An Explorer's Guide to the lost words

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by Eva John
“We are Lost Word protectors and we didn’t even know it!...
Be part of the story – the ending of which will be wild words tripping off tongues like laughter and joy.”

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#TheLostWords
**EXPLORER’S GUIDE INTRODUCTION**

Who is this Explorers’ Guide to The Lost Words for?
It’s for teachers, parents, children, nurseries, youth groups, charities, outdoor instructors, Forest Schools, primary schools, secondary schools, hostel staff, festival organisers, community workers, story-tellers. It’s for anyone with an interest in nature, words and images, and anyone who wants to explore further some of the ideas and creatures conjured up by The Lost Words: A Spell Book.

The age of the readers of – and listeners to – The Lost Words has ranged from 6 months to over 100 years old.

### Who is this Explorers’ Guide to The Lost Words?

- It’s to accompany The Lost Words.
- It’s for use in classrooms or in homes or in woods.
- It’s designed to overlap with the National Curriculum across the UK but also to range beyond its bounds. There is a ‘Curriculum Context’ section on page 30.
- Its aim is to help get children (and non-children) looking, learning, making and dreaming about the natural world and our part in it.
- It’s to help people recognise a wren or a willow or – if they’re really lucky! – an otter when they see one, but also to recognise how deeply bound into our culture wrens and willows and otters are.
- It’s for celebrating the magic of nature and the magic of language.
- It’s for spilling back some of the plants and animals with which we share our everyday world, and the language we use to describe them.
- It’s for starting conversations, stories, drawings and, perhaps, lifelong passions for nature.
- It’s for spelling back some of the plants and animals with which we share our everyday world, and the language we use to describe them.

### How and where to use it?

- Take it outside! Take in on expeditions, on walks, out into the school grounds.
- Keep it indoors! Use it for reflection or prompts – during or after activities.
- It’s organised into twenty-two sections: one for each of the twenty words in The Lost Words, one for the cover and title together, and one for the preface.
- For each ‘word’ there are ideas, challenges (writing, research, imagining, creating, exploring), ‘Further connections’ and further reading.
- Download it, print it, laminate key pages or individual sections.
- Read it on a screen, following the links.
- Identify words of interest to delve deeper into...
- Pick out activities that suit you, who you are with, your location...
- Print off just one section, one word: kingfisher, heron or weasel!
- In places, background information is offered in [blue].

### General Activities

- Try reading a spell or a poem (not just from this book; any poem you like) out loud to yourself or to a friend (or to a tree!) once a day.
- Add wonder words to your word-hoard in your Spell Book: build up a treasure-chest of words for nature, weather, plants and animals.
- Become “Nature Detectives”: make fine, detailed observations; learn the charm of naming things; discover new things; make connections; keep a nature journal/sketch book to develop your own responses to the wildlife, plants and environment around you.
- Identify words of interest to delve deeper into...
- Pick out activities that suit you, who you are with, your location...
- Print off just one section, one word: kingfisher, heron or weasel!

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### General Activities

- Try to see each of the twenty species that are named in The Lost Words.
- Create fact files for some or all of the creatures and plants that appear, not just the main twenty.
- Create a special “Sketch & Spell Book” to record your own observations and responses.
- Create a nature table which will change through the seasons.
- Become “Nature Detectives”: make fine, detailed observations; learn the charm of naming things; discover new things; make connections; keep a nature journal/sketch book to develop your own responses to the wildlife, plants and environment around you.
- Add wonder words to your word-hoard in your Spell Book: build up a treasure-chest of words for nature, weather, plants and animals.
- Try reading a spell or a poem (not just from this book; any poem you like) out loud to yourself or to a friend (or to a tree!) once a day.

### LITERACY & NATURE RESOURCE GUIDE

Read a John Muir Award Literacy & Nature Resource Guide to find out how nature and the outdoors can inspire and support literacy skills. It includes links to literacy resources that have a natural theme or are specially adapted for the outdoors. Search: John Muir Trust Initiatives Lost Words
Wonder Words

A ‘charm’ of goldfinches is a collective noun.

