



**PRIMARY CURRICULUM
MATERIALS
FOR
THE PEAK CENTRE
AT
CHAMPION HOUSE**

**Devised and written by
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A. “SENSORY HALTS”

Objectives

- 1.To encourage the participants (students and teachers) to use a variety of ways of raising their awareness of, and recording, the sensory experiences gained from their stay at Peak Centre
- 2.To enable all students to have an experience of being “in charge” of an activity
- 3.To encourage listening skills - understanding and reacting to simple instructions
- 4.To introduce and develop creative writing skills, expressing feelings and creative ideas.

Curriculum Links

Creative writing, listening and speaking, recording skills artistic/creative skills, stilling and reflection, group work, photography.

Description of Activity

1. Each session one member of the group is designated “Sensory Halt” facilitator. Everyone in the group should have an opportunity to lead this activity.
2. The facilitator determines (somewhat randomly) when the group will be given a signal (“duck decoy”) to stop what they are doing and remain still and silent for one minute and then undertake a specific task for **no more than 5 minutes**.
3. The group is to respond to any auditory, tactile or visual stimulus that they are experiencing at the time, in a way that is most appropriate to the individual, the activity taking place and the time available.
4. These activities may be used to increase group bonding and for the group to offer encouragement and praise to each individual for the effort and commitment they are showing
5. The activities are designed to encourage leaders to develop them further to address other activities and experiences the students may have while at Peak Centre and meet the specific needs of their group
6. They offer possibilities for such work, back at school, in a wide range of curriculum activities when “writing about it” might not be the best option

Activities to select from or develop

1. The group is exploring the Peak Centre site for the first time

- a. The Facilitator gives the Sensory Halt signal
- b. The group gathers in a pre-arranged spot and settles down in silence
- c. The group is asked to think about their preconceived ideas about the Centre and their actual observations and first impressions
- d. The group settle down to the activity which will last for about 5 minutes
- e. The group is encouraged to feed back their thoughts and ideas to a partner, small group or the whole group
- f. The group gets back quickly to their planned work so it is clear that these stops are short and to the point
- g. The group might be encouraged to share issues about living in community together as well dealing sensitively with the hopes and fears experienced when being away from home in a different environment. There are no street-lights, little or no traffic noise (except the trains!) as well as animal and bird sounds in the night. All of these may concern or excite some students

- h. This might be an appropriate time for the group to begin to devise their own “house rules,” to compliment the safety information from the centre staff, and to ensure that everyone feels comfortable, safe and happy
- i.

2. The group is using the climbing walls for the first time

- a. The facilitator gives the Sensory Halt signal.
- b. **When they are safely on the ground** they may be asked to:
 - I. Take two minutes to tell **one** partner how they feel after their climb. Each to listen in silence to other using creative listening technique¹
 - II. In groups of four, tell each other about one of their partner’s feelings, taking no more than five minutes in all
 - III. Jot down a few words that express how their body feels when they climb
 - IV. Or they may express in 30 words how they felt when they waited for their first climb, or how they now feel having achieved their first climb
 - V. Or they might record a series of images of “climbing” for a later presentation using sketching materials, digital media or audio recording, while they are waiting their turn or at the end of the session
 - VI. The emphasis is on quick, first impressions not long deliberation, as it is important to maintain the energy levels of the climbing activity
 - VII. The group continue with the planned activity and reflect on how they feel as they become more accustomed and skilful at the climbing walls

3. The group is on a walk on the hill

- a. When the group is at a safe point where they will not interfere with the enjoyment of others the Facilitator gives the Sensory Halt signal.
- b. **Do not use whistles or anything that might be mistaken for a distress signal**
- c. The object of the activity is to assist the students to focus on the sights and sounds of the natural world
 - I. The group sits/stands in a tight “sticky elbows” circle, in silence, with eyes closed and their ears covered over for a few seconds
 - II. They then open their eyes and uncover their ears and around the circle they share, with the whole group, the sensations they can see hear or feel as they sit/stand in the circle
 - III. They could be encouraged to focus on natural sounds or intrusive “human” sounds. They may be encouraged to focus on the ground immediately at their feet or the distant view
 - IV. Individuals may “pass” but everyone is encouraged to share something, even if it is just that they are starving!
 - V. Repeat the whole process either straight away or at reasonable intervals throughout the walk
 - VI. Encourage the students to be aware of their increased sensitivity to the sights and sounds around them
 - VII. If possible record some of these impressions on cassette/minidisk to think about during an evening reflection time

