

Thematic Unit (PMLD)



Northern Ireland
Curriculum

Perfect Picnic Fun



OVERVIEW

In this unit learners gain an awareness of what happens at a picnic. This awareness is developed and embedded through a range of carefully planned and personalised sensory experiences such as poetry, stories, songs, games and musical experiences.

These activities are suggestions only. You can adapt or extend them to suit your learners' age, cognitive ability and specific needs.

Please note: before beginning an activity, check that all the resources are suitable for your individual learners. For example, some essential oils may not be appropriate for young children and others may have contraindications for learners with complex medical needs, life-threatening conditions and/or epilepsy. It is advisable to consult a trained therapist before using essential oils.

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Out and About

Setting the Scene

Outings to a local park, seaside, forest area or the countryside, as well as around the school grounds, are an ideal way to give your learners a wide range of sensory experiences. Each season will bring its own range of smells, sounds and natural stimuli. You can bring these back to the classroom to use for further exploration and as prompts for the theme.

As well as planned outings to a range of picnic venues, you could prepare for this unit by creating an area in the classroom to support class-based activities and individual sensory experiences.

Some of the suggestions may not be practical for your school. You can adapt and select what is most appropriate.

Make several visits to different sites before deciding where to have your picnic.

Take photographs and recordings of suitable sites for the picnic, as well as your learners' responses to them.

Record any sounds you can hear, such as bird song, lawnmowers and rustling leaves. Use these sounds as prompts and stimuli in related activities back in the classroom.

Identify each learner's preferred sensory cue to support your learners' individual needs.

Arrange a number of visits to the places you've identified to give your learners opportunities to experience, encounter and engage with different spaces and environments.

During the exploration activities, take time to investigate the different sights, sounds and smells, for example:

- cut grass;
- leaves;
- fruit;
- berries;
- blossom;
- bird song; and
- animal calls.

Observe your learners' responses to each place you visit. Base your choice of picnic venue on these responses. Make several visits to your chosen place before you have your picnic.

What to Do

Create sensory containers using some of the items listed above.

Be careful not to overload your learners with sensory experiences. Allow them to encounter one sensory experience at a time giving them sufficient time for processing. They may find trying to process a range of different sensory experiences challenging.

Resource 1: Sights and Sounds (Interactive Whiteboard Slides) provides a range of outdoor sound effects.



Areas of Learning

Primary

The World Around Us
The Arts (Art and Design)
Personal Development and
Mutual Understanding

Post-Primary

Learning for Life and Work
(Personal Development)
Environment and Society
The Arts (Art and Design)

What You Need



Resource 1:
Sights and Sounds
(Interactive Whiteboard Slides)



Resource 2:
Play Dough

- Camera
- Recording devices
- Cotton wool balls
- Empty margarine tubs
- Bought or homemade play dough
- Empty spray bottles
- Items that smell
 - apples
 - oranges
 - strong cheese
 - crisps
 - fruit juices
 - air fresheners
 - cut grass
 - leaves
 - fruit
 - strawberries
 - blossom
 - ice cream
 - liquid essences such as essential oils or food essences
- Sounds
 - CD player and sound effect CDs
 - tablet and sound effect apps
 - a selection of sound effects, available from websites such as www.soundrangers.com,
- Items to touch
 - apple
 - drinking glass and straw
 - ice cube
 - crisp packet
 - cold cooked sausage
- Items to taste
 - apples
 - oranges
 - strong cheese
 - crisps
 - fruit juices
 - strawberries
 - ice cream
- Items to see
 - apple
 - crisp packet
 - strawberries
 - drinking glass and straw

Out and About

Ideas for sensory containers include:

Smells

Use cotton wool to soak up liquid scents such as essential oil or food essence. Place them in containers pierced with pinholes.

