

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: **Teachers' Notes**



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Who we are



Founded in 1907, the CLA is the membership organisation for owners of land, property and businesses in rural England and Wales. We exist to champion, protect and enhance our rural economy, environment and way of life.

Our aim is to unlock the potential of the rural economy by promoting innovative ideas to a national audience and providing practical support to members. We do this so our members can feed the country, create jobs and prosperity, invest in communities and protect the environment for future generations.

Together, CLA members own and manage around half the rural land in England and Wales and more than 250 different types of businesses. The work they undertake in the best interests of the land has a positive effect on wildlife and the natural environment, and their diverse and successful businesses are the heart of rural communities.

The CLA's formal, incorporated name is the Country Land and Business Association Limited, and its registered office is at 16 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PQ.



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1. Introduction



The CLA's landowning members range from those who own just a few acres, to those who own many hundreds. The Countryside Code's message of respecting everyone, protecting the environment and enjoying the outdoors is a key one for our young people to learn and understand. This is why the CLA has created this lesson plan on The Countryside Code for teachers, which includes complementary resources such as a starter activity, a soil investigators' exercise, a sky lantern role play activity and a waymarker memory game.

1.1 Why is this CLA lesson plan so important?

This activity-based resource is designed to give Key Stage 2 pupils the opportunity to become familiar with The Countryside Code.

Through a series of activities that can be delivered in the classroom, school grounds and local neighbourhood, pupils will learn "why" there is a Countryside Code and "what" is in it.

Having learnt about the various aspects of The Countryside Code, pupils can apply this knowledge to their neighbourhood to produce their own "Neighbourhood Code".

This resource contains activities which cover many areas of The Countryside Code. It is hoped that teachers will choose to use the whole resource. However, you may select certain sections that apply more directly to your school or neighbourhood.

Each section of this lesson plan is supported by statements from farmers as well as videos so that pupils can see the application of The Countryside Code in real life.

On completion of the activities, it is hoped that you will be encouraged to take your pupils on a visit to a farm or countryside setting so that they can embed their learning further.

Towards the end, there is information you may find useful if you are considering taking your pupils to the countryside.

This CLA lesson plan covers elements of the Geography and Citizenship curricula.

1.2 Curriculum links

1.2.1 Geography

Pupils should be competent in the geographical skills needed to:

- collect, analyse and communicate with a range of data gathered through experiences of fieldwork;
- interpret a range of sources of geographical information, including maps, diagrams, globes, aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems; and
- communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and writing at length.

Place knowledge

- Understand geographical similarities and differences through a study of human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom.

Human and physical geography

- Describe and understand key aspects of physical geography including ... rivers and mountains and human geography, including ... land use, economic activity.

Geographical skills and fieldwork

- Use the eight points of the compass, four and six figure grid references, symbols and key (including the use of Ordnance Survey maps to build knowledge of the United Kingdom).
- Use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs and digital technologies.

1.2.2 Citizenship

Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities.

- Talk and write about their opinions, explain their views on issues that affect themselves and society.
- Face new challenges positively by collecting information, looking for help, making responsible choices and taking action.

Preparing to play an active role as citizens.

- Research, discuss and debate topical issues, problems and events.
- Why and how rules and laws are made and enforced, why different rules are needed in different situations and how to take part in making and changing rules.
- To realise the consequence of anti-social behaviours.
- That there are different kinds of responsibilities, rights and duties at home, at school, and in the community, and those can sometimes conflict with each other.
- To resolve differences by looking for alternatives, making decisions and explaining choices.

Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people.

- To think about the lives of people living in other places.

2. Introduction to The Countryside Code



The Countryside Code was first introduced in 1951 and was updated in April 2021. With more and more people enjoying the outdoors and realising the benefits of spending time in the countryside, the Code is designed to allow people to enjoy parks, waterways, coastal areas and the countryside in a safe and respectful way for everyone.

The full Code can be viewed using the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code-advice-for-countryside-visitors>

It should be noted that The Countryside Code only applies to England and Wales. For Scotland, please refer to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and Scottish Right of Way Access Code.

This CLA lesson plan applies to The Countryside Code for England and Wales.

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the GOV.UK website. The address bar shows the URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code-advice-for-countryside-visitors>. The page content includes a navigation menu with 'Home', 'Access and rights of way', and 'The Countryside Code'. Below the navigation, there are links for 'Natural England', 'Natural Resources Wales', and 'Natural Resources Scotland'. The main heading is 'Statutory guidance The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors', updated 1 April 2021. The page is divided into sections: 'Respect everyone', 'Farming, livestock and wild animals', and 'Travel and parking in the countryside'. The 'Respect everyone' section includes a list of bullet points: 'be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside', 'leave gates and property as you find them', 'do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking', 'be nice, say hello, share the space', and 'follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available'. The 'Farming, livestock and wild animals' section includes a sub-heading 'Your actions can affect other people's lives and livelihoods.' and a paragraph: 'Co-operate with people working in the countryside. For example, follow the farmer's directions when animals are being moved or gathered. This helps keep everybody safe. Leave gates and property as you find them or follow instructions on signs. When in a group, make sure the last person knows how to leave the gates. Farmers close gates to keep animals in or leave them open to give access to food and water. Do not interfere with farm machinery, horses or livestock. If you think a farm animal is in distress, try to alert the farmer. Give wild animals, livestock and horses plenty of space. Their behaviour can be unpredictable, especially when they are with their young and you could get hurt. Do not feed livestock, horses or wild animals as it can cause them harm.' The 'Travel and parking in the countryside' section includes a sub-heading 'Traffic on country roads can be dangerous to people and wildlife.' and a paragraph: 'Slow down and drive carefully on rural roads. Make sure you do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking. Always leave access for emergency vehicles. Consider leaving your car at home when visiting the outdoors. You could use public transport instead. Find public transport information on the [Traveline](#) website. Take extra care and stay alert where a path of new crosses a railway line. You can find

