

Home Sweet Home:

Squirrel Dreys





Red squirrels build their nests, called dreys, high up in the trees. This activity encourages learners to take on the role of Skyra and collect natural materials such as twigs, moss, leaves and fur to create their home sweet home.

Learning objective: To explore why and what a squirrel needs to build a home and to work together to create one.

Curriculum Purposes: Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the World.

AOLE: Science and Technology, Humanities

Resources:

-  Natural materials—twigs, sticks, leaves, fur, moss
-  Soft toy squirrel
-  Photos/examples of squirrel dreys
-  Access to outdoor space or bring materials inside for classroom activity.



Activity



Discuss why squirrels build dreys—to create a safe space for them and their young, keeping them sheltered from the weather and protected from predators. Explore where they would build a drey and what materials they would use—branches and twigs for structure and leaves, moss, fur for warmth and comfort.



Encourage the learners to take on the role of Skyra.

Watch these short clips of a red squirrel [here](#) and [here](#) and talk about how they move around: think about their squirrely paws, twitchy noses, tufty ears and how they travel.

Ask your learners to practise being a squirrel.

It is up to you and your class to decide if they would like to build a drey as one, big class 'Wilders tribe' or to build dreys in pairs.



The Wilders



cadwch keep
cymru'n wales
ddaclus tidy

Eco-Sgolon



Eco-Schools

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Find a **safe space to build**, then task the learners to **collect** as many **natural materials** as they can. Encourage all the 'Skyra Squirrels' to keep a watch out for predators, hiding and seeking as they go.

4

Sort the materials into structural, nest constructing materials and insulating, nest lining materials. You can discuss how the materials feel and what their best use might be.

Extend

Count and sort the sticks into different sizes and shapes before the drey building begins.

This material is...— Mae'r deunydd hwn yn ...

Soft—Meddal

Cold—Oer

Hard—Caled

Warm—Cynnes

Scratchy—Crafu

Strong—Cryf

Smooth — Llyfn

Weak—Gwan

Rough—Garw

The drey building can now begin!

5

Encourage the learners to build the strong outside structure first, weaving the twigs between the overlapping larger branches. Then line the drey with the soft comfortable materials.



6

If small dreys have been created and if you have a soft toy squirrel, sit her in the drey. If a whole tribe drey has been built, all sit in it. Discuss how **safe**, **comfortable** and **secure** you /Skyra feel.

Extend

Can Skyra find her own school grounds tribe? Search for other animal homes/habitats.

Build other animal habitats—nest boxes, hedgehog homes, minibeast habitats.