Discover as many collective nouns for animals as you can and list them alphabetically.

Make up some of your own, e.g. a ferocity of lions.

Create your own zigzag display of illustrated collective nouns.

Research challenge

What other names are there for goldfinches?

[Goldie, gold linnet, redcap, thistle-tweaker, little tailor]

Find out about the famous painting of a goldfinch by Fabritius (1622-54). What do you notice that is surprising in the painting?

Conjuring

What does the word spell mean?

What does conjuring mean?

Why do you think it is important to speak the words aloud? What kind of ‘old, strong magic’ might speaking aloud possess?

What and where is ‘the mind’s eye’? What do you see in your mind’s eye when you close your eyes for a few moments and pause?

Writing challenge

Seek, find, speak, write

Blackout poetry (or losing words): using a copy of the words in the introduction, create a blackout poem by isolating and piecing together single words or short phrases.

Scan the text to find an interesting key word which is significant and could be the possible theme for your poem.

Read the whole text and, using a pencil, circle words that would connect well with the key word. Try not to circle too many words in a row.

List all the chosen words on a separate piece of paper in the order in which they appear, top to bottom and left to right as this is the order they will appear in the poem.

Select the words that you think work best together, remembering that you can blackout parts of the words.

Try out different ideas before making your final selection. You may want to return to the text to find additional words, but remember to keep them in order.

Once you have made your final selection, go back to the original text and circle only those carefully chosen words, erasing any circles around words you decided not to use.

Carefully black out the words you are not using, taking care not to cover your chosen words. It is better to use biro or pencil, rather than ink or felt, which can bleed into the paper.

You might want to add a design which suits the subject of your poem.
As flake is to blizzard, as curve is to sphere, as knot is to net, as one is to many, as coin is to money, as ear is to far, as wind is to weather, as bird is to flock, as spring is to river, as glint is to glitter, as feather is to flight, as light is to star, as...

Seek, find, speak, write
- What is missing in this illustration above?
- Look closely at the grasses. How many different kinds can you see? How has the artist composed the picture?
- What do you find?
- What is in the picture?
- What is the time of year depicted?
- What pattern do you notice?
- What do you notice in the order and for an extra challenge, see if you can create patterns within patterns as you create your own spell: As.... is to ... ... , as ... ... is to ....
- Practise and perform.

Seek, find, speak
- What is missing in this illustration above?
- Look closely at the grasses. How many different kinds can you see? How has the artist composed the picture?
- What do you find?
- What is in the picture?
- What pattern do you notice?
- What are the patterns within the pattern?
- Make a recording of the poem. You may wish to add sound effects and/or music.

Creative challenge
- Hapa Zome (the Japanese art of beating leaves or flowers with hammers or pebbles, pounding natural pigment into paper or cloth)
- Select an oak leaf and good quality paper or heavy cotton cloth.
- Fold the paper or cloth in half, placing the leaf/leaves between, thinking carefully about the arrangement or composition.
- Hammer carefully or pound with a pebble, working on a smooth, durable surface and avoiding your fingers!
- Carefully unfold and behold!!

You could use this as a cover of a book in which you write your own poem to the oak.

Creative challenge
- Hapa Zome (the Japanese art of beating leaves or flowers with hammers or pebbles, pounding natural pigment into paper or cloth)
- Select an oak leaf and good quality paper or heavy cotton cloth.
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Further connections:
- The Promise by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Laura Carlin
- The Man Who Planted Trees assembly kit
- India Man Plants Forest Bigger Than Central Park
- The Man Who Planted Trees assembly kit
- India Man Plants Forest Bigger Than Central Park
- Search: National Geographic India Man Forest

Seek, find, speak, write
- What is in the picture?
- Why do you think the acorn is painted on gold leaf?
- Discuss with a partner everything that you can see in the painting below. What time of year is depicted?
- Look outside for examples of different types of grasses. Using a reference book or the internet, try to discover the names of them all.
- In your sketch book, draw and label them, annotating them with words you might use to describe them. (A thesaurus is wonderful for extending your choice of words!)
- Look at the connections carefully.
- What is the time of year depicted?
- What do you notice in the order and for an extra challenge, see if you can create patterns within patterns as you create your own spell: As.... is to ... ... , as ... ... is to ....
- Practise and perform.