3. Introductory activity to The Countryside Code



3.1 Learning outcomes

In this section pupils will:

- learn what a code is – why we need codes and learn examples of codes that can be used;
- understand that there is a Countryside Code;
- learn what is included in The Countryside Code; and
- relate The Countryside Code to their local area or school grounds.

3.2 Introducing the Code

As an introductory activity you could ask your pupils the following.

- Are there any codes at school – uniform, litter etc?
- What is a code?
- Why do we need codes?
- Are codes useful?

Introduce the idea that visitors to the countryside are asked to follow The Countryside Code.

The Code helps those living, working and visiting the countryside to Respect, Protect and Enjoy the countryside.

Aardman Animations has produced a fun clip you may want to show to your pupils. You can find it using this link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMLHrBtLMTI>

So let us find out more about The Countryside Code.

The Countryside Code applies to:

- parks;
- waterways;
- coastal areas; and
- the countryside

It is worth, at this stage, ensuring pupils are clear on what the above areas are. Can they provide you with a list of features or what they might find in the above areas? Are there any parks in the local area that they may be familiar with? Has anyone visited the countryside – what did they see?

Before progressing, ask pupils what they think should be included in The Countryside Code.

To introduce The Countryside Code to your pupils, watch the short film below by Natural England which explains why the Code was set up.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Abw55kh9iTk>

As a starter activity, create sets of cards using *The CLA's Countryside Code Starter Activity* which you will find in Appendix 1. Can the pupils match the correct statements to the correct heading: "Respect", "Protect" and "Enjoy"?

Now your pupils have an understanding of The Countryside Code ask them a series of questions.

- Why do we need a Countryside Code?
- What is its purpose?
- What might happen if we did not have a code or people ignored the Code?
- Do pupils think The Countryside Code is a good thing?
- Does the Code help people to respect, protect and enjoy the countryside?

Make a note of the pupils' responses. It would be useful to ask these questions again when the pupils have completed the activities. Have their responses or thoughts changed?

Let us now relate The Countryside Code to the local area in which the pupils live. Ask your pupils the following.

- Could some parts of the Code be used in your school grounds or local neighbourhood?
- Would a code help people to respect, protect and enjoy the local area?
- Do pupils think a local neighbourhood code for their area would be a good idea?
- What would they include in a neighbourhood code?
- Are there any things that match The Countryside Code?

4. Mapping your neighbourhood and school grounds



4.1 Learning outcomes

In this section pupils will:

- learn and use geographical skills to create a map of their local neighbourhood or school grounds; and
- learn and use geographical questioning to create a map of their local neighbourhood or school grounds.

Pupils will need to create a logbook to record all their findings, plus a map of their school grounds or local neighbourhood.

The map will be used to complete the activities in this resource. It will help pupils make links between The Countryside Code and the Neighbourhood Code they are going to create.

Before pupils start creating their map, what geographical questions could they ask to find out about their area?

- What is the name of the place?
- Where is the place?
- Are there any local landmarks or places of interest?
- What type of buildings can be found in the area?
- What types of land use are there and who uses the land?
- Are there any green spaces and what are they used for?
- Who lives or works in the area?
- Is the area similar or different to the countryside?

Ask the pupils where they could find the above information. Could it be maps, direct observation, asking people, photographs?

Encourage pupils to identify both human and physical features in the area.

Encourage pupils to use correct geographical skills and terminology, such as those below.

- To describe direction, north, south, east and west.
- To measure scale.
- To use four and six figure coordinates.
- To use keys and symbols.

Let's get started...

5. The Countryside Code: Respect everyone



5.1 Learning outcomes

In this section pupils will:

- develop their knowledge in relation to
 - the reason for gates, how they should be used, and the consequences for not using them correctly in the countryside and local neighbourhood;
 - appropriate parking of vehicles in the countryside and local area, and the consequences when vehicles block access to entrances and gateways; and
 - signs and their purpose in the countryside and local neighbourhood.

The Countryside Code says:
RESPECT everyone

- Be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside.
- Leave **gates** and property as you find them.
- Do not block access to gateways or driveways when **parking**.
- Be nice, say hello, share the space.
- Follow local **signs** and **keep to marked paths** unless wider access is available.