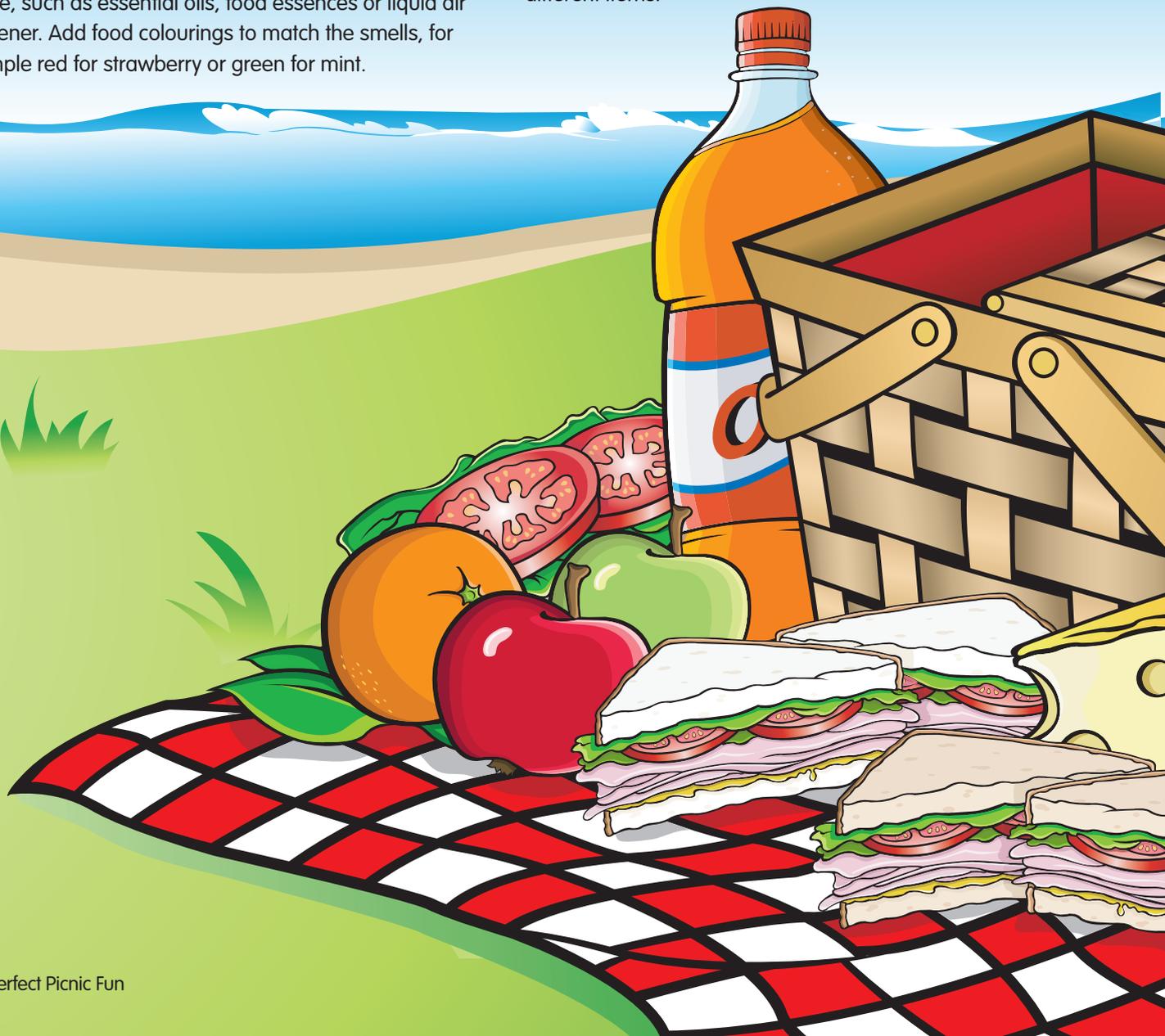
Alternatively, make or buy play dough (the recipe is available in **Resource 2: Play Dough**). Add scents of your choice, such as essential oils, food essences or liquid air freshener. Add food colourings to match the smells, for example red for strawberry or green for mint.

