

# Rock Pool Rummage

KS1

KS2

Science

Low tide activity only

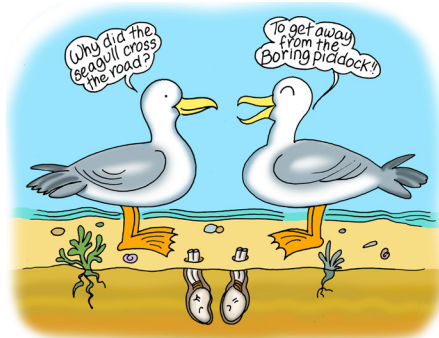
## Learning Outcomes

After taking part in this activity children will understand that rock pools provide a safe habitat at low tide for marine plants and animals and that they support a diversity of creatures dependent upon each other. They will also be able to identify a selection of rock pool creatures.

## Introduction

The Thanet Coast is a Marine Protected Area that includes a Marine Conservation Zone. The coastal rocky reefs and rock pools are rich in plant and animal life and can be easily accessed and explored at low tide. In many of the pools and crevices you will often find prawns, hermit crabs and small fish taking shelter until the tide rises.

One local resident is the boring piddock named not because of its dull nature but because it bores holes in the chalk!

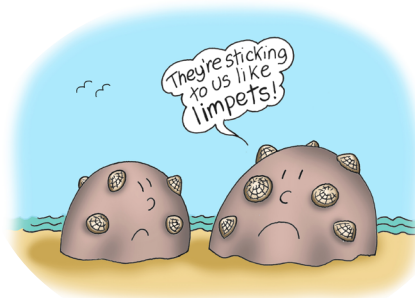


## Guidelines

- Dry and calm weather is ideal for rockpooling as this will keep the surface of a rock pool still, making it easier to see what lies beneath.
  - Pools closest to the sea edge are better, but take care as the chalk reef may be more fragile and more easily damaged here.
  - Start by seeing what's swimming under the surface. You might see small fish such as a goby or blenny. Prawns and shrimps are also common inhabitants of rock pools. They move very quickly and often swim backwards when you least expect it.
  - At the bottom of rock pools you might see a starfish or its skinny, spiny relative, the brittlestar.
  - Try turning over seaweed where you might find the white swirls of tube worms such as tubeworms, which are officially called Spirobis.
  - Look at rocks to see if you can see keel worms, or gently look beneath to see if green shore crabs or edible crabs, which often look like pebbles, are living there.
- Always remember to replace them back gently, the right way round!



- To catch rock pool creatures place a bucket in the water and see what swims in or push it gently through the water to scoop them up. Remember to let them go again where you found them after a short time.
- Take time to explore the crevices between rocks where you may find periwinkle shells, mussels and dogwhelks.
- On more exposed bits of rock you may find limpets and barnacles.



## Before the visit

Look at pictures of seashore and rockpool life or watch a brief video such as <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CczvL4hgiFQ> which shows common species such as shrimps, hermit crabs and fish such as blenny and wrasse. Julia Donaldson's book *Sharing the Shell* is also a good introduction.

Children will need to understand that:

- Rockpools are left behind as the tide falls
- Creatures living in rock pools are waiting until the tide rises again

KS1 children can listen to 'Hermit's Shell' story (*Resource 10*) as well as looking at pictures of rock pool life to prepare them for their visit.

**Remember** - always check the tide times before you visit as part of the risk assessment, as it is best to view rock pools over an out-going (receding) tide, close to low tide.

## During the visit

**Remember** – always check the tide times to ensure you will not be cut off by an incoming tide

- Divide children into small, manageable groups.
- Prepare children with a brief safety talk, warning them that the rocks can be slippery and to take care when exploring.
- Remind them too that creatures living in the pools should be treated gently and if any are caught they must be returned to their original pool.
- Turn over rocks and seaweed carefully and gently replace them in the same position, otherwise they will have left creatures' homes 'upside down'.
- Only take away empty shells, but it's best to leave most of them for wildlife to use.
- Use Resource 3, Identification Sheet to help recognise plants and animals living in the rock pool.
- When the excitement of searching the pools is over, examine



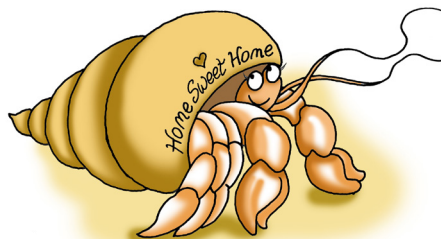
the creatures that have been caught and ask children what differences they can spot between creatures, how do they move, what do children think they might eat and do they have a favourite rock pool creature.

- Encourage children to draw the rock pool creatures.

## After the visit

You can use information gathered during the visit to do some of the following:

- Use Resource 2, Rock Pool Rummage, Sea Creature Cards, to remind children about what creatures they found
- Create a rock pool food web wall display
- Create a diorama using Resource 1, Rock Pool Rummage, Diorama
- Write an account, or produce a storyboard, of a day in the life of a hermit crab or other rock pool animal.
- Write a postcard home about your rock-pooling day (see Resource 6 for postcard designs)



## Equipment needed

For a successful rock-pooling expedition you will need the following:

- Buckets
- Shallow plastic trays
- Identification sheets
- Shoes that are suitable for walking in water and on rocks are useful for this activity!

Using a net is not a good idea, as many rock pool creatures are small and delicate and being tangled in a net can damage them.

## Resources

Resource 1: Rock Pool Rummage, Diorama

Resource 2: Rock Pool Rummage, Sea Creature Cards

Resource 3: Rock Pool Rummage, Identification Sheet

Resources 6 and 10: Blank Postcards and Five Audio Stories, may also be useful for Rock Pool Rummage Activity.