Watch this CLA video which explains why it is important to park responsibly, stick to footpaths and close gates.

https://youtu.be/JAI_GPI7pAs

5.2 Teacher information

You may have heard of “Right to Roam” or “Freedom to Roam”.

You can access some land in England without using paths if it is “open access land” or “access land”. Access land usually includes mountains, moors, heaths and downs that are privately owned. It also includes common land registered with a local council and some land around coastal areas.

You can go walking, running, watching wildlife and climbing on open access land.

5.3 Classroom activities

5.3.1 Gates

You will find a lot of gates in the countryside. The Countryside Code says:

“Leave gates and property as you find them or follow instructions on signs. When in a group, make sure the last person knows how to leave the gates. Farmers close gates to keep animals in or leave them open to give access to food and water.”

Take pictures of gates located in the school's grounds or the area covered by the map the children have created. Can the pupils match the pictures of the gates and plot them on their map?

Who uses the gates? Why do they use the gates? What is the purpose of each gate? Should the gate be left open or closed? Are there any instructions on the gate? What would happen if the gate was left open and it should be closed?

How does the last person in the group to pass through the gate know how the first person to pass through the gate found it? Does the last person know how the latch works? Should they leave it open or closed?

Find a gate in or near the school grounds and play "Relay Whispers." Can the correct message get to the last person? Can the pupils think of a way in which groups can pass through a gate and make sure it is left correctly? The best method to adopt in these situations is for the person who opens the gate to close the gate.

What would the consequences be if a gate in the countryside was left open when it should have been closed?

5.3.2 Parking

If you travel to the countryside in a car, it is important to think about where the car is parked. The Countryside Code says:

"Make sure you do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking. Always leave access for emergency vehicles."

In the countryside, it is not just emergency vehicles that need to be able to get access past parked cars. Farmers need to be able to get their tractors and machinery past too.

A fire engine is 2.3m wide and a large tractor could be up to 2.55m wide. Which is wider, the fire engine or the tractor? Using the measurement for the fire engine, could the fire engine get access past parked cars to your school?

Can pupils identify areas in their local neighbourhood or near their school grounds where parking is a problem? Can they mark these areas on their map?

Can they take photographs showing areas where parking could be a problem?

Can emergency vehicle get past the parked cars? What would be the consequences if emergency vehicles could not get through?

5.3.3 Signs and paths

The Countryside Code asks visitors to:

"Use maps and local signs to help you find your way. Stay on marked paths, even if they are muddy, unless wider access is available, such as on open access land. This helps to protect crops and wildlife."

What signs can pupils find in their neighbourhood or in their school grounds? During a walk ask pupils to take photographs of the signs they see and add them to their logbook. What is the purpose of the signs? For example, giving a warning, providing

information, showing a direction, or giving a command such as “No Entry”? Can the pupils classify the signs and make a tally chart depending on their purpose? Pupils can add the tally chart to their logbook.

In the countryside you will find signs called waymarkers. Waymarkers are symbols that mark the route of a path. Different shapes and coloured symbols are used to show who is allowed to use the path, for example, cyclists, walkers, horse riders, motor vehicles or horse-drawn vehicles.

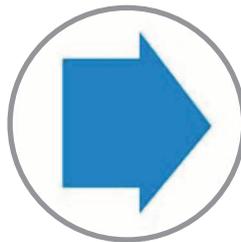
Fingerpost signs mark a route from a surfaced road and from this point onwards waymarkers are used.

Can pupils tell you why is it important to keep to pathways in the countryside?

Your class may like to have a go at *The CLA's Countryside Code Waymarker Memory Game* which you will find in Appendix 1. Can they match the correct symbols to the correct definition?



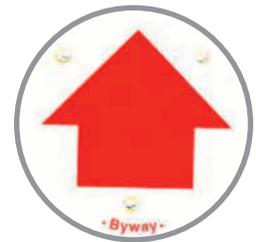
Footpath



Bridleway



**Restricted
Byway**



BOAT



**National
Acorn Trail**



**Open Access
Land**



**Permissive
Path**



**Fingerpost
Sign**

6. The Countryside Code: Protect the environment



6.1 Learning outcomes

In this section pupils will:

- understand the issues of litter in the countryside and local neighbourhood;
- develop their knowledge in relation to the use of disposable barbecues and the risk of fire from their use in the countryside and local neighbourhood; and
- understand the rules relating to dog walking in the countryside and adapt this knowledge to promote responsible dog walking in the local neighbourhood.

The Countryside Code says:
PROTECT the environment

- Take your **litter** home – leave no trace of your visit.
- Take care with **barbecues** and do not light fires.
- Always keep **dogs under control** and in sight.
- Dog poo – bag it and bin it – any public waste bin will do.
- Care for nature – do not cause damage or disturbance.

Watch this CLA video which explains that dogs can disturb ground-nesting birds if not kept on their leads.

<https://youtu.be/l-OM9Eh3MAI>

6.2 Teacher information

Some pupils may have seen sheep being rounded up by trained sheepdogs. This may lead to some confusion in terms of The Countryside Code. It is worth pointing out that sheepdogs are very clever animals and can learn and understand commands from the farmer or shepherd. Sheepdogs are trained to never bite or chase the sheep. A trained sheepdog is invaluable and is always under the farmer's control. Sheepdogs can travel faster and cope with rocky hillsides much easier than a farmer can.