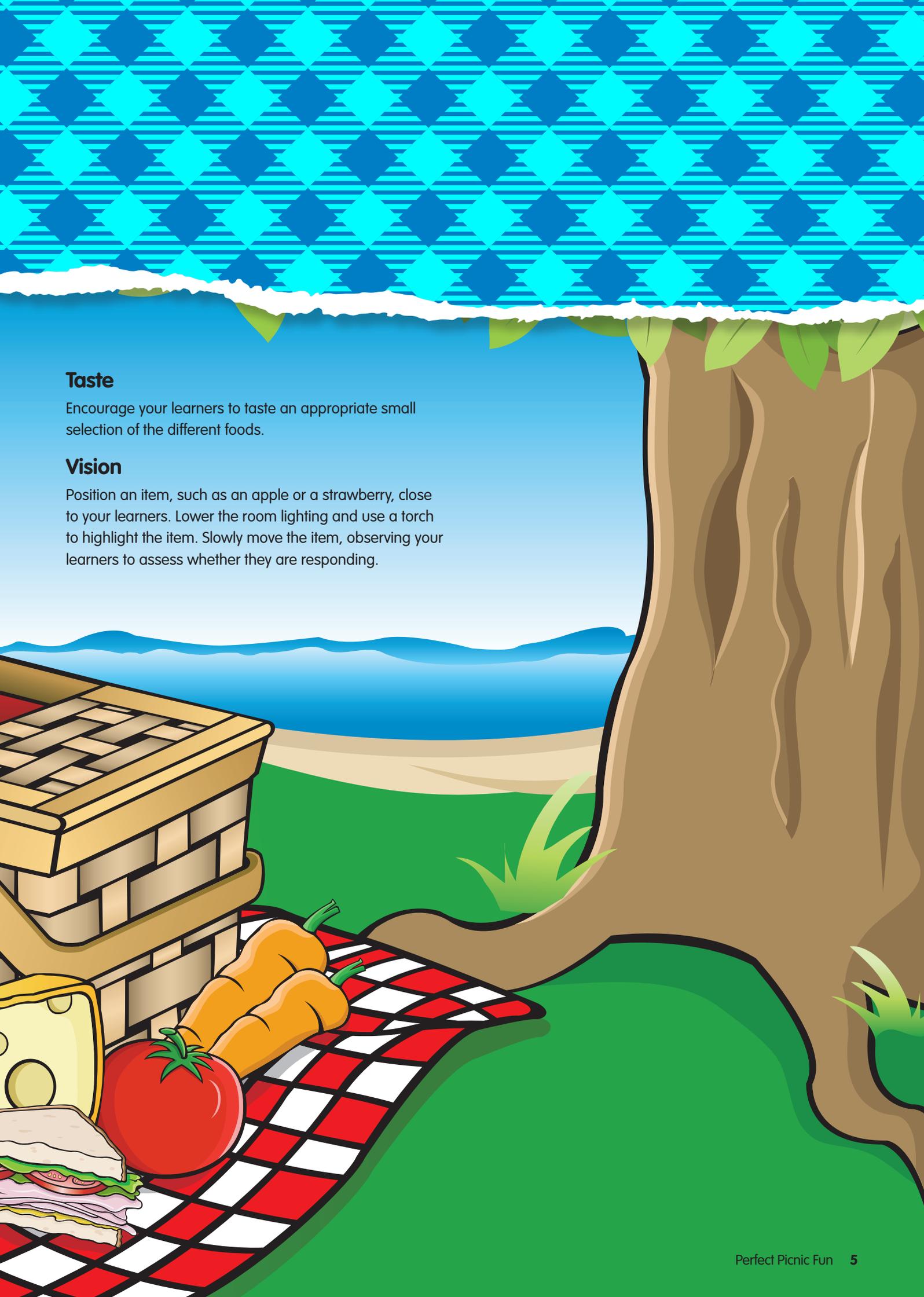
Sounds

Quieten the classroom as much as possible and perhaps darken it slightly. Gather the class together and play some selected sounds. Look for responses and, if sounds are repeated several times, anticipation.

Touch

Support your learners to feel and explore some of the different items.





Taste

Encourage your learners to taste an appropriate small selection of the different foods.

Vision

Position an item, such as an apple or a strawberry, close to your learners. Lower the room lighting and use a torch to highlight the item. Slowly move the item, observing your learners to assess whether they are responding.

Learning Activity 2

Yum Tum

Setting the Scene

In this activity, learners consider foods that might be suitable for their picnic. The picnic basket must contain the learners' personal choices and preferred foods.

What to Do

In a circle activity, guide your learners to smell, feel, taste and look at the items you have collected as you reveal them. If appropriate, support your learners to help you to place each item in the basket.

Support your learners to try the following activities.

- **Taste** the different foods to experience the four main tastes:
 - *salty*: crisps, ham or bacon sandwiches;
 - *sweet*: jam, honey, fruit, juices, fruit yogurts;
 - *bitter*: dark chocolate, grapefruit, lemon; and
 - *sour*: natural yoghurt, sour cream.
- **Smell** the different items, for example:
 - flavoured milk shakes; or
 - chocolate spread.
- **Feel** the textures of items, for example:
 - fruit;
 - icing sugar; or
 - pretzels.

Support your learners to join in making the sandwiches. Once you have made the sandwiches, cut them into small slices. Place these in a container and then pack it into the picnic basket.

Bake some buns, letting your learners engage with the process. Encourage them to try decorating the buns with fun toppings such as icing, chocolate, buttercream, jam, coconut, sprinkles or chocolate buttons.

You can find alternative ideas for picnic food in **Resource 3: Picnic Foods**.