Seek, find, speak
- What is in the picture?
- Why do you think the acorn is painted on gold leaf?
- Read aloud slowly. What do you notice? [As ... is to ... as ... is to ... (x 16)]
- Pick out all the nouns (opposite) to examine the connections carefully.
- What pattern do you notice?
- Are there patterns within the pattern?[Alliteration, rhyme and rhythm]
- Make a recording of the poem. You may wish to add sound effects and/or music.

Creative challenge
- Hapa Zome (the Japanese art of beating leaves or flowers with hammers or pebbles, pounding natural pigment into paper or cloth)
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Seek, find, speak, write
- Think, pair, share: make a thought-cloud of your own words which have connections, like the ones in Acorn.
- Play around with the order and, for an extra challenge, see if you can create patterns within patterns as you create your own spell: As.... is to ... ... , as ... ... is to ....
- Practise and perform.

Seek, find, speak
- Think, pair, share: make a thought-cloud of your own words which have connections, like the ones in Acorn.
- Play around with the order and, for an extra challenge, see if you can create patterns within patterns as you create your own spell: As.... is to ... ... , as ... ... is to ....
- Practise and perform.
Adder 2
What words would you use to describe these adders?
What time of year do you think it is in the painting?
How could you describe the different textures of everything shown in the painting?
How do you think the artist feels about adders?
Bluebell 1
Seek, find, speak, write
How does this image make you feel? What is missing?

Bluebell 2
Wonder words
What do these mean?
- billows
- current
- undertow
Can you find any synonyms? Try using them with a partner by creating different sentences.
How many times is blue mentioned? Why do you think this is?
What is meant by ‘the blue hour’?
Think of other names for dusk and dawn.

Bluebell 3
Research challenge
Seek, find, speak, write
What are the creatures in the painting?
Seek, find, speak, write
Research challenge
Find some recipes and, if possible, create a meal featuring blackberries.
Find fascinating facts. Ramble through wonder words before you start, to help make your writing more vivid.

Writing challenges
Think of any stories associated with bluebells. What significance do you think they have?
Look carefully at the painting. It has been created using negative space. Using a paint programme and careful observations of natural objects, create a picture using negative space.

Bluebell 1
Seek, find, speak, write
Think of other names for dusk and dawn.

What is meant by ‘the blue hour’?
Why do you think this is?

Writing challenges
Choose another landscape, e.g. a meadow of buttercups, a wood in summer, autumn or winter. Collect a word-hoard, using a thesaurus to extend your choices.
Create your own poem, possibly using repetition for effect.

Research challenge
What different names can you find for bluebells?
What are the growing conditions for bluebells?
Find out about imported species, such as Endymion or fairy bluebells?
Find examples of Dutch still-life paintings on the internet which depict blackberries.
Find one you particularly appreciate and explain why you like it.
Search: National Trust Still Life Derbyham
How do you feel about brambles? Collect a word-hoard and, selecting the most effective, create a rolling, arching, poem which has little shoots stealing across the page. Use your best calligraphy to present it, thinking artistically about the colours you use.

Creative challenge
Look closely at brambles and, if possible, the flowers and/or blackberries. Find one you particularly appreciate and explain why you like it.

Bluebell 3
Seek, find, speak, write
What are the creatures in the painting?
Seek, find, speak, write
Research challenge
Find out about the two creatures and where are bluebell woods in Britain?

Create your own poem, possibly using repetition for effect.

Research challenge
What are the ‘city edges’ like in your mind’s eye?

Creative challenge
Look closely at the painting. It has been created using negative space. Using a paint programme and careful observations of natural objects, create a picture using negative space.

Further reading
Edward Thomas poem: The Lane
RSPB Bird Calls
YouTube Briar Rose Song

Bramble 1
Seek, find, speak, write
What do these mean?
- billows
- current
- undertow
Can you find any synonyms? Try using them with a partner by creating different sentences.
How many times is blue mentioned? Why do you think this is?
What is meant by ‘the blue hour’?
Think of other names for dusk and dawn.