If you would like to add an additional activity to this section, you could ask your pupils to research the types of birds that might be found on moorland and how they nest and rear their young. Open moorland provides a breeding area for ground-nesting birds. It is important whilst out walking on the moorland that people and their dogs do not disturb the birds as they might abandon their nests and their young.

Once pupils have a list of moorland birds, they may like to research which birds are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species. Are any of the moorland birds on the Red List? What is the Red List? Why is it important to protect the birds on the Red List?

Can pupils find pictures of moorland birds that are on the Red List and make a poster explaining how we need to protect them?

6.3 Classroom activities

6.3.1 Litter

The Countryside Code asks visitors to:

“Take your litter home – leave no trace of your visit. Remember to bring a bag with you and take your rubbish and food waste home, use public bins or recycle if possible. Litter spoils the beauty of the countryside and can be dangerous to wildlife and livestock. Dropping litter and dumping rubbish are criminal offences.”

Ask pupils if they think litter is a problem in your local neighbourhood. Can pupils identify areas where litter is a problem and mark on their map? Do a litter count in their identified area. Who is dropping the litter? What are the consequences of the litter being in the area? Do the pupils think the people who are dropping the litter are bothered? Why? How might they reduce the amount of litter being dropped?

Litter in the countryside not only spoils the beauty of the area, but it is very dangerous to wildlife, crops and livestock.

Can your pupils take part in a role play that will help them understand the issue of litter in the countryside? One of the most worrying litter problems for farmers is sky lanterns.

“Sky lanterns are novelty items made from wire or bamboo frames covered by paper. Open flames are lit inside the lanterns which carries them up into the air. They can travel for miles from where they were first released. Once the flames go out the lanterns fall onto land or into the sea, endangering the lives of animals that encounter them. It is estimated that 200,000 lanterns are sold in the UK each year. Their popularity is increasing which means a greater risk to wildlife, livestock and other animals.”

Source, RSPCA.

What do pupils think about sky lanterns? Would they classify them as litter? Do they feel they are a problem or not?

To help stimulate their discussions, you might like to use *The CLA's Countryside Code Sky Lantern Role Play Activity* which you can find in Appendix 1.

6.3.2 Barbecues

The Countryside Code says:

“Be careful with naked flames and cigarettes. Only use barbecues where signs state they are allowed. Always put your barbecue out, make sure the ashes are cold and dispose of them responsibly. Fires can be devastating to wildlife and habitats as they are to people and property.”

In England, on average, 27,000 fires are started on grass, heathland and moorland every year. This is an average of 73 fires every day. Source, Fire Safety Outdoors: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-outdoors>

Watch this video produced by United Utilities about barbecues.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFLfdM7PGxY>

Can your pupils answer the following questions?

- Who are United Utilities?
- How did the fire start?
- What were the consequences of the moorland fire for
 - fire fighters;
 - farmers / landowners; and
 - wildlife?

What do your pupils think about the following scenario?

If someone came on to the school grounds one night and used a disposable barbecue what might the consequences be? Who and what would be affected? How would they dispose of the barbecue? They might be able to put the fire out but it would be hot and wet making disposal hard.

Can pupils design a poster discouraging the use of disposable barbecues in the outdoors?

Where would pupils like to display their posters? Are there any places in their neighbourhood that might display their posters, for example, community centre, youth centre, in school? Are there any community groups that might help the pupils promote their posters or even let the pupils talk to them about their posters? This would be a good opportunity for pupils to talk about the other aspects of the Neighbourhood Code they are devising.

6.3.3 Dogs

The Countryside Code says:

“Always keep dogs under control and in sight. Keep your dog under effective control to make sure it stays away from wildlife, livestock, horses and other people.”

Livestock worrying is a recurring and increasing problem for farmers. When dogs chase sheep it subjects the sheep, farmers and dog owners to high levels of stress.

Stress can lead to sheep dying, ewes becoming separated from their lambs, or pregnant ewes aborting their unborn lambs. In other cases, dogs may bite the sheep or lambs causing injury, pain, suffering and in some cases death. According to Sheepwatch UK, it is estimated that 15,000 sheep are killed by dogs each year (British Farmer and Grower,

May 2021). The effect on sheep and lambs is evident, but it must be remembered that it is distressing for farmers too when they find stock that has been injured or killed. In addition, there is the financial impact of losing stock or having to pay for veterinary treatment.

Needless to say it can be very distressing for dog owners too.

When walking through cattle, the rules are slightly different. If you feel threatened whilst walking in a field of cattle or horses the advice is to let your dog off the lead. Releasing your dog will make it easier for you both to reach safety.

When taking dogs on to open access land, again the rules are different. Dogs need to be on a short lead of no more than two metres between 1 March and 31 July each year (except on coastal margins) and at all times near livestock.

