National Trust

Sycamore Gap

Schools competition

27 Nov 2026 - 29 Jan 2027

Introduction

The National Trust would love you to share stories about the trees that are important to you.

80 schools will have a chance to twin their chosen tree with the Sycamore Gap tree.

The National Trust is a charity which looks after nature, heritage and beauty across the UK.

Sycamore Gap

This competition is inspired by the Sycamore Gap tree, which grew for many years by Hadrian's Wall and was much-loved by many people.

After the tree was felled in 2023, thousands of people shared their memories about the tree from across the world.

Which tree matters to you?



Virtual lesson

Meet Aneeshwar Kunchala, a National Trust Youth Ambassador.

He's going to talk about his favourite trees and why they are important for nature.

[Click here to watch the video]



Every tree has a story



Choose a tree which is important to you.



Share a story about why it matters to you.



Winning schools will twin their tree with Sycamore Gap.

Share a story about a tree that matters to you

Your tree could be:

A memorable place

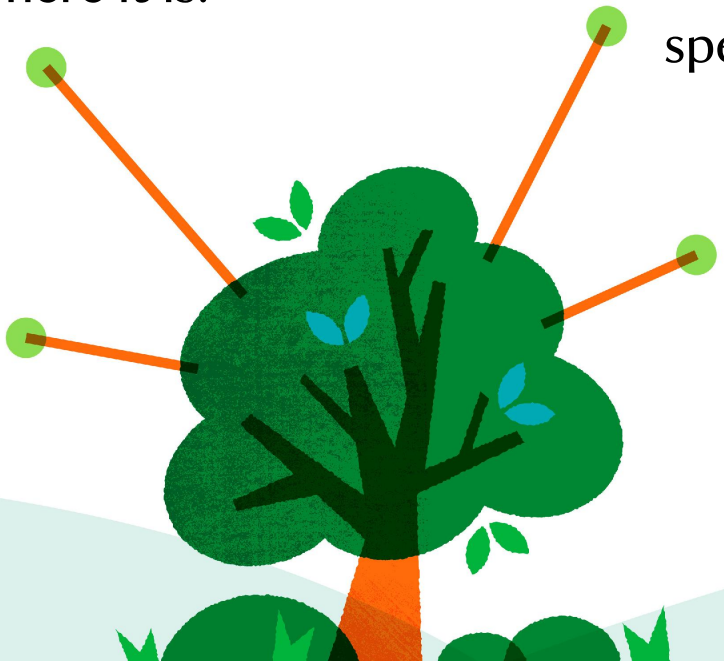
A tree you pass every day

A tree at your school or nearby.

Why is that tree important to you?

Is it because of where it is?

Does it hold a special memory?



Is it because of how it makes you feel?

Is it the way it looks?

What makes your tree special?

- What makes your tree beautiful?
- What would you like to say to the tree?
- What would the tree say to you?



Connecting with nature

Aneeshwar said that we can create a bond with nature through looking, listening and noticing. He said that when you love nature, you want to protect it.

- **What is nature connection?**
- **What can we do to feel closer to nature?**
- **What nature have you noticed in the last week?**

Ways to feel connected with nature



Senses

Engaging with nature through the senses for enjoyment, for example listening to birdsong, smelling wildflowers, touching the bark of a tree or watching the sunset.



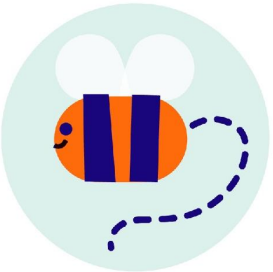
Emotion

Celebrating a love of nature and the positive feelings it can inspire, such as calm and happiness.



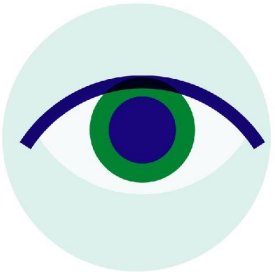
Compassion

Caring for nature, and thinking about how your choices can help protect animals, plants and the environment.



Meaning

Exploring traditions, such as seeing the first swallow or smelling the first bluebell, or reflecting on how we use nature in everyday sayings such assuch as ‘busy as a bee’ or ‘heart of oak’.

