

STICKS for Play: Bringing Books to Life through Outdoor Play

Jigsaw Education Group is proud to be working in partnership with World Book Day®. Inviting children to engage with nature through imaginative and hands-on play in the outdoors is a powerful way to bring stories to life and enhance the reading experience, as well as boosting children's mental health and well-being.

How and why is outdoor learning beneficial?

Time spent outdoors has been shown to reduce stress, improve mood, and boost overall mental health (Learning Through Landscapes, 2023). Spending time in natural settings reduces the body's stress hormone (cortisol) while increasing levels of endorphins and dopamine, which contribute to feelings of happiness and relaxation. A report by Public Health England (2021) highlighted how a whole-school approach to health and wellbeing, including outdoor learning, can positively impact both emotional well-being and academic performance. Jigsaw Outdoors provides a unique way to enhance the Jigsaw 3-11 PSHE programme by giving children an opportunity to learn in and about the outdoors in a purposeful, unique and engaging way.



Teacher Guidance:

The outdoors is full of open-ended natural materials, which change throughout the year and can be used to role-play and step into the shoes of many characters and situations. Through this type of play, we invite children to explore their creativity, tap into their imaginations, and express their emotions.

Being imaginative by crafting scenes, tools, or objects used by characters with sticks and other natural materials, provides a creative outlet for children. This includes opportunities to convey their thoughts, ideas, feelings and moods. It also provides an opportunity for children to delve into their reading in an experiential and playful way. This open-ended, nature-based play encourages children to connect with stories more deeply while aligning with key PSHE principles of independence, emotional development, celebrating difference and creative expression.

Through this experience, we can encourage children to make their own choices, follow their own interests and therefore overcome potential obstacles.



Children and young people should be encouraged to make their own reading choices, to find books and stories that ignite their own passions. By using natural materials found outdoors, children can step into the stories they read, embodying the roles of characters and exploring the world of books in a new hands-on, creative way.

A stick is a resource for the imagination, a gateway to adventure, and a means to bring reading to life in the outdoors. Whether it becomes a magic wand, a detective's torch, or a telescope for an explorer, a simple stick holds endless possibilities.



Suitable for All Children

This experience is designed to encourage children of all ages and abilities. Engaging with nature does not require a specially designed outdoor space. Natural resources can be found in a variety of settings, both urban and rural, making this play-based experience accessible to all. We also want to encourage children to enjoy reading and find books that inspire and interest them which is a key aim of World Book Day's Campaign for 2025.

Sticks can be used in various ways to create a physical experience of reading. A single stick could become anything a child imagines... encouraging them to visualise aspects of a book as well as the traits or behaviours of a character. Multiple sticks could be combined to create larger structures of imagined worlds like castles, or smaller aspects like a campfire. For some children, this experience can inspire more complex ideas, creations and adventures such as engineering challenges where they design dioramas reflecting key parts of a story, encouraging interpretation and problem-solving skills.



Click here to explore our engaging resources and support materials for the 'Read Your Way' theme, provided by Jigsaw Education Group.

STICKS for Play

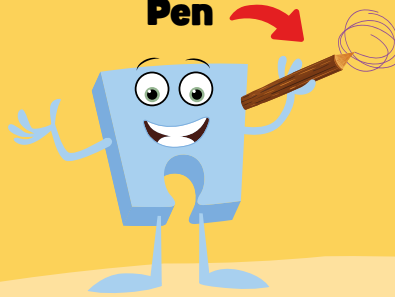
A stick could be...

One Stick, Many Possibilities...

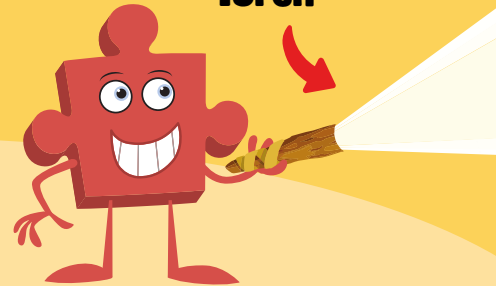
Wand



Pen



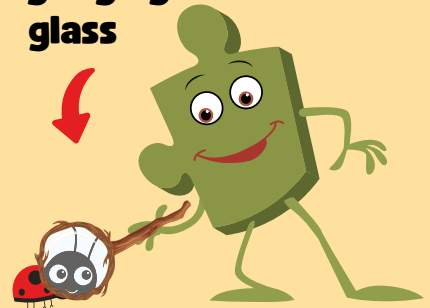
Torch



Telescope

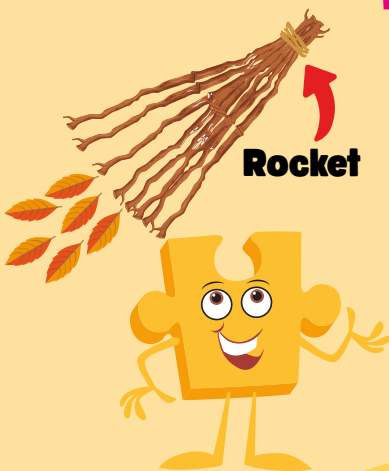


Magnifying glass



More Than One Stick, Bigger Adventures...

Rocket



Camp fire



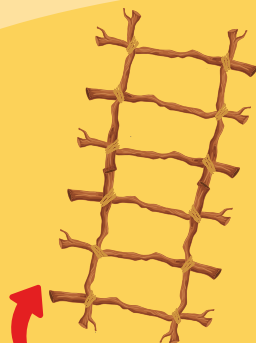
Castle



Nest



Ladder



Musical instrument



Treasure trail