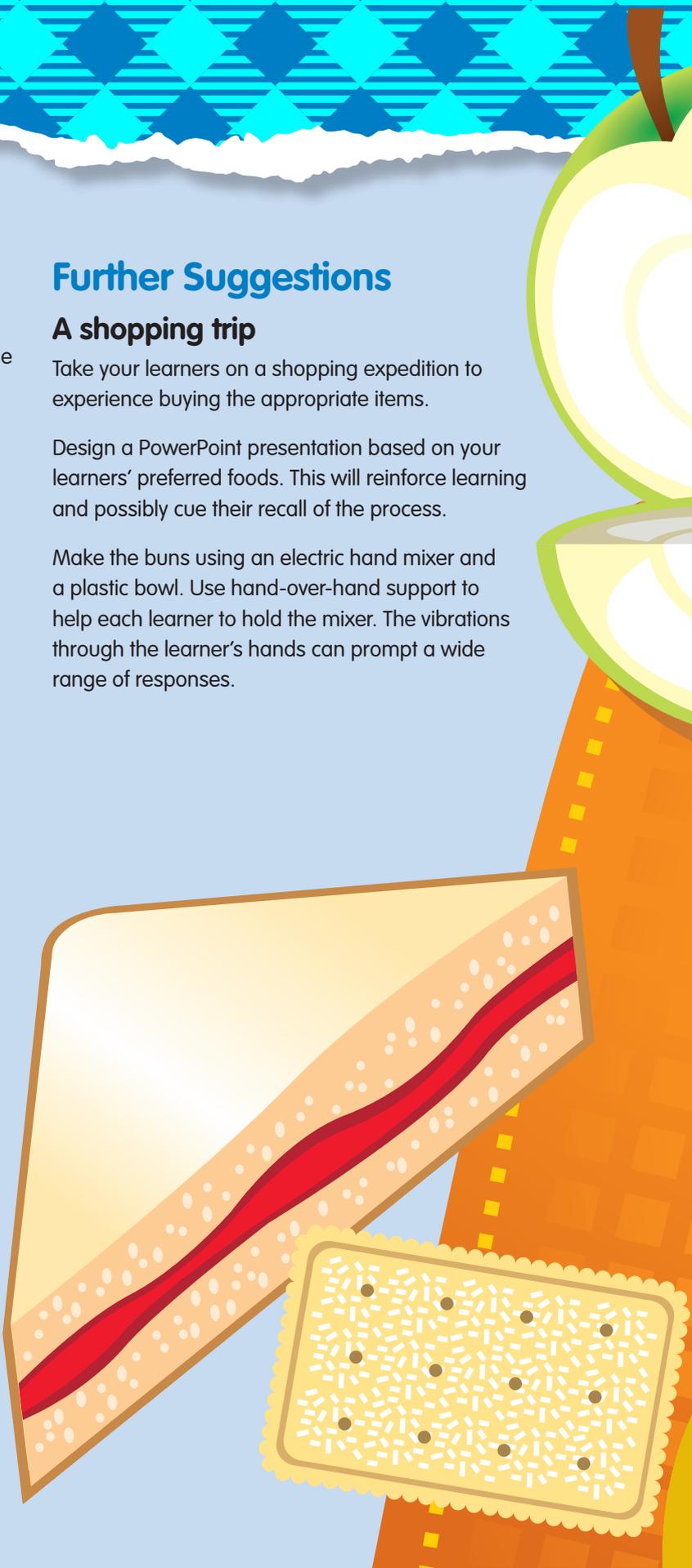
Further Suggestions

A shopping trip

Take your learners on a shopping expedition to experience buying the appropriate items.

Design a PowerPoint presentation based on your learners' preferred foods. This will reinforce learning and possibly cue their recall of the process.

Make the buns using an electric hand mixer and a plastic bowl. Use hand-over-hand support to help each learner to hold the mixer. The vibrations through the learner's hands can prompt a wide range of responses.



Areas of Learning

Primary

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
The Arts (Music and Drama)
The World Around Us
Physical Development and Movement

Post-Primary

The Arts (Music and Drama)
Environment and Society
Learning for Life and Work (Home Economics and Personal Development)
Physical Education

What You Need



Resource 3: Picnic Foods

- Straws
- Bacon
- Jam
- Bread, crisps or crackers
- Icing sugar
- Pretzels
- Honey
- Dark chocolate
- Grapefruit
- Lemon
- Natural yoghurt
- Sour cream
- Chocolate spread
- Flavoured milk shake
- Containers
- Ham
- Cheese
- Coconut
- Drinks
- Fruit juices
- Sandwich fillings
- Buns
- Sausage rolls
- Fruit
- Glasses
- Blanket
- Plates
- Checked tablecloth
- Picnic basket
- Ingredients for buns – use a tried and tested recipe or search the following sites for fairy cakes: www.bbc.co.uk/food
www.bbcgoodfood.com

Let's Go

Setting the Scene

To help build anticipation and excitement of an imminent picnic, enact a short, simple drama with your learners.

Spray some water on the learners' hands and open umbrellas over them, while miming shivering with cold. Explain that sometimes when we go on a picnic the weather can turn out wet and cold.

Display a large cardboard sun and pass it over and in front of your learners. Place warm hot water bottles or hand warmers in their hands and explain that it could also be very hot on the picnic. Tell them that when the sun shines we need a hat to protect us from it. Encourage each learner to put on a fun hat.

Tell your learners that we also need sunscreen to protect our skin. Either rub sunscreen onto your learners' arms and legs or support them to do it. Encourage your learners to smell the sunscreen. Observe your learners closely for any indication of likes or dislikes.



What to Do

Line your learners up and sing a picnic song as you make your way to your chosen spot or onto the bus.

You can find suggestions for picnic songs in **Resource 4: Picnic Songs**.

When you arrive at your picnic area, arrange rugs for your learners to sit on with the checked tablecloth, picnic basket and a range of utensils in the centre.

Remove your learners' shoes and socks and encourage them to rub their feet and hands in the grass.

Sing some songs with your learners while you organise the picnic.

Take the picnic items out of the basket one by one, saying the names of each one as you set it down.

Offer each learner a choice of two drinks. Encourage them to indicate their preferred choice.

Cut a banana and an apple into small slices. Support each learner to smell and feel the fruit. Encourage them to indicate their favourite.

If appropriate, give each learner a paper plate. Ask him or her to indicate which sandwiches and picnic food to place on their plates.

For nil by mouth learners, you can provide an enjoyable sensory experience using their preferred smells, tactile experiences or picnic songs.

Areas of Learning

Primary

The World Around Us
The Arts (Art and Design)
Personal Development and
Mutual Understanding

Post-Primary

Learning for Life and Work
(Personal Development)
Environment and Society
The Arts (Art and Design)

Further Suggestions

Ketchup and mustard bottle painting

Fill a squeezable ketchup bottle with thick red tempera paint and a squeezable mustard bottle with thick yellow tempera paint. Support your learners to create their own designs by squeezing the paint onto construction paper.

Decorate an old sheet, to use as a picnic blanket, with your learners' handprints and footprints. Learners could also decorate a placemat to use on the day of the picnic.



What You Need



Resource 4: Picnic Songs

- Sunhats
- Sunscreen
- Large, bright yellow cardboard sun (or hot water bottle wrapped up as a sun)
- Checked tablecloth
- Picnic basket
- Picnic foods
- Choice of drinks
- Paper plates
- Fruits
- Rubbish bag

Picnic Games

Setting the Scene

Take your learners to a large open space to carry out the activities. You could use one of the picnic songs as a sensory cue.

What to Do

Game 1

Arrange your learners in a circle and place the picnic hamper or basket in the centre. Give each learner a soft ball or beanbag. Demonstrate how to throw the ball into the basket. Support each learner to throw a ball or beanbag.

Game 2

Arrange your learners in a circle. Using different sizes and colours of balls, engage your learners in games that involve the skills of rolling, pushing, patting, throwing, catching and kicking. Encourage your learners to interact with each other and take turns, where possible.