Writing challenges
Choose another landscape, e.g. a meadow of buttercups, a wood in summer, autumn or winter. Collect a word-hoard, using a thesaurus to extend your choices.
Create your own poem, possibly using repetition for effect.

Research challenge
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Further reading
Edward Thomas poem: The Lane
RSPB Bird Calls
YouTube Briar Rose Song
Conker 1
Seek, find, speak
- Look closely at the image of the conker shell, what does it remind you of? What is contained within the shell?
- What is the other name for a conker tree?
- What is another way to spell the word conker and what does it mean? What ideas does this generate?

Conker 2
Seek, find, speak
- How is this poem different from the others?
- [Question and answer dialogue]
- How many characters are there?
- Draw the king, the cabinet maker and engineer.
- [Is the assumption that they are all men?]
- [What is the message in this poem?]
- [How many fingers does a horse chestnut leaf have?]

Conker 3
Seek, find, speak
- Look at the different techniques used in the painting (left). How do you think the stippled effect is created?
- What happens when you open a conker shell, where the conker is still white and you leave it in the open?
- Find out about horse chestnut and sticky buds.
- Find out how to grow a conker.
- [What is the other name for a conker tree?]
- [What is another way to spell the word conker and what does it mean? What ideas does this generate?]
- [Find out about horse chestnut and sticky buds.]
- [What is the collective noun for horse chestnut?]
- [How many fingers does a horse chestnut leaf have?]

Research challenge
- Find out about horse chestnut and sticky buds.
- What happens when you open a conker shell, where the conker is still white and you leave it in the open?
- Find out about playing conkers.
- Give instructions for finding and creating an indestructible conker.

Writing challenges
- Find all the negative words in the poem.
- Find any synonyms?
- Try using them with a partner.
- Find out how to grow a conker.
- [What is the other name for a conker tree?]
- [What is another way to spell the word conker and what does it mean? What ideas does this generate?]

Dandelion 1
Seek, find, speak
- What does the image on the page remind you of?
- How did the names, dandelion, originate?
- [The artist chose to represent the leaves of the dandelion as a clock and lion’s teeth]

Research challenge
- How do you think the hare is in the illustration?
- What is the collective noun for goldfinches and also for hares?
- Find out about the life cycle of the dandelion.
- Find out about playing conkers.
- Give instructions for finding and creating an indestructible conker.

Dandelion 2
Wonder words
- What do these mean? Can you find any synonyms?
- Try using them with a partner.
- [Create a rhythmic chant, playing around with the word order.]
- What sort of sound accompaniment would add extra impact to the words?
- Create your own question and answer poem about a natural object or creature.
- Create a play script or fairy story involving the characters in the poem.
- Make an animation or film of the script or story.

Art challenge
- Select a plant and experiment with making a slightly abstracted outline.
- [Find out about horse chestnut and sticky buds.]
- [What is the other name for a conker tree?]
- [What is another way to spell the word conker and what does it mean? What ideas does this generate?]

Dandelion 3
Seek, find, speak
- What does this painting depict?
- [The different phases in a dandelion’s growth]
- [Why do you think the hare is in the illustration?]
- How do you think this painting make you feel?
- What is the collective noun for goldfinches and also for hares?

Research challenge
- Find out about horse chestnut and sticky buds.
- What happens when you open a conker shell, where the conker is still white and you leave it in the open?
- Find out about playing conkers.
- Give instructions for finding and creating an indestructible conker.

Creative challenge
- Take a dandelion seed and look closely at it with a magnifying glass. See the bright, light parachute that lifts it on the wind; the shape of its spear seed, sharp, so that when it lands, it catches the earth. Imagine the journey from dandelion clock to earth landing. Draw a single seed – huge on a big piece of paper to accompany your imaginings.

Further reading
- [Crow’ by Ted Hughes (from The Cat and the Cuckoo). Discuss the metaphors and similes.]
- [What sort of character do they convey?]
Fern 1
Seek, find, speak
- What do you think the marks represent?
- What patterns can you see?

