Background

Rockpools are mini ecosystems - for a few hours each day they are cut off from the sea, providing a safe haven for creatures while the tide is out. Every rock, crevice and clump of seaweed is important to the anemones, crabs, shrimps and small fish that live there. Exploring rockpools and the wildlife within, is both an educational and enjoyable experience for young children. Where possible, this session should involve a rockpooling trip.

Set the Scene

Discuss rockpooling. Children to share ideas of what is involved and why people go rockpooling. Examine images of rockpools (see Beside the Sea gallery) on IWB. In pairs, examine and discuss the creatures on the ‘Rockpool Spotter’. As a class identify unknown species and briefly discuss characteristics and behaviour. Group into vertebrates and invertebrates, then into fish, mollusc, crustacean, or others suggested by students.

Resources

Worksheet: Rockpool Spotter, Beside the Sea gallery and interactive game.

Investigate

As a class, brainstorm items you could take rockpooling. Use interactive game (in the explorer centre) on IWB and compare items to own list. If possible, visit a local beach with rockpools. Be sure to check tide times and set clear expectations of your students (see safety advice in Teach on the Beach). Examine and discuss the seashore code (within the Sea Shore Safari guide at http://bit.ly/1qQEvA4). Use ‘Rockpool Spotters’ to identify creatures found and discuss how they are adapted to their environment. If a trip to the beach is not possible, view a video clip, such as Life in a Rockpool on the BBC Learning Zone and then move onto the ‘apply’ activity.

Apply

In pairs review images from the gallery on a laptop or tablet. Compare these to the images on the Rockpool Spotter. Select one of the creatures and use information from within the gallery to create a mini-factfile. Encourage students to give a classification eg mollusc.

Extend

Use a range of non-fiction books and the internet to research your animal further. Ensure that your students use a child safe search engine, such as www.swiggle.org.uk or provide a list of websites to guide research. Students should then chose a method to present their research.

Reflect

Why do animals live in rockpools? What are the advantages and disadvantages? How have creatures adapted to their environment? Ask for volunteers to share their factfiles and additional research.
Which things have you seen? (tick the circles)