Game 3

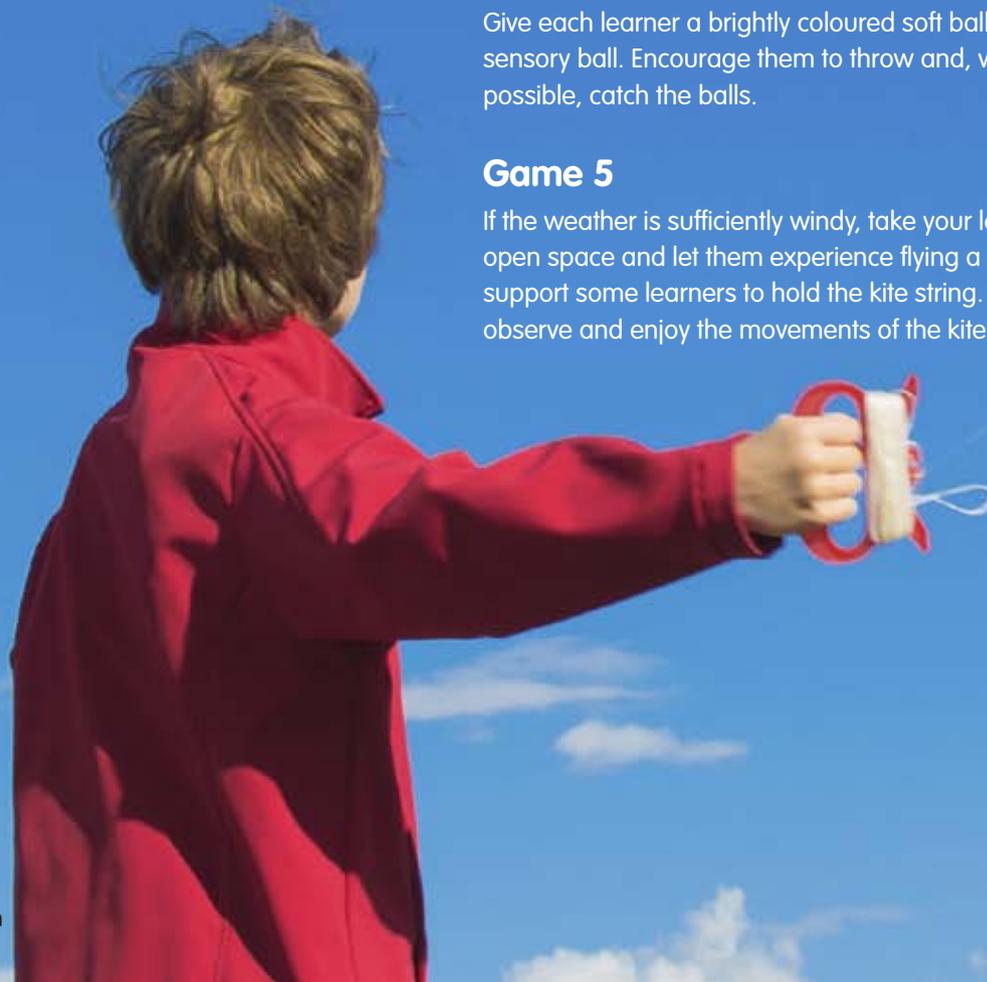
Sing one of the picnic songs and involve your learners in a simple movement activity. Divide your learners into pairs. Guide each learner to hold both of their partner's hands and then raise their arms to create an arch. Support your learners to move around and through the arch in time to the music.

Game 4

Give each learner a brightly coloured soft ball or a large sensory ball. Encourage them to throw and, where possible, catch the balls.

Game 5

If the weather is sufficiently windy, take your learners to an open space and let them experience flying a kite. You may support some learners to hold the kite string. Others can observe and enjoy the movements of the kite.



Areas of Learning

Primary

Physical Development and Movement

Post-Primary

Physical Education

If the weather is unsuitable for kite flying, you could adapt the game by using a fan to create a wind in the classroom.

Game 6

Hang a hammock between two trees or uprights and allow each learner to enjoy a gentle swinging motion. Be aware of health and safety precautions.



What You Need

- Balls/Sensory balls
- Beanbags
- Basket
- Kite



Picnic Proms

Setting the Scene

Position your learners in the picnic area, preferably on soft mats. Play some identified picnic music. This activity seeks to enhance your learners' body awareness by stimulating body movement in time with the rhythm of the music.

What to Do

Extend the musical experience with these sensory activities.

Remove your learners' shoes and socks. Spread some rough textured rugs on the ground. Position your learners on the rugs.

Gently move or roll each learner from side to side. Move their hands and feet on the surfaces. Prompt and encourage independent movement. Give your learners plenty of time to process the sensations they feel.



Areas of Learning

Primary

The Arts (Music)
Language and Literacy

Post-Primary

The Arts (Music)
English

Encourage your learners to clap their hands or stamp their feet in time to the music. Alternatively, gently manipulate their hands and feet to create sounds.

Sing the *Teddy Bears' Picnic* song to your learners. Vary your voice with high, low and whispering tones. Keep this consistent so that, for example, the last line is always loud. This may help the development of anticipation.

Give your learners a range of different percussion instruments appropriate to their ability. Encourage or support them to beat, tap or shake their instruments in time to the music.