Fern 2
Seek, find, speak
- What do you notice about the words the writer has selected?

Wonder words
- Challenge yourself to give an accurate definition of the following:
  - furled
  - frond
  - fast
  - flares
  - fanned

Check in a dictionary to find out which words have more than one possible definition. Which definition fits the context of the spell?

Fern 3
Seek, find, speak
- How many different types of fern can you see in the painting?
- Can you identify them using a reference book or the internet?
- What else do you notice in the illustration?
- What did ferns form over a long period of time, after they had died?

Creative challenge
Hapa Zome (the Japanese art of beating leaves or flowers with hammer or pebbles, pounding natural pigment into paper or cloth)
- Select a fern and good quality paper or heavy cotton cloth.
- Fold the paper or cloth in half, placing the fern between.
- Hammer carefully or pound with a pebble, working on a smooth, durable surface and avoiding your fingers!
- Carefully unfold and behold…!

Writing challenge
- Write a four line acrostic:
  - Fern's last form is …….
  - Each frond ……
  - R…..
  - Now fern is ……

Research challenge
- Find out about the plants in the poem:
  - Asphodel: what was this used for by women in the sixteenth century?
  - Tormentil: what was this used for?
  - Cotton-grass: what were the fluffy heads of these plants once used for?
- Find out about the plants listed in the poem:
  - [White]
  - [Red grouse, birds, bees]
  - [Mountain hare (shorter ears); hen harrier]
  - [Bilberry]
  - [Candlewicks; stuffing pillows and mattresses]
  - [Killing poison from the heart; ‘to appease rage and torment of the teeth;’ red dye for clothing; roots used for tanning hides]

Ferns between.

Heather 1
Seek, find, speak
- Where would you expect to see this plant?
- What do you notice?
- Which definition fits the context of the spell?
- What patterns can you see?
- What do you notice in the illustration?
- What do you see in the painting?

Research challenge
- Find out about the plants once used for?
- Find out other names for the bilberry and which animals fed on it.
- Find a picture and write a two line description.
- Find out about the animals and create fact files.
- What are the predominant colours?
- What sort of landscape is this and what animals can you see?
- What was heather used for in the past?
- Find out the Latin origin of the second part of the botanical name, Ossifragum.
- Find out what can be done with fiddle-heads.
- Which heather is lucky?
- Which animals feed on them?
- Why are they lucky?
- Why do you need to be careful?
- Dying their hair yellow
- [Dye for clothing; roots used for tanning hides]

Heather 2
Seek, find, speak
- Read the spell aloud several times.
- What do you notice?
- What does the writer mean by ‘heather’?
- What does the writer suggest the second part of the botanical name, Ossifragum, means?

Research challenge
- What was heather used for in the past?
- What else do you notice in the illustration?
- What does the writer suggest you do with the heather, and why?
- Find out about the plants once used for?
- Find out about the plants listed in the poem:
  - [Floral sang
  - [Candlewicks; stuffing pillows and mattresses]
  - [Killing poison from the heart; ‘to appease rage and torment of the teeth;’ red dye for clothing; roots used for tanning hides]

Heather 3
Seek, find, speak
- How many different types of heather can you see in the painting?
- Can you identify them using a reference book or the internet?
- What else do you notice in the illustration?
- What do you notice?
- What does the writer mean by ‘heather’?
- What does the writer suggest you do with the heather, and why?
- Find out what can be done with fiddle-heads.
- Find out about the plants once used for?
- Find out what are the predominant colours?
- Find out about the plants listed in the poem:
  - [Red grouse, birds, bees]
  - [Candlewicks; stuffing pillows and mattresses]
  - [Killing poison from the heart; ‘to appease rage and torment of the teeth;’ red dye for clothing; roots used for tanning hides]

Further reading
- Sky Dancer by Gill Lewis
- The White Hare by Nicola Davies
Heron 1
Seek, find, speak
- How do you think you would describe the feel of this feather?
- What sort of bird do you think it has come from?
- Why do you think the artist has chosen to paint a feather?