Ask pupils to research the section of The Countryside Code relating to dogs. Can pupils devise some questions based on The Countryside Code that they could ask dog owners? You may have to structure this session so that pupils ask adults that are known to you or the school rather than dog owners within the community. Maybe a small group of parents, known volunteers or teachers might be able to help.

Having asked the dog owners the questions, do the pupils think the owners have enough awareness of the rules? Do the rules need promoting? Would the pupils adapt any of the rules to the Neighbourhood Code they are developing? Are there any areas they can locate on their neighbourhood map which are popular places for owners to walk their dogs?

Could the pupils make a short video for the local community explaining how dogs should be walked both in the local neighbourhood and in the countryside?

7. The Countryside Code: Enjoy the outdoors



7.1 Learning outcomes

In this section pupils will:

- learn where they can set up a tent and camp in a safe and enjoyable place and how to camp responsibly to protect wildlife and the environment.

The Countryside Code says:
ENJOY the outdoors

- Check your **route** and **local conditions**.
- Plan your **adventure** – know what to expect and what you can do.
- Enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory.

Watch this CLA video where CLA members explain how visitors to the countryside can get maximum enjoyment with a little advance planning.

<https://youtu.be/AFIc7Rc-Eqc>

7.2 Teacher information

The Countryside Code says:

“This code sets out information about the rights of different users. For some activities you may need to get permission from the landowner, including: camping, freshwater swimming and freshwater fishing.”

Wild camping is camping somewhere other than a campsite or caravan park. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland campers do not have an automatic right to camp wherever they like. They must legally get the landowner’s permission.

For those who obtain the landowner’s permission, the rule of wild camping is “leave no trace”. Campers should have minimum impact on the site so that it remains natural and wild. Campers should leave the site so no one could tell they had been there.

7.3 Classroom activities

Split the class into small groups. Ask half of the groups to discuss this question.

- Should people have the right to camp anywhere they like, such as the school playground or your garden?

You may prefer to alter this statement to make it easier for your pupils to imagine the situation – possibly ask the pupils to imagine a small group of people entering the school

grounds one sunny weekend afternoon and having a barbecue or get-together for an hour or so. Or there may be an outdoor area near the school that can be used as the location for the scenario.

Ask the remaining groups to discuss this question.

- Should people have the right to camp anywhere they like, such as a field in the countryside?

Ask each group to give their reasons for and against people having the right to camp wherever they like. Are there any similarities or differences between the reasons for and against camping in the school grounds and the countryside?

Can the pupils write a “Wild Camping” code that would provide guidance both in their neighbourhood and in the countryside?

At this point you can introduce each group to *The CLA's Countryside Code Soil Investigators' Exercise* which you will find in Appendix 1.

8. Create a Neighbourhood Code



8.1 Learning outcomes

In this section pupils will:

- reflect on their learning in relation to The Countryside Code;
- develop a code for the neighbourhood around their school; and
- discuss the merits of The Countryside Code and a Neighbourhood Code.

By now your pupils should have a good understanding of The Countryside Code.

Using all the information they have gathered, can they design a poster detailing a code for their neighbourhood?

What do your pupils feel should be included in a Neighbourhood Code? This might include a comparison on litter, obstructing pavements and parking across driveways.

Do pupils feel a Neighbourhood Code would make their neighbourhood a better place? Why?

Do pupils feel The Countryside Code makes the countryside a better place? Why?

Ask pupils to come up with a plan on how they are going to promote a Neighbourhood Code, who they are going to promote it to and when they will promote it.

9. Farm visits: Advice for teachers



Hopefully, your pupils will have enjoyed the activities in this CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code. To embed their learning further, why not consider taking your pupils on a visit to the countryside or to a farm?

You may also like to consider taking part in “Farmer Time” (a regular virtual link with a farmer and your class)

<https://leafuk.org/farmertime/home>

Organisations such as LEAF Education work with schools and landowners to encourage visits to the countryside. The Regional Educational Consultant for your area would be more than happy to offer help and support if you felt this is something you would like to consider.

<https://leafuk.org/education/leaf-education>

You may also find the following resources helpful.

Countryside Classroom website

<https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/>

Visit My Farm website

<https://www.visitmyfarm.org/>

“How to plan curriculum-linked and safe visits to farms: A handbook for teachers”

<https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1416>

“Advice to teachers and others who organise visits for children”

<https://www.visitmyfarm.org/preparing-for-your-farm-visit/238-preventingorcontrollingillhealthfromanimalcontactatvisitorattractions>

10. Farm visits: Applying the CLA lesson plan



This CLA lesson plan can be applied to a farm or countryside visit, and in doing so will consolidate any learning the pupils will have already achieved.

The activities suggested below will allow pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of The Countryside Code and apply it in a real life context.

Some farmers and landowners are already hosting successful school visits. If, however, you have not hosted a school visit, but it is something you would like to do and you would like some support, contact the LEAF Education Regional Consultant for your area. They will be more than happy to help. <https://leafuk.org/education/leaf-education>

In order to prepare themselves for hosting school visits, some farmers choose to undertake a CEVAS course (Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme). Further details can be obtained from LEAF Education.