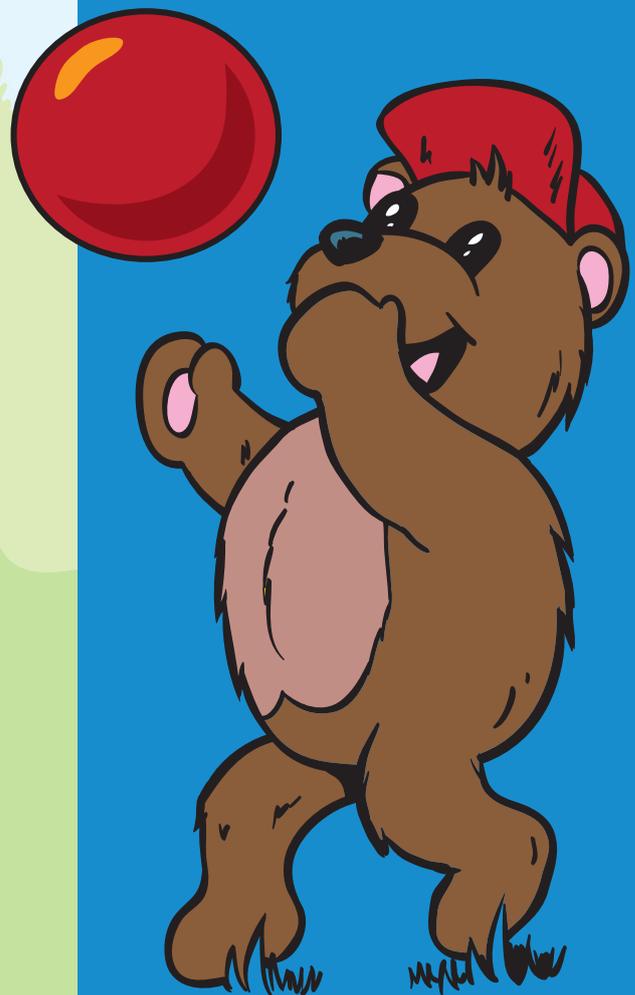
There are many apps available on the theme of picnics. Although your learners may not be able to use them independently, many learners respond well to these resources and engage with the animations, voices and sound effects.

What You Need



Resource 4: Picnic Songs

- Rough textured rugs
- Various percussion instruments



A Picnic Story

Setting the Scene

This is a class-based activity. You can adjust it to meet the needs of your learners or base it on one of the sensory stories listed opposite.

What to Do

Position your learners in a circle.

Begin with the custom-made sensory story and props from your picnic basket or box. For example:

- '(Learner's name) went on a picnic and she brought a wonderful warm blanket to sit on.'

Encourage your learners to feel the texture of the blanket, giving them sufficient processing time.

- '(Learner's name) went on a picnic and he brought a smooth, hard plate to eat from.'

Support your learners to feel and explore the shape and texture of the plate.

- '(Learner's name) went on a picnic and he brought a spoon or fork to eat with.'

Help your learners to explore the spoon or fork and listen to the sound it can make when struck on a surface.

Repeat with as many picnic items as appropriate.

The Ant's Picnic

Introduce your learners to the cut-outs/pictures/replicas of ants and explain that sometimes when we are on a picnic, we can see little ants scurrying about in the grass searching for food. Use your fingertips to pretend that ants are scurrying over your learners' bodies.

Search online for the words, music and a video of the song *The Ants Go Marching*. Sing an appropriate number of verses from the song and model the actions as you sing.

Repeat the song, encouraging your learners to join in with the actions.

Further Suggestions

Sensory books

Make personalised sensory books for each learner, using a range of textures and fabrics.

You can enhance sensory stories by using apps such as the sounds of birds singing to create the atmosphere of being outside.



Areas of Learning

Primary

Language and Literacy
The Arts (Drama and Music)
The World Around Us
Mathematics and Numeracy

Post-Primary

English
Mathematics
The Arts (Drama and Music)
Environment and Society

What You Need

- Search online for the song *The Ants Go Marching*
- A custom-made sensory story created to suit your learners' needs
- *The Ant's Picnic* by Margo Fallis is suitable for all age groups. You can find it at www.electricscotland.com
- *Teddy Bears' Picnic* by Jimmy Kennedy (Aladdin Picture Books) for younger children
- *A Perfect Picnic* (Sesame Street) is suitable for all age groups
- *We're Going on a Picnic!* by Pat Hutchins is suitable for all age groups
- Search online for *The Mice Go on a Picnic*
- *This is the Bear and the Picnic Lunch* by Sarah Hayes and Helen Craig (Walker Books Ltd)
- Yogi Bear cartoons
- *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch* by Ronda Armitage and David Armitage (Scholastic)
- Extracts from books such as *The Famous Five* have examples of picnics for older learners
- A plate
- Cut-outs, pictures or replicas of ants
- Sensory props, for example:
 - squeeze ketchup bottle or ziplock bag half filled with fluid hair gel
 - plastic rain hood that will make a distinctive sound when scrunched
 - picnic basket and picnic foods and drinks
 - vacuum flask
 - blanket.

Goodbye Picnic

Setting the Scene

Set the scene for a final picnic. Use one or more of your sensory cues to introduce the appropriate resources.

What to Do

Conclude your themed activities with a class-based final picnic experience. Re-visit the key stimuli, experiences, songs and poems that engaged your learners and most effectively enhanced their recognition and active involvement in this unit.

