

LEAF Lesson Plan



BAT LESSON PLAN AND GAME

Suitable for
AGES 7+

LEARNING
ABOUT
FORESTS

Description	Lesson plan about Bats
Aims	Learn about bats and their habitats
Needed on the day	It is very useful to identify an area in the forest where you can see elements of a bat's habitat (roost/feeding areas/water source) Information on the bat species known to live in the area. Phone or sound recorder/player. Blindfold (for the game).
Where	Preferably near a forest/woodland/river but can also be done in the school yard.
Age group	7+. Lesson works with up to twenty students.

Lesson outcome:

Students will understand

- What a bat is
- What it feeds on
- Its preferred habitat
- Its preferred roost/home
- How it catches its prey

Timescale and outline of Activities:

Activity can last from 15-60 minutes

Gather students at a point where they can observe the water/woodland edge/roost cave or ruin.

Explain to students what a bat is:

- Not a bird but a flying mammal, very small with long fingers that have webs between them for flying
- Having a picture chart of Ireland's 11 bat species is useful at this point.

What it feeds on

- All Irish bats are insectivores. Ask the students what kind of insects they think the bats might eat.
- Bats can eat up to 8,000 insects per night which is of great benefit to humans.

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Explain how it hunts

- 🦇 Bats find the insects using echolocation, sending out and receiving sound waves which bounce off an object in their path and send information which allows the bat to locate objects (prey) at high speeds.
- 🦇 This sense even tells a bat if an insect is too big for it to eat. Remind them how small a bat is.
- 🦇 There are many excellent videos online which have amplified recording of bats' noises. Most Irish bat species can be found online. These can be played to students on a phone.

Explain what a bat's preferred habitat is

- 🦇 Broadleaved woodland is the habitat type universally preferred by all Irish species, even if they do not forage in and around trees. Riparian (river's edge) habitats are also very important.
- 🦇 Bats like to roost in cool dark places. They prefer old stone buildings to modern block ones.

Play the bat game

This active game teaches students how bats use echolocation to catch flying insects in the dark. Divide your students into two groups. One group will form a circle; this will be the boundary/hedgerow. The others will be "bats" and "moths" inside the circle. Blindfold one volunteer inside the circle; this student will be the bat. The other students inside the circle are moths. The bat will periodically yell "BAT!" and the moths will respond with "MOTH!" Using only the sense of hearing, the bat will have to capture (tag) the moths that are trying to avoid getting caught. If either bat or moths go too near the edge of the circle, the other students tap them twice on their shoulder. Once tagged, the moths join the circle. Students can then take turns being bats, moths, and boundary markers. Make sure the students walk, not run. Otherwise, the blindfolded student may easily run into someone or something.