To apply the classroom learning to a farm or countryside visit, provide pupils with a simple diagrammatic map of the farm or area you intend to use. A farm walk should be shown clearly on the map. With the farmer's help, can the pupils navigate their way using the map?

Before setting off on your walk ask a few questions about The Countryside Code to refresh pupils' memories. For example:

- Can pupils name the three sections of The Code? (Respect, Protect, Enjoy)
- Can pupils talk to you about any of the guidance in The Code?

If pupils have not already done some classroom learning in relation to The Countryside Code, it would be worth spending more time introducing the Code to them. Explain what the Code is and why we have it. You could use the starter activity (see Appendix 1).

Whilst following the farm trail, encourage pupils to use basic map reading skills, (see 1.2.1, the Geography curriculum links section, for a description of the skills pupils should be using at this age).

As the farm walk progresses, activities, scenarios or explanations can be used to show how The Countryside Code is important.

Gates

- At an appropriate point on the farm walk where gates are used, ask pupils to explain what the guidance is in relation to gates.
- What are the consequences if people do not follow the guidance?
- Can you give an example when visitors have not followed the guidance?

- You may also like to highlight that people should use gates and stiles when walking in the countryside and not climb over walls, hedges and fences. Ask the pupils why this is so.
- You may like to play the “Relay Whispers” game described in 5.3.1.

Parking

- At an appropriate point, set up a scenario showing inappropriately parked cars. You may be able to use your own vehicles to do this or you may have to mark out the space used by cars on the ground. If you are not using actual vehicles a photograph showing the parked cars would help pupils visualise the situation.
- Ask the pupils: “Could a tractor and trailer (or even an emergency vehicle) get through the gap left between inappropriately parked cars?”
- The maximum width of a tractor is 2.55m, for an ambulance 2.41m and for a fire engine it is 2.3m.
- Can pupils measure the distance between the parked cars to decide if the tractor or emergency vehicle could get through?
- What are the consequences if a tractor or emergency vehicle cannot get through?

Waymarkers

- Look out for examples of waymarkers on the farm walk.
- Can pupils spot them?
- Which waymarker is it and who can use the path?
- Ask the pupils what are the consequences of visitors not using the designated pathways.
- You could also use *The CLA’s Countryside Code Waymarker Memory Game* which you will find in Appendix 1.

Litter

- There may be areas on your farm walk that are prone to fly-tipping or visitors leaving litter. If this is the case, take photographs to show the children.
- Ask the pupils why it is wrong to drop litter in the countryside.
- A popular activity to highlight litter and objects that should not be in the countryside is to set up an “unnatural trail”. Over a designated area (approx. 5m long) leave objects that should not be found there. Can the pupils identify the “unnatural” ones, that is, the litter? Remind the pupils they should not pick up the litter as you will clear it up later.

Barbecues and wild camping

- Set up a scene on your farm walk. The scene would look like visitors had been wild camping and using a disposable barbecue.
- What are the pupils' thoughts? What are the rules on barbecues and wild camping? What are the possible consequences of people wild camping and using disposable barbecues?
- You could link this scene to the parking activity described above. Could a fire engine get to the area if a fire started?
- Depending on the time you have, you could ask pupils to help you investigate the scene. The people who were wild camping and having a barbecue left some very muddy footprints. If pupils can work out the characteristics of the soil left in the footprint, they can compare their findings to soil samples from footwear worn by the suspects. This should lead the pupils to identify the culprit. For further explanation of this activity refer to *The CLA's Countryside Code Soil Investigators' Exercise* which you will find in Appendix 1.

Keeping dogs under control

- Ideally stop off at a field that has livestock in. If, however, you are on a farm that does not have livestock use pictures of fields with livestock in. You can also use this opportunity to explain the type of farm you are on and why there is no livestock.
- Can pupils tell you what the guidance is relating to keeping dogs under control?
- What are the consequences of dogs not being kept under control?
- If your farm contains sheep, ask the sheep farmer to talk about himself and his sheepdogs and ask for a demonstration of the sheepdogs herding the sheep safely.

11. Appendix 1: Associated resources



In order to help your pupils engage with the different aspects of The Countryside Code, the CLA has created different activities and games as detailed in the following pages. A couple are interactive, and the memory game can be presented via PowerPoint (it is reproduced here for completeness).

11.1 Starter activity

As a way of introducing your pupils to The Countryside Code, ask them to sort the various statements provided and put them with the correct headings.

Refer to The Countryside Code document for the correct answers.

Print and cut out enough sets of cards for your class.

Headings

Respect everyone

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

**Protect the
environment**

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Enjoy the outdoors

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Statements

Be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Leave gates and property as you find them.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Be nice, say hello, share the space.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Take your litter home – leave no trace of your visit.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Take care with barbecues and do not light fires.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Always keep your dogs under control and in sight.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Dog poo – bag it and bin it in any public waste bin.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Care for nature – do not cause damage or disturbance.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Check your route and local conditions.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Plan your adventure – know what to expect and what you can do.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

Enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Starter Activity

11.2 Soil investigators' exercise

Soil Investigators' Exercise

Wild camping is against the law in England as all land is owned by somebody, even common land. You need the landowner's permission to stay on their land; it is just the same as if somebody was to come and stay in your garden or on the school playground.