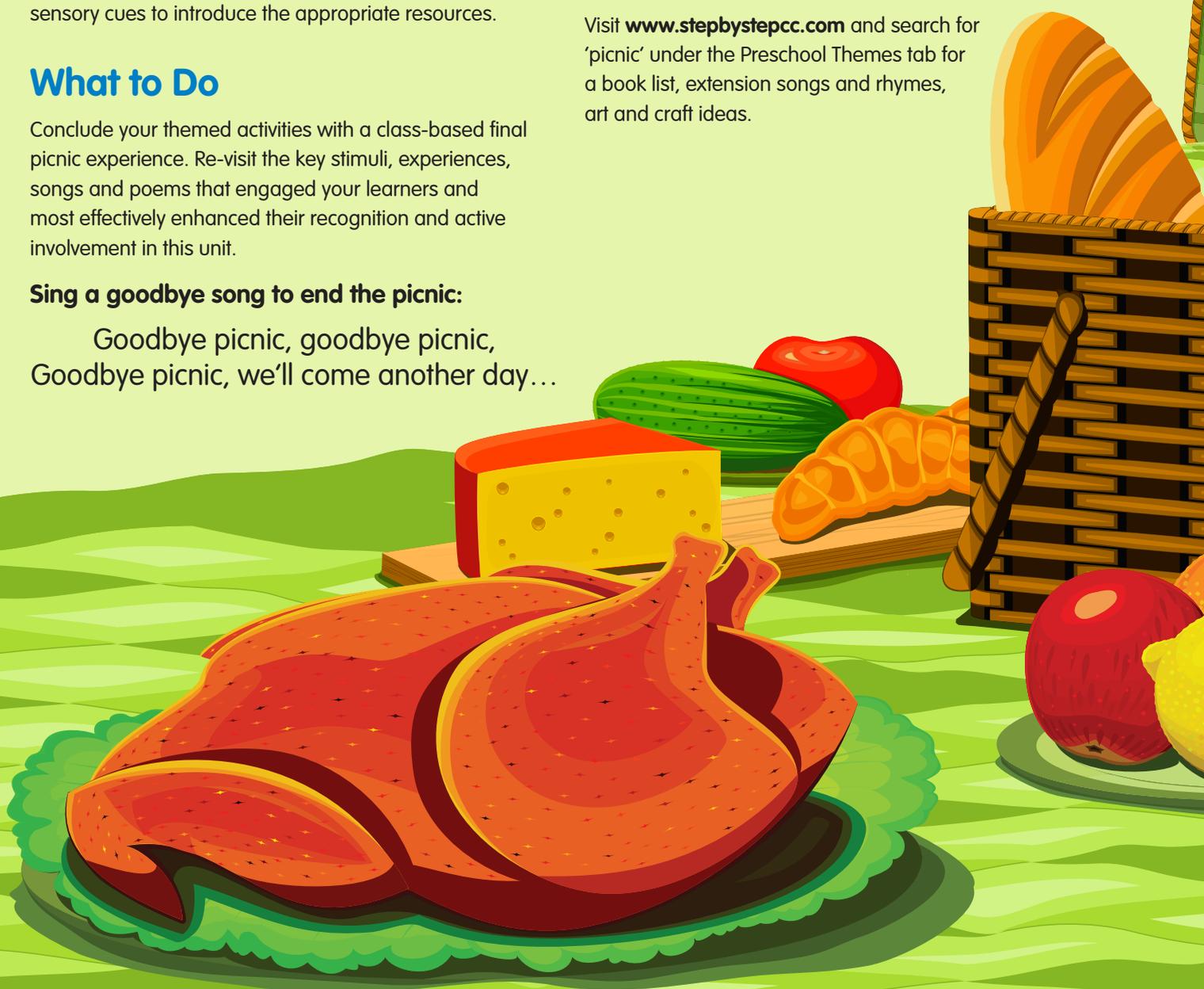
Sing a goodbye song to end the picnic:

Goodbye picnic, goodbye picnic,
Goodbye picnic, we'll come another day...

Further Suggestions

More to do

Visit www.stepbystepcc.com and search for 'picnic' under the Preschool Themes tab for a book list, extension songs and rhymes, art and craft ideas.





Areas of Learning

Primary

The World Around Us
Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Post-Primary

Learning for Life and Work
(Citizenship and Personal Development)
Environment and Society

What You Need

- Bags to collect rubbish

Resource 1: **Sights and Sounds** (*Interactive Whiteboard Slides*)

(available from the Inclusion and SEN at www.nicurriculum.org.uk)

Sights and Sounds

Title Slide

Slide 1: Dog

Slide 2: Lawnmower

Slide 3: River

Slide 4: Sheep

Slide 5: Cow

Slide 6: Tractor

Slide 7: Children playing

Slide 8: Bumble bee

Slide 9: Wind in the trees

Slide 10: Bird

Slide 11: Rain

Slide 12: Laughter

Slide 13: Church bells

Play Dough Recipe

Ingredients

- 2 cups **plain flour**
- 4 tablespoons **cream of tartar**
- 2 tablespoons **cooking oil**
- 1 cup **salt**
- 2 cups **boiling water**
- food coloring
- glitter or coloured sand to make the dough more fun

Smells or flavourings of your choice

Method

Just place all the ingredients in a mixing bowl and mix.

It might not come together at first, but keep on mixing. It will eventually take on a nice play doughy texture.

Alternative ideas for picnic foods

Sticky Sausages

- 900 g (2 lb) **cocktail sausages**
- 3 tablespoons **runny honey**
- 5 tablespoons **hoisin sauce**
- 1 level teaspoon **mustard seeds**

Mix together the honey, hoisin and mustard seeds.

