

The Wild Boy of Dunbar - Now and Then



The aim of this activity is to compare and contrast your own primary and secondary school outdoor experiences and then write about the 'now and then' in your own journal.

Start this activity by reading together the first section of the John Muir graphic novel, up to page 51, to discover how at age 11 he moved to America from Scotland.

When John Muir first arrived in America he would capture things that he was discovering and observing about the natural world around him by drawing and writing in his journal.

Discuss in pairs what it must have been like for John Muir when he was at primary school and living by the sea in Dunbar, Scotland, where he was free to roam the beaches, cliffs and countryside and then compare this to what his new life would have been like when he first moved to America in 1849 aged 10/11, as well as his early teenage years there. What things did he do?

Write what you find out here:

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Now think about the things you did when you were at primary school. Answer the following questions to help you with ideas and share them with your class.

- a. What was your primary school playground like? Did you play outside at that school?
- b. Did you ever go on trips to the hills, local park, woods or seaside when you were at primary school? Tell your pair about one of these trips.
- c. What birds, insects and other creatures did you know about when you were at primary school?

Now write down all your primary and secondary school outdoor experiences, in your own journal, under the heading **Now and Then**.

You can use your answers to the following questions to help you with the 'now' section and use your answers to the questions above for the 'then' section:

- a. What is your secondary school playground like?
- b. Have you been on any trips to local parks, woods, hills or the seaside recently?
- c. What insects, birds or animals were you aware of on any of these trips and/or in your school playground?
- d. Do you come across more or fewer creatures now that you are older?

You can draw pictures, write a story or create some comic book illustrations to share your outdoor experiences and to show if since you were at primary school, your outdoor experiences have changed or stayed the same.

Once you have finished your journal entries your teacher will provide you with a handout – What is the John Muir Award.

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Go to <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award/> if you would like to sign up and take part.