Some farmers offer a "wild camping" experience where you can pay a small fee to pitch a tent on their land. This is well controlled so that campers are safe and are not likely to disrupt the owner's use of their land.

Farmer Burton has just gone to check on his field which he is hoping to mow to make hay later in the week. He has found that somebody has been camping in his field without his permission. The grass has been trampled flat by people walking around the field, particularly where the tents were pitched. The campers have also had a fire which has burnt the grass. Sadly, Farmer Burton cannot make hay in this field anymore. This means he will have fewer bales to feed his sheep and cows in the winter.

Farmer Burton enjoys welcoming visitors to the countryside and would like your help to find out who has been camping on his land so he can explain how this has affected his hay crop.

Can you work out the properties of the soil in the footprints and compare these to samples of soil taken from the visitors' footwear?



Test 1 – Soil Texture / Type

Explain to pupils that soil is made up of particles of sand, silt and clay.

Using a soil texture test, farmers can work out the type of soil in their fields.

Soil Texture Test

Depending on the group size, farmers may like to demonstrate this test.

1. Take a handful of soil and wet it.
2. Squeeze out the water.
3. Make the shapes below in order.
4. When you cannot make your shape you have your soil type.



Shapes you can make	Soil Type
Cone only	Sandy
Cone and ball	Loamy sand
Cone, ball and straight worm	Loam
Cone, ball, worm and bent worm with cracks	Clayey loam
Cone, ball, worm and bent smooth worm	Clay

Add the soil texture to the **Soil Record Sheet**.

At this point, you may like to explain a little bit more about the different types of soil and why farmers must look after soil. Explain what good soil is and why this is important in terms of food production. In simple terms, explain how soil can be improved and what crops grow best in which soil.

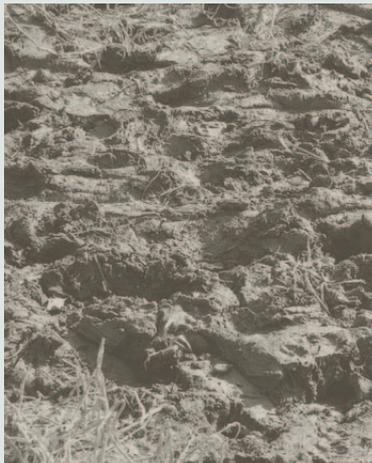
Test 2 – Soil Drainage

Explain to pupils that if soils drain well, water can pass through easily.

The colour of soil is a useful indication of soil drainage.

- **Brown / black soil** = good drainage
- **Grey soil** = poor drainage

Ask pupils to compare the soil sample to the pictures below.
Which picture does the sample match the best?



POOR DRAINAGE



MEDIUM DRAINAGE



GOOD DRAINAGE

Add the drainage type to the Soil Record Sheet.

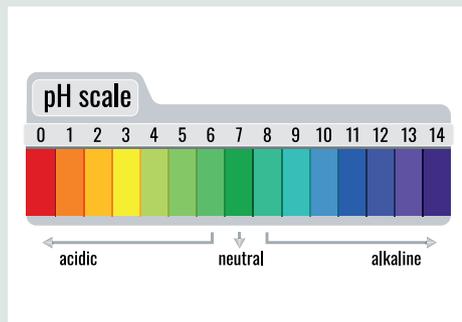
Test 3 – Soil pH

What can the pupils tell you about pH?

- pH is measured on a scale of 1 to 14
- pH 7 is neutral
- below pH 7 is acidic
- above pH 7 is alkaline

Explain that most soil is between pH 5 to 8.

Use an electronic soil acidity meter or pH testing kit to test the pH of the soil.



Add the soil pH to the Soil Record Sheet.

Working out who was in Farmer Burton's field...

Pupils should compare these results on the **Soil Record Sheet** to the details on the **Suspect Cards**.

Do any of the samples match?

Who was camping in Farmer Burton's field?

Ask farmers to insert information into the **Suspect Cards** so that one of them matches the sample used for the three soil tests carried out.

Then print off and laminate copies for the group you are working with.

Soil Record Sheet

Sample taken from: "the muddy footprints left by the visitors at the wild camping and barbecue site".

TEST	Results / Observations
Soil Structure	
Drainage	
pH Value	

Suspect Cards

SUSPECT ONE – CAMPERS



Test	Results / Observations
Soil Structure	
Drainage	
pH Value	

SUSPECT TWO – WALKERS



Test	Results / Observations
Soil Structure	
Drainage	
pH Value	

SUSPECT THREE – CYCLISTS



Test	Results / Observations
Soil Structure	
Drainage	
pH Value	

11.3 Sky lantern role play activity

ACTIVITY CARDS 1 – 3

AN ARABLE (CROP) FARMER

- My fields are full of wheat, which I sell to people who use it to make bread.
- Last year two sky lanterns landed in my fields and caused a fire.
- The fire damaged my crops.
- I'm always worried about sky lanterns landing in my fields and causing a fire.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Sky Lantern Role Play Activity Cards

