

Key steps to constructing a simple outdoor trail for SESE

Remember

- Choose 3 or 4 stops within close proximity of each other
- Best if trail is circular in design and if teacher can see all groups working at different stops at once.
- You can choose to have separate stops for each SESE subject (ie 1 for History, 1 for Geography, 1 for Science) or have a combination of the subjects at each stop.
- Go to www.trails.ie for readymade trail templates, symbols and icons.
- It is not always necessary for children to have a clipboard or recording sheet there and then. The trail activities and associated questions can be pinned up at each stop, read out by the leader and followed by the group. Recording can take place later in the classroom.

Below is a sample of typical teacher preparation for each stop when designing the trail. The information can then appear on a task card that is pinned to the stop.

- Decide on the stop and the key feature of the stop. *Stop 1.- The Beech Tree- An Feá*
- Identify equipment needed for this stop: *String, meter stick, compass*
- Include some interesting points of information or “Did you know?” facts- Keep these simple. i.e. *The beech is not a native Irish tree. This means it was not around 10,000 years ago. It is very useful for making furniture.*

Children can find out more later as follow up research or as answers to some questions that may come up.

- Design a range of varying ordered questions, ie 1 lower order, 1 middle order, 1 higher order.

What colour is the bark? What does it feel like? (Could blindfold children for the tactile activity)

What fruit do you think it produces? A) nuts B) berries C) catkins

Why is there no moss growing on this side of the tree?

- Design an activity that involves investigative skills-
i.e. *Find the circumference of the tree using the equipment above.*
Allow the children a chance to engage in problem solving here.
- Take photos of the feature for recording purposes
- Outline clear directions to the next stop or ask children to consult their trail maps.