¹ Creative Listening involves listening to someone with total attention but without comment. It is sometimes useful for the listener to then feed back what they have heard to the speaker. The individuals then swap roles and repeat the activity

4. The group is involved in a very physically demanding activity such as climbing or canoeing

- a. When there is a natural break in the activity, and it is safe to do so, the Facilitator gives the Sensory Halt signal
- b. The group gathers in two's and three's and sit in silence together for a few moments
 - I. Each group member shares with the others the sensations they are aware of when they take part in a physically demanding activity. Both the anticipation and the actual experience could be shared
 - II. Encourage discussion of the specific environment, water, rocks etc as well as the physical demands each student experiences
 - III. Encourage descriptions of the excitement and challenges offered by the activity
 - IV. Each group could select a few key words that sum up the experience for them. These could be written up on a "message board"
 - V. Digital images of the activity could be taken to facilitate recall of the experience at an evening or final sharing session

Endnote:

- a. This process is designed to be modified by teachers to suit a wide range of activities both at Peak Centre and back at school.
- b. The key factor is the involvement of all group members (including staff) in a process that encourages the participants to explore a wide range of emotions and feeling that relate to the experience of being at Peak Centre
- c. The process should not upset the flow of activities being undertaken. It should develop a time of reflection and language development that has an appropriate pace that maintains the interest, enthusiasm and involvement of the group.

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B. NIGHT TIME EXPERIENCES

Objectives

1. To encourage and develop the children's observational and listening skills in a different context to that which is possible in a school day
2. To make full use of the potential of the site at Peak Centre for creative activities
3. To encourage language development, especially speaking and listening skills
4. To explore the potential of a night-time activity that encourages positive feelings about being in the dark

Curriculum Links

Speaking and listening, language development – specifically describing feelings and observations accurately

Links to observation of wildlife; climate change; weather; environmental issues and basic land use.

Description of Activity

1. Many children have no experience of true 'darkness' and these activities are designed to engender a feeling of excitement and wellbeing in darkness
2. They require some preparation by staff to ensure that all the children are aware of the ground rules of night-time work²
3. Children's natural concerns about the dark need to be taken into account and discussed while at the same time discouraging irrational panic that might endanger others
4. It is vital that staff are seen to take these activities seriously as experiential experiences do not succeed if staff are not committed to them, and JOIN IN

² See Health and Safety note on page three

Activities to select from or develop

Preparation

The children need to be in warm clothes (as appropriate); they need something to sit/lie on.

They need recording equipment such as a minidisk player/recorder and Bat detectors

Adults require powerful torches and an agreed signal – **not a whistle which may be mistaken for a distress call**

Depending on the time of year the group may well go out when it is dark, experience it going dark gradually or watch the dawn.

1. The group has been looking at differences between town and country life, and this activity is being used to reflect on the sounds in a rural environment.

- a. The students are told that they are going for a walk in the grounds, away from their main buildings.
- b. As they set off they are reminded to be as silent as possible
- c. At an appropriate point they are asked to stand for a moment and accustom themselves and 'tune in' their ears' to the sounds of the night.
- d. The objective is then to sit or lie down and listen to the sounds of the night both natural and made by people and machines for five minutes
- e. One group may use the bat detector and another try to record the silence on a minidisk.
- f. The group gathers in a close circle and everyone is encouraged to share something of what they heard: "I sat in the dark and I heard....."
- g. The group listens to the recordings made
- h. The group note down some of the key words that people have used. These may be used as a simple "list" poem or be used later to develop Haiku poems