A LIVESTOCK FARMER

- My valuable cows live in the fields surrounding my farm.
- Last year a sky lantern landed in one of my fields.
- One of my cows ate the sky lantern and became very ill. Luckily the vet was able to make her better.
- I'm always worried about sky lanterns landing in my fields and harming my cows.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Sky Lantern Role Play Activity Cards

A DOG WALKER

- I enjoy walking my dog in the countryside and taking photographs of the wildlife.
- Last week my dog stood on some wire that came from a sky lantern. Her paw became very sore so I had to take her to the vet.
- I worry that the sky lanterns will also harm the wildlife by trapping or injuring them.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Sky Lantern Role Play Activity Cards

ACTIVITY CARDS 4 – 6

A FAMILY VISITING THE COUNTRYSIDE

- This is our first holiday to the countryside. We have enjoyed seeing all the farm animals, crops and wildlife.
- On one of our walks we met a farmer who was clearing a sky lantern from her field. The farmer explained to us the damage sky lanterns can do to crops, animals and wildlife.
- In the past, we have enjoyed lighting sky lanterns and watching them float up in to the night sky.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Sky Lantern Role Play Activity Cards

AN ECOLOGIST

- My job is to help farmers attract wildlife to their farms by making suitable habitats for them to live in.
- I have done this job for a long time and in that time I have seen how wildlife can be injured or trapped by sky lanterns.
- I'm always worried about sky lanterns landing in the countryside.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Sky Lantern Role Play Activity Cards

A FIRE OFFICER

- Last summer two sky lanterns landed in some fields and caused a fire. The fire damaged the crops.
- Luckily three fire engines got to the farm quickly and we were able to stop the fire spreading and damaging the farm buildings and harming any of the farm animals.
- I wondered how much wildlife was harmed though.
- I'm always worried about sky lanterns landing in the countryside and causing damage.

A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Sky Lantern Role Play Activity Cards

11.4 Waymarker memory game

This game has been created as a CLA PowerPoint presentation. It can be accessed from the [CLA website](http://www.cla.org.uk) (www.cla.org.uk) or from the [LEAF Countryside Classroom website](http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk) (www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk).



Slide 2: Game Instructions

- Split your class into smaller groups and print off a set of slides (slides 4-19), for each group.
- Mix the order of the slides up and place face down on to the table.
- Can the pupils work together in their groups to match the symbol card with the correct definition card?
- Ask pupils to turn one card over. If the next card they turn over is a matching pair, put that pair of cards to one side.
- If they do not find a matching pair, they must place both cards face down on the table again.
- Pupils must memorise where the matching cards are in order to find the pair.
- You may like to split each group into two teams to make the session more exciting.

The team that finds the most matching pairs wins.

Below are visuals of the slides.

Slide 3



Slide 4

Q.
Footpath information

FOOTPATH

- Open to **walkers** only.
- Waymarked with a **yellow** arrow.



Slide 5

A.
Footpath waymarker

FOOTPATH




Slide 6

Q.
Bridleway information

BRIDLEWAY

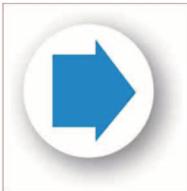
- Open to **walkers, horse riders and cyclists**.
- Waymarked with a **blue** arrow.



Slide 7

A.
Bridleway waymarker

BRIDLEWAY




Associated resources: waymarker memory game

Slide 8

Q.

Restricted byway information

RESTRICTED BYWAY

- Open to **walkers, cyclists, horse riders and drawn vehicles**.
- Waymarked with a **purple** arrow.



Slide 9

A.

Restricted byway waymarker

RESTRICTED BYWAY



Slide 10

Q.

Byway open to all traffic (BOAT) information

BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC (BOAT)

- Open to **walkers, cyclists, drawn vehicles and motor vehicles**.
- Waymarked with a **red** arrow.



Slide 11

A.

Byway open to all traffic (BOAT) waymarker

BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC (BOAT)



Slide 12

Q.

National trail acorn information

NATIONAL TRAIL ACORN

National Trails can be used for walking, with horse riding and cycling possible on some trails or parts of trails.



Slide 13

A.

National trail acorn waymarker

NATIONAL TRAIL ACORN



Slide 14

Q.

Open access land information

OPEN ACCESS LAND

You can walk and explore away from paths.



Slide 15

A.

Open access land waymarker

OPEN ACCESS LAND



Slide 16

Q.

Permissive path information

PERMISSIVE PATH

Follow advice on local signs as landowners voluntarily provide access to these paths and choose who can use them.



Slide 17

A.

Permissive path information waymarker

PERMISSIVE PATH



Slide 18

Q.

Fingerpost sign information

FINGERPOST SIGN

These signs are used when a route leaves a hard surfaced road. The sign points in the direction of the route. From this point waymarkers are used.



Slide 19

A.

Fingerpost sign

FINGERPOST SIGN



Contacts



This document has been written by LEAF Education on behalf of the CLA. For more information on *A CLA lesson plan for The Countryside Code: Teachers' Notes*, published in July 2021, contact:

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A CLA lesson plan for
The Countryside Code:
Teachers' Notes