Research challenge
- Make a collection of feathers and examine them with a magnifying glass or microscope. Can you identify which birds they might be from?
- How did feathers evolve?

Creative challenge
- Create your own close observational drawings or paintings of feathers. You might want to look at other feathers.

Ivy 1
Seek, find, speak
- Look closely at walls with ivy growing on them. Can you trace the pathways of the rootlets?
- Find out about:
  - The different shapes of ivy leaves
  - Which insects pollinate the flowers
  - Which creatures feed on the black ivy berries
  - Christmas traditions of using ivy
  - Other uses of ivy

Wonder words
- Via
- Sky-wire
- Ground cover

Writing challenge
- Choose a bird and study its characteristics either in life or on film.
- Collect a heard of words and phrases and extend your choice by using a thesaurus.
- Play around with words to create a four line spell (you can write more) about your bird.
- Choose how to display your writing.

Further reading
- The Fable of Bramble, Heron and Cat
- Dylan Thomas: Poem in October
Think, pair, share
What do these mean?
- feather-stream
- Halcyon (research different meanings for this word)
- Angler

Try using them with a partner by creating different sentences.
Seek, find, speak

Performance
- Read the poem several times and think about pace. Which parts do you think should be calm and slow and which parts fast or accelerating?
- Practise reading aloud with a partner. Record and add background film or graphics.

Quick abstract art challenge (in pairs)
- Read the poem and list the colours it conjures in your mind. Collect all the colours and materials you think you might need to create an abstract picture in a speedy response to the spell.
- As your partner reads the spell aloud, respond to the images by painting and using any other materials you have selected, to depict what you are hearing.
- You might need to have the spell read more than once!
- Swap roles.
- Discuss the results. What worked well? What might you have done differently?

Creative challenge
- Create a dance to the words of the spell, possibly using long lengths of fabric for the river and ribbons to help depict the kingfisher’s movements.

Research challenge
- Find out about the Greek myth associated with kingfishers.
- Search: Greek Myths Halcyon

Further reading
- Find out about the Greek myth about kingfishers
- Search: Greek Myths Halcyon

Lark

Seek, find, speak
What is this spell about?
What is the metaphor the writer has chosen for the lark and why do you think he has chosen it?
Which verbs has Robert Macfarlane chosen for the lark and why do you think he has chosen them?
Models of complex courtship are developed from which birds?

Reading the spell
- What is meant by:
  - ‘dying stars’
  - ‘exploding suns’
  - ‘dark matter’
- How do you feel when you think about deep space?

Further reading
- Find information and images by painting and using materials you think you might need to create the desired result.
- Research challenge: Identify the yellow flowers in the painting.
- Search: Visual Art

Create a recipe spell for ‘Being of good cheer.’ Think of the ingredients and how you would combine them to create the desired result.
- Listen to the song of a lark
- Search: RSPB Lark
- Listen to The Lark Ascending by Vaughan Williams
- Search: YouTube Lark Ascending

What sort of things cheer you up when your ‘sadness has come’ and your ‘heart grows flatter’?
- Create a recipe spell for ‘Being of good cheer.’ Think of the ingredients and how you would combine them to create the desired result.
- You might need to have the spell read more than once!
- Swap roles.
- Discuss the results. What worked well? What might you have done differently?

Add music or sound effects with arranging them on the page to suggest the flight of the lark, thinking carefully about design: colour and word letter size.
Seek, find, speak
- Read the spell again. In what ways has your understanding of it developed from the first reading?

Lark 1

Seek, find, speak
- Why do you think the letters are arranged in this way?
- Why do you think blue was the colour chosen for the letters of the missing word?
- How do you think the artist created the sky effect?

Lark 2

Seek, find, speak
- What is this spell about?
- What is the metaphor the writer has chosen for the lark and why do you think he has chosen it?
- Which verbs has Robert Macfarlane chosen for the lark and why do you think he has chosen them?
- Models of complex courtship are developed from which birds?

Reading the spell
- What is meant by:