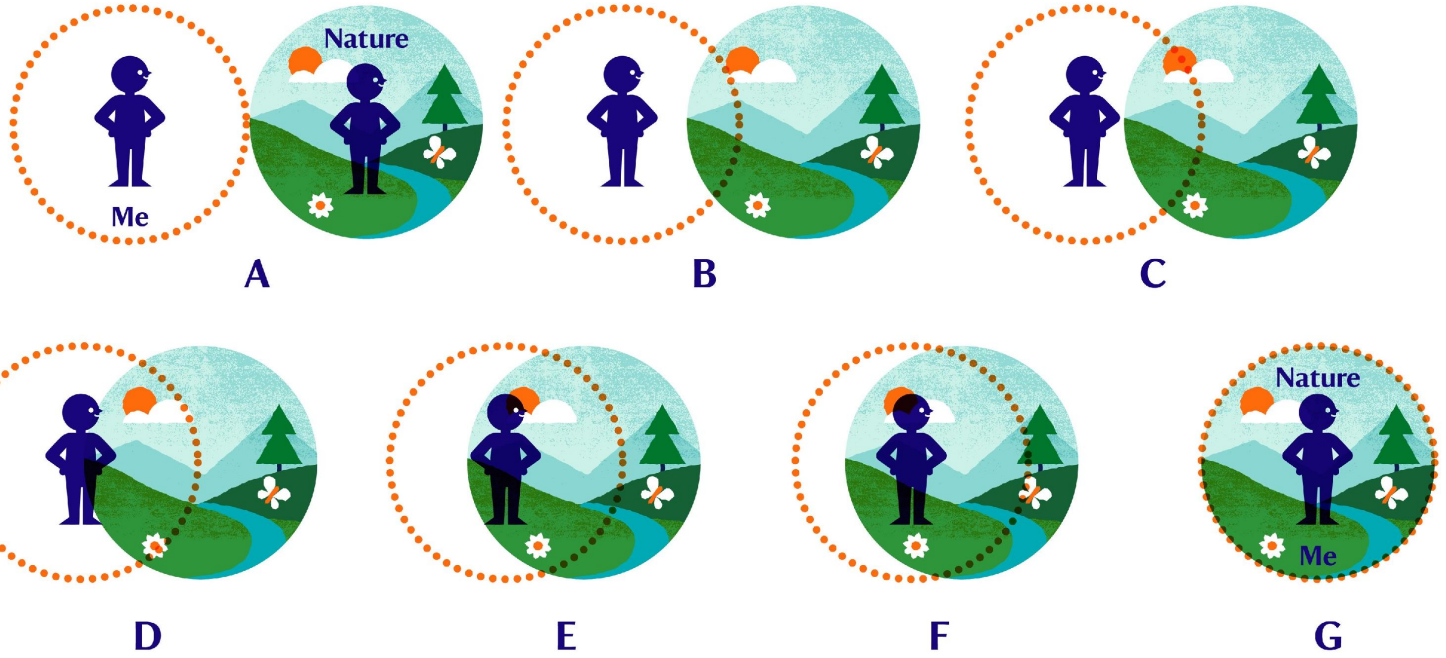


Beauty

Noticing the beauty of nature, and finding inspiration for creative activities such as poetry, music and art.

How connected do you feel to nature?

Please choose the picture that best describes how close you feel to nature.



* adapted from Kleepsies et al (2021)

What can we do to help nature?

Aneeshwar is hopeful about nature as it can grow and return even after a wildfire, flood or drought.

Nature can come back!

Look at the new shoots growing at Sycamore Gap three years on.



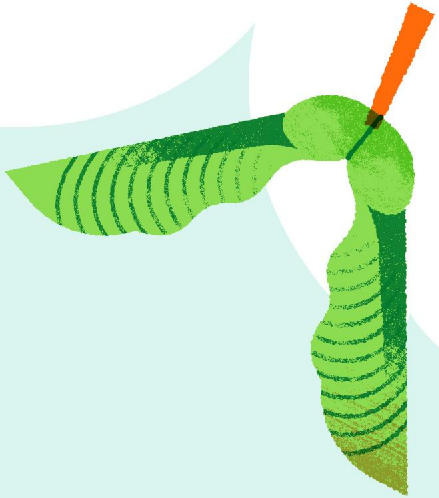
Make a pledge for nature

Aneeshwar said his pledge for nature is to be like the Lorax and speak for the trees.

You can help nature by planting a tree or building a bug hotel.

What would you like your school to do to help nature?





Thank you for taking part in the Sycamore Gap Schools Competition

Your teacher can enter on behalf of your class.

Winning schools will receive a plaque to twin their chosen tree with Sycamore Gap.

Resources

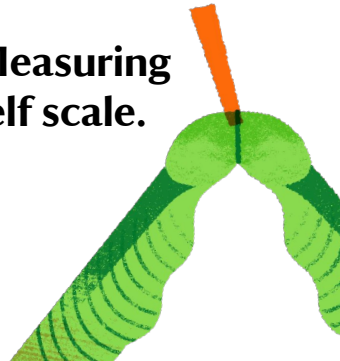
Here are some useful links to continue exploring nature connection in the classroom:

A Young Person's Guide to Connecting with Nature (click on the Download link on the right-hand side to download the nature connection guide)

Messages from the Wild | Annabel Ross Listen to messages from the wild.

National Tree Week - join the UK's largest tree celebration Visit National Tree Week's website to get involved – watch free tree talks, host a tree party and much more!

Reference: **Kleespies, M. W., Braun, T., Dierkes, P. W., & Wenzel, V. (2021). Measuring connection to nature—a illustrated extension of the inclusion of nature in self scale. *Sustainability*, *13*(4), 1761.**



National Trust

This competition is run by the National Trust in celebration of National Tree week with the National Tree Council, as part of a commission 'The People's Tree' with Helix Arts and George King Architects.

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