2. The group has been looking at their heightened senses in a rural environment

- a. Some time is spent acclimatising the group to the darkness. It helps to close the eyes and then open them to adjust to the low light levels
- b. The group is standing, sitting or lying down looking around themselves for five minutes (This is a long time for some children, but it is well worth persevering.)
- c. This time they get into small listening groups and share in turn their experiences of trying to see in the dark.
- d. This activity might be attempted at dawn. The students are encouraged to watch the dawn in silence or
- e. This "Salutation" on page four may be helpful with older children to make the experience more mystical

IMPORTANT NOTES:

There are crucial health and safety issues associated with children being out in the grounds after dark and potentially being briefly out of sight of their responsible adults.

Necessary risk assessments must be undertaken and ground rules set by the leaders and staff at Peak Centre should be clearly explained to all involved.

The neighbours of Peak Centre have to be treated with due consideration, not being disturbed by undue noise or flashing torch light.

3. The group is doing indoor work on the senses

This activity is intended to heighten awareness for work outside

- a. The group settles down in a quiet part of the building
- b. The group take it in turns to be blindfolded
- c. Sounds are made from different parts of the room and the task is to identify the direction of the sound and possibly what has made that sound (keys rattling, paper rustling, water pouring, percussion instruments etc)
- d. When everyone has had an attempt, feely bags are passed around with a series of objects in them. Each person has to identify the objects on a simple recording sheet
- e. On another occasion a series of "smells" are passed around for each person to identify
- f. Optical illusion images could be posted up around the room with a small prize for the individual who identifies the most images in a set time

Salutation to the Dawn

**Listen to the refrain of the dawn.
Look to this day for it is life, the very life of life.
In its brief course lie all the truths
And realities of your existence.
The glory of action,
The bliss of growth,
The splendour of beauty.
For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision.
But today, well lived,
Makes every yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day!
Such is the salutation to the dawn.**

Adapted from the Sanskrit

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C. ROLE PLAY

Objectives

To enable students and staff to empathise with issues affecting people in an area like Edale with the range of pressures that come into play when change is considered.

Curriculum Links

Language skills, Drama, Speaking and Listening, Geography – issues affecting locality

Description of Activity

1. There are many opportunities for role play but this particular example centres around an environmental issue concerning land use in the Edale area
2. There will be opportunities for students and staff to take on the roles of the people involved in a major issue affecting the area
3. Each of the three levels of his example is designed to take a maximum of an hour to complete
4. The activity involves three levels of activity:
 - I. Discussion of a rumour/local gossip in the shop or the Nag's Head
 - II. The development of a publicity campaign both for and against the proposals
 - III. A more formal presentation of the various points of view in front of an independent chairperson
5. The activity is debriefed by the staff and the process is discussed by the students

1. Discussion of rumour/gossip

The group are told the following pieces of gossip as "the truth" (It must be true as it was heard in the shop/pub!)

- a. According to the local paper employment around Edale is at an all time low following the closure of the Hope Cement Works.

- b. It is proposed to develop small scale industrial units on the land surrounding the station to make better use of the site
- c. These proposals would keep the station open to passengers and freight for the next thirty years
- d. The Railway Company refuses to consider any other proposals
- e. The industrial sites will require the major upgrading of the road from Hope and some railway development such as sidings, repair and storage sheds and high intensity floodlighting for security
- f. Some new affordable housing will be required for local people and key workers, meeting government targets for new homes in the Hope valley area
- g. The site earmarked for the new housing is at present occupied by The Peak Centre @ Champion House

The group is encouraged to discuss the news in small groups (as though in the pub/shop)

The group is asked to identify what they see as truth, or gossip and what further information they require

2. The campaigns, for and against the proposals

- a. The group is encouraged to gather "facts" and other information to support their case for or against the proposals.
- b. They can be self-selecting groups or made randomly by drawing lots etc.
- c. The groups need to establish ground rules for the conduct of the campaigns and agree time limits and resources to be used.

Some Possible Key Issues the group may be encouraged to consider

- Need to keep station especially in times of severe weather
- Part of government strategy to encourage visitors to use public transport
- Part of Government policy to build more homes throughout the country
- Visitors may be less inclined to come to Edale if the development goes ahead
- Visitors will come anyway because of the Pennine Way and surrounding countryside
- Jobs are desperately required by those local people forced out of farming and local quarry jobs
- More jobs means more money in the local economy
- More people means more pollution, crime and general disturbance
- Peak Centre only benefits the few, housing would benefit the whole community
- Peak Centre is a precious resource much valued by many town people
- The Village school would be safe from closure if there were more houses
- The school would lose its special character if it was made a lot bigger
- The environment would suffer from any development
- More buildings mean more traffic, street lighting, noise and pollution
- People want to live and work in the countryside
- The needs of the many outweigh those of the few
- The views of local farmers and long established families need to be considered
- New people means new life to the old fashioned community

3. The “Local Enquiry”

1. The children would be asked to assume the roles of the various people involved in this issue:

- Locals without a job
- Residents
- Environmentalists
- RSPB
- Local farmers and farm workers
- Visitors
- Bed and Breakfast and other tourism providers
- Retired local people and incomers
- Peak Centre Management and users
- Peak Park Staff
- Local industrialists
- School Staff and parents
- Planners
- Developers

2. Someone is asked to “chair” the meeting. (This could be the warden or a local person who is associated with Peak Centre)

3. Following on from the discussions in the Nag’s Head (or the Village Shop) the students will be encouraged to research the issues and put their case in a campaign. This will inform the next stage, the Public Enquiry. The research could be done alongside other activities that take the children out into the community or on visits and be concluded during the evenings

4. The students will be asked to assume the roles of supporters and opponents of the proposals and put their case succinctly (with some passion) to the Enquiry

5. On the basis of the quality of the arguments **only** the Chair will decide to allow or dismiss the proposals

6. The group should have an opportunity to debrief the activity and record any insights into complex rural issues

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D. OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Objectives

1. To explore curriculum links with the range of outdoor activities available at Peak Centre
2. To focus on opportunities offered by the unique location and resources of Peak Centre
3. To make some curriculum activities undertaken at school more challenging and relevant through links with the Peak Centre experience
4. To identify two specific areas for development with strong connections with the opportunities offered by Peak Centre

1. Curriculum Links

These are many and various but might include:

Maths:

- Simple maths from navigation exercises – scale plans, basic geometry
- Journey planning to/from Edale
- Plans of site to scale

Geography:

- Location of Peak District in UK
- Location of major mountain ranges in UK/world
- Compass work – journey planning by bearings etc
- Map reading – interpretation and understanding of signs and symbols
- Caves and caving in the Peak and elsewhere
- Farming and industries of the Hope Valley
- Characteristics of limestone/gritstone scenery

Science:

- Water testing
- Limestone testing
- Pond dipping
- Life cycles of aquatic life forms
- Wild flower and other flora of site

History:

- Settlements in Hope Valley
- Prehistoric and Roman remains
- Ancient track ways and trade routes
- Mines and Quarries
- History of archery
- Research of major mountaineering achievements
- National Parks – Kinder trespass etc

Language:

- Devising safety codes for dangerous sports
- Rules for activities/ house rules
- Speaking and listening
- Creative listening
- Role play: Empathising with issues of the countryside/village
- Poetry and journal writing

Music:

- Representing experiences through sound
- Folk songs of area
- Listening to atmospheric music from all traditions

Art and Craft:

- Using various media to create displays of experiences
- Creating models of caves/ activities/visits
- Posters illustrating Peak Centre attractions for others
- Digital photography – creating a presentation at end of visit
- Creating natural forms using found objects
- Living sculptures

2. Specific Areas for Development at Peak Centre

A. Spiritual Development³

Objectives

- To enable the participants to “develop the awareness that there is something more to life than meets the eye, something more than the material, something more than the obvious, something to wonder at, something to respond to...”⁴

³ This is much broader than *Religious* development and therefore has wider implications for those of faith or no faith. The work is equally appropriate for members of all world faiths

- ii. To utilise the opportunities provided by time spent at Peak Centre to provide the students with a range of activities that enable them to meet the first objective in a way that addresses the needs of those of faith and of no faith
- iii. To enable staff to explore methods and techniques that could be transferred to school

Curriculum Links

Listening and speaking, stilling and reflection, creative arts, RE, PSE

Activities to select from or develop

1. Beginnings and endings- devising celebrations and rituals

- I. Encourage the students to devise simple rituals to celebrate being at Peak Centre.
- II. The group gathers, in silence, at a pre-arranged time and location, to sit indoors or out, in a compact "sticky elbows" circle
- III. This might involve simple "round" songs with appropriate words, hymns, a group prayer or mantra and other contributions devised by the group
- IV. Appropriate background music and low lighting will help to create a "special" atmosphere.
- V. Some sort of "focus" might be placed in the centre of the circle – candles or night lights, natural objects or artefacts from the days events
- VI. There may be a sharing time when individuals share thoughts and experiences with the group, which are received in silence. There needs to be a few moments gap between contributions
- VII. The session closes, candles are extinguished, music is faded up and the group move away to the next activity

2. Opportunities to enable students and staff to spend time being still, quiet and reflective

- I. Establish "magic spots", places where individuals may go and just "be" away from others
- II. Students and staff may take opportunities to sit with a natural object (leaf, stone, twig, found object) and spend a few moments reflecting on that object
- III. Spend some time with a pencil and piece of card "recording" the sounds heard at the "magic spot"
- IV. Sit and sketch the largest object in sight (reduced to postcard size) or the very smallest (drawn as large as possible)
- V. Write down a series of words that come to mind when at the magic spot. Arrange them into a simple list poem or work them into a Haiku
- VI. Sit outside and devise local legends or cloud stories. ("That cloud reminds me of an express train" etc) to share with the group later

3. Being a community looking out for each other

- I. A group meeting is held (early on in the visit) and the group devise a simple "buddy" system so that everyone is looked out for by someone else
- II. A group meeting devises "house rules" for the visit with a reward and sanction system. Posters are made to display the rules
- III. An angel system is devised whereby everyone is given the name of someone else to look after ***without anyone being aware of who his or her angel is.*** The "angel" could change from day to day

⁴ (MARJON Educating for Spiritual Growth (video) Guidelines and supporting material for discussion group leaders (1989))

- IV. A daily group meeting is held to discuss the day and deal with any problems or issues that have emerged
- V. A time is found to celebrate the achievements of others
- VI. Share positive words to describe individuals and their personality
- VII. Thank you groups are arranged to ensure that Peak Centre staff, tour guides, drivers etc are thanked

B. Citizenship

1. Country Code – environmental responsibility

- I. Instigate discussion about rural issues involving environmental impact of visitors
- II. Ask National Park Ranger/a.n.other to talk to the group about visitor pressure on the area around Edale and the key issues involved
- III. Devise simple advertising campaign/PowerPoint presentation addressing the issues highlighted above
- IV. Carry out a simple practical activity for the group such as a litter pick, wildflower planting etc (in conjunction with the PNPA)

2. Functioning as a group

- I. Devise simple ground rules for the visit
- II. Play co-operative games and trust activities to build group identity
- III. Introduce getting to know you activities in which the group get beyond the obvious and life back at school
- IV. Explain tasks to be completed at Peak Centre and devise a rota system for the duration of the stay
- V. Discuss expectations when the group is on a visit or out walking – establish consensus about impact on other visitors and walkers

3. Equal Opportunities in the Peak National Park

- I. Share ideas about whom the National Park is for. Discuss concept of National Parks
- II. Look at publicity material produced for visitors for evidence of equal access for all
- III. Spend some time observing visitors arriving in the main car park with the view to informally identifying: the ethnic and social mix together with any visible disabilities noted and possible age range of visitors
- IV. Spend some time role-playing as members of minority groups in and around the Visitor Centre and the start of the Pennine Way. Identify issues for each group
- V. Write to the National Park Chief Executive about any major issues identified by the group