Toss the cocktail sausages in the mixture.

Roast them in a tin at 200° C (180° C fan oven) gas mark 6 for 35–40 minutes, stirring occasionally.

These sausages are excellent cold too.

Tortilla Snails

- tortillas
- soft cheese
- wafer thin ham
- mini bread sticks

Cut 4 cm off either side of some large tortillas.

Spread the tortillas with soft cheese.

Place a layer of wafer thin ham on top.

Roll up tightly, wrap in cling film, and place in a fridge to chill.

Cut the chilled wraps into 1 cm slices. This is the shell part of the snail.

Place a mini bread stick (to act as the body of the snail) at the base of each slice of wrap and arrange on a plate.

Hungry Ants

- celery sticks
- peanut butter (be aware of allergies)
- cream cheese
- raisins

Wash, top and tail the sticks of celery.

Spread with peanut butter or cream cheese.

Dot raisins along each celery stick to represent the ants.

Smiley Pizza Faces

- muffins or round soda bread
- pizza sauce
- cherry tomatoes
- sweetcorn
- cheese

Split muffins or round sodas in half.

Spread each half with pizza sauce.

Use cherry tomato slices, pepper strips, ham strips, sweetcorn and cheese to make smiley faces.

Fruit Kebabs with Lemon Dip

- selection of fruit
- Greek-style yoghurt
- lemon curd
- soft cheese

Prepare bite-size pieces of fruit.

Mix 200 g of Greek-style yoghurt with 150 g lemon curd and 150 g soft cheese to make a dip.

Colourful Jellies

- two 135 g packets of jelly (different flavours)
- a can of evaporated milk
- hundreds and thousands

Break up a 135 g packet of jelly (any flavour) and place in a heatproof jug.

Add boiling water to make up to 300 ml and stir until melted.

Add ice cubes to make up to 500 ml and stir until melted.

Pour into clear plastic cups until a third full and chill until set.

Chill a 170 g can of evaporated milk.

As before, cut up another packet of jelly and make up to 375 ml with boiling water. Stir until melted.

Leave to cool but do not allow to set.

Whisk the chilled evaporated milk in a bowl until frothy, then add the liquid jelly and whisk well.

Pour over the set jellies and chill again.

Add hundreds and thousands.

Bun Favourites

Customise and adapt a plain sponge or plain buns with your own toppings: chocolate, buttercream, jam, coconut, sprinkles and hundreds and thousands.

Rice Crispy Buns

Rice Crispy Buns and Marshmallow Top Hats are always popular.

Meringue Nests

Fill ready-made meringues with whipped cream or a healthier alternative and add fruit of your choice.

Teddy Bears' Picnic

If you go down in the woods today you're sure of a big surprise
If you go down in the woods today you'd better go in disguise
For every bear that ever there was will gather there for certain because
Today's the day the Teddy Bears have their picnic

Every Teddy Bear who's been good is sure of a treat today
There's lots of marvellous things to eat and wonderful games to play
Beneath the trees where nobody sees they'll hide and seek as long as they please
That's the way the Teddy Bears have their picnic

Picnic time for Teddy Bears
The little Teddy Bears are having a lovely time today
Watch them, catch them unaware and see them picnic on their holiday
See them gaily gad about
They love to play and shout
They never have any cares
At six o'clock their Mummies and Daddies will take them home to bed
'Cause they're tired little Teddy Bears

If you go down in the woods today you better not go alone
It's lovely down in the woods today but safer to stay at home
For every bear that ever there was will gather there for certain because
Today's the day the Teddy Bears have their picnic

Visit www.dltkids.com or www.bussongs.com to find a *Teddy Bears' Picnic* song suitable for primary learners.

Music without the lyrics is more suitable for post-primary learners. The music without lyrics is available on the Music CD.

Flight of the Bumblebee (by Rimsky-Korsakov) and other similar classical pieces may be suitable for older learners.

Here We Go

(Sung to the tune of Mulberry Bush)

Here we go on a picnic today,
A picnic today, a picnic today.
Here we go on a picnic today,
On such a beautiful _____ (day of the week).

A Picnic in the Park

(Sung to the tune of If You're Happy and You Know It)

(Original Author Unknown)

Yes, we'll all go on
A picnic in the park.
Yes, we'll all go on
A picnic in the park.
Bring some lunch
And bring a ball.
There will be
Such fun for all!
Yes, we'll all go on
A picnic in the park.

Picnic Song

(Sung to the tune of Mulberry Bush)

This is the way we spread our cloth,
Spread our cloth, spread our cloth.
This is the way we spread our cloth,
On such a beautiful _____ (day of the week).

This is the way we eat our lunch...
This is the way we play our games...
This is the way we clean it up...
After a delightful picnic.

We had fun on a picnic today,
Picnic today, picnic today.
We had fun on a picnic today,
On such a beautiful _____ (day of the week).

A Picnic Basket

(Sung to the tune of A Tisket-A Tasket)

(Original author unknown)

A-tisket, A-tasket,
A filled up picnic basket,
Mum stuffed it with such yummy treats,
I can't wait to unpack it.

Unpack it, unpack it, I can't wait to unpack it, crackers, cheese and fruit please,
Kept safe tucked in our basket.

Our basket, our basket,
There's more things in our basket,
Juice and bars and my toy cars,
To play with – let's unpack it!

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