



50 LEARNING-INSPIRED THINGS TO DO WITH A STICK FOR PRIMARY YEARS

Sticks are open-ended items that encourage children to be creative, imaginative, and exist in worlds where they have full control. They can be an inventor, creator, director, engineer or scientist. Sticks offer infinite opportunities for: open ended learning; creating; role playing; hypothesizing; critiquing and imagining in many teaching contexts.

What does a child imagine when they have a stick in their hands and what stories will they create if we allow them?

This list is designed to inspire educators to explore the learning potential of a stick with their children.

THE STICK AGREEMENT

Before exploring the world of sticks discuss with your children how they should and shouldn't be used. By forming a mutual stick agreement you can empower the students to govern their play and ensure they are aware of how to keep their play environment, and the children within it, as safe as necessary. The agreement can also include how large sticks are carried and how to be respectful of the natural environment when sourcing sticks.

TRY THIS:

Undertake one stick inspired outdoor activity each day.

Map some of these activities into an existing term planner.

Start or end each day with an outdoor learning activity from this list.

Watch *The Humble Stick*: The must have tool for summer for some inspiration.

LITERACY

- 1 Write poetry based on the attributes of a stick (ie my stick is straight like a road, smooth like a pancake, bumpy like a rollercoaster). Display these poems alongside the sticks in an outdoor gallery.
- 2 Read and then create your own Stick Man using colourful wool and a few small sticks. This could be a springboard for creating narratives or innovations based on the book.

- 3 Create a stick picture frame and use natural materials to create an image inside it. Use this image as inspiration for creative writing, poetry or a narrative.
- 4 Use sticks as a tool for facilitating conversation (ie a 'talking' stick) and create games and oral language activities together with students.
- 5 Using sticks and other natural materials create a visual story on the ground

- 6 Read *Room on the Broom* (Julia Donaldson) and create your own stick inspired brooms using sticks and other natural materials

MATHS

- 7 Lay on the ground and see how many sticks it takes to measure around your body.
- 8 See how high you can build a stick tower with a pile of sticks.



- 9 Collect several sticks and sort them by length, width, shape, colour or texture.
- 10 Gather a handful of sticks and measure and compare these with peers using a range of attributes.
- 11 Stick fractions: compare one stick alongside a stick divided in half, thirds, quarters etc to compare
- 12 Use sticks to build arrays
- 13 Create a set of balancing scales with a stick or a seesaw-inspired measuring tool to compare the weight of natural items from your local environment
- 14 Use lengths of bamboo and twine to build 3D shapes and discuss properties such as volume, capacity, angles and net shape.

HASS

- 15 Create a Journey stick with markers to depict a personal journey or story on the stick
- 16 Research Totem Poles and create a series of them for your site
- 17 Make a walking trail marked by sticks. Consider using colour in some way to add to this.

S.T.E.M

- 18 Use sticks, twine and small rocks as balances to build a hanging balance or levering balance to model principles of balance that you have researched.
- 19 Use a handful of sticks to create a mini elf house, fairy glen or hobbit house for others to enjoy in a natural setting.
- 20 Make a flying machine out of sticks.

- 21 Create a sun dial out of sticks
- 22 Make a stick-inspired shadow picture and take a picture of the shadows created at different times of the day.
- 23 Explore ways to join and fasten sticks together to create a den or cubby.
- 24 Turn a stick into a stirring spoon to mix up mud soup, scented petal potions or magic potions.
- 25 Make a mini raft to transport rock or stick people. Test this out in water.
- 26 Design an outdoor game using a small bundle of sticks as the only resource. Teach someone!
- 27 Make a stick raft that will float. Add weight or items on the raft for an element of challenge.
- 28 Create a stick bridge (life-size or for a small creature)
- 29 Pooh sticks in nearby creek (excursions) or create a flowing water channel
- 30 Use sticks as a tool for digging and explore the history of sticks as an early form of technology
- 31 Make a fishing rod or a water diving tool.

THE ARTS

- 32 Create painted stick mobiles.
- 33 Construct twig stars other shapes.
- 34 Create a mobile made from stick with natural element hanging such as feathers, leaves and rocks
- 35 Make a picture frame.
- 36 Draw a 3D map or picture in mud or sand with a stick.
- 37 Make a dream catcher.

- 38 Make a stick crown.
- 39 Use sticks and colourful twine to make decorations for a celebration.
- 40 Using mud and water build a sculpture using sticks to give it life.
- 41 Paint a stick totem.
- 42 Make a bouquet of painted sticks
- 43 Use sticks to attach natural material to make paintbrushes.
- 44 Whittle a stick.
- 45 Weave a pile of sticks to create a checker board square.
- 46 Make a musical instrument with sticks, twigs, shells and rubber bands



CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING

- 47 Play a game of 'This is not a ..., it's a ...' (This is not a leaf; it's a lady bug's umbrella, this is not a stick; it's a wand, this is not a rock; it's a medieval catapult etc) in groups.
- 48 Challenge: who can build the tallest stick tower in a set amount of time using nothing but sticks and twine?
- 49 Play a game of pick up sticks or make your own naughts and crosses frame with a series of sticks
- 50 How many squares can you make with 4 sticks? 8 sticks? 12 sticks?