Topic

Signs of spring

Aims

- To celebrate the coming of spring and vocabulary related to nature
- To talk about the weather and the plants, insects and animals we see on a daily basis
- To develop children's speaking, observation and collaboration skills
- To practise the present simple when completing the worksheet and past simple when reflecting

Age group

Young learners aged 6–10 years

Level

CEF Level A1–A2

Time

50–60 minutes

Materials

- *Signs of spring* worksheet (one per pupil or group)
- Pictures of spring scenes (optional)
- Pencils to complete the worksheet; coloured pens, pencils or crayons for colouring (optional)
- Access to the LearnEnglish Kids website (see links below)

Introduction

This activity is for young learners living in northern hemisphere countries where it is currently spring, and is especially useful to see how nature comes to life in this season. In this lesson children identify the objects on their worksheet together and then go outside or look at pictures inside the classroom to see what they can find.

They first tick the weather boxes and then search for the plants and animals on their worksheet. When they see an item, they tick the box.

Children then go through the list as a class, putting a cross in the boxes next to the things they didn't see. If children wish to, they can colour their worksheets and display them. As spring progresses, more and more of the animals on the worksheet appear, so your students may enjoy doing the activity at the beginning, middle and end of the season.

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Procedure

Before the lesson	Download and make a copy of the worksheet (one per student or group). Have the LearnEnglish Kids page ready on your computer or screen for the follow-up activities. This activity requires an outdoor space with some greenery to attract birds and insects, and more of the objects on the worksheet can usually be seen on a warm, sunny day.
1. Warmer (5–10 minutes)	Introduce the topic by asking children what season it is and what they know about it (spring: green, rain, new plants, flowers, insects and birds). Tell students they will be going outside to look for the items on the worksheet and put the students into groups if they will be working together. Give each student (or group) a worksheet and pencil and go through the list of items. If possible, show them what to do by completing the weather row together. Look out the window and ask, *What's the weather like today?* If it's cloudy and they can't see the sun, students put a cross in the *sunny* and *rainy* boxes and a tick in the *cloudy* box. Go through all the objects on the worksheet. Children repeat after you. If it's possible where you work, prepare children to go outside. Once they're lined up, tell the children that they must not pick the plants or touch the animals because in spring they are all growing and getting ready to make new life.
2. Group activity (15–20 minutes)	**Outdoor activity** Take your class outdoors if it's possible. Make sure that they know exactly which part of the garden or playground they are allowed to explore. If children are working in groups, they're easier to keep an eye on, since they will also be looking out for each other. Encourage the children to point out the plants and animals they see to the others: *Look! It's an ant. Look! I can see a bird in the tree!* Give students a time limit and count down so that they know how much time they have: *We have five minutes left. What else can you see? OK, everyone, in one minute we're going back inside. Line up, everyone! It's time to go to the classroom!* **Indoor activity** Either find four or five copyright-free images of spring landscapes or take your own photos. Print these before the lesson and pin them to walls around the classroom. Ask students to spend a few minutes looking at the pictures around the room to find the plants and animals on their worksheet.

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3. Group activity (5–10 minutes)	Once you are all back inside or the students are sitting back in their seats, go through the worksheet together: *Was/Is it sunny? Yes! Was/Is it windy? No! What did you see? Did you see a big bird? Yes! What colour was it? It was black! Did you see a butterfly? No? Oh well, maybe we'll see one next time.*
4. Colouring activity (5–10 minutes)	Children colour the drawings and display their worksheets on the noticeboard – or they could glue them into their notebooks.
5. Extension (10–15 minutes)	Revise and extend the topic using the activities below from the LearnEnglish Kids website. Younger learners will enjoy singing 'The leaves on the trees' song: http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/songs/the-leaves-the-trees Play the word game: Plants http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/word-games/plants Play the word game: Bugs and insects http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/word-games/bugs-and-insects Print and colour a spring picture http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/sites/kids/files/attachment/colouring-pages-spring.pdf
6. Extra ideas	• Do this activity three or four times through the season so that children can see how new life flourishes and grows as the season progresses. • Photocopy the worksheet on card and laminate it so that it can be reused each time. Give children whiteboard markers to put ticks or crosses in the boxes and a piece of cloth to wipe the board off. • Have children make their own worksheets in groups, predicting what they will see on their playground explorations. • Plant seeds (radishes, cress and impatiens work well) in class so that children can care for the seedlings and watch them grow into plants. • Learn about bugs and insects (talk about the role of insects in pollinating flowers to help them produce seeds). https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/flashcards/bugs-flashcards

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