold lots of sticks or twigs together instead of tape or glue.



Fill in any left-over gaps by poking in sticks or other left over items to make the design compact.





Part Two: Observational Drawing and Mark Making

The insect hotels will provide lots of different textures perfect for creating drawings led by mark-making.

Warm up

Invite children to draw different sized boxes and shapes in their sketchbooks.



Make viewfinders by cutting out two L-shaped bits of card and place them over their insect hotel. Ask students to play around with the different compositions using viewfinders until happy with the area that they'd like to draw.





Start the drawing session by using drawing exercises such as continuous line, backwards and forwards drawings or thoughtful mark-making to settle the class.

Main Activity

After the more controlled warm up, provide students with a range of different drawing materials so that they can choose how they explore their insect hotels. Encourage children to explore angles and different perspective with their viewfinders so that their sketchbooks are filled with lots of exciting and varied drawings. Provide large sheets of paper too so that children can create big detailed drawings of their hotels after they've worked in sketchbooks testing out materials and mark-making.

Materials:

- **Wax crayons**
- **Pencil crayons**
- **Graphite pencils**
- **Watercolour**
- **Oil pastels**
- **Handwriting pens**

Children may also want to take photos of their hotels to work from, and to stick in sketchbooks.







Once children are finished with their drawings place the insect hotels outside in a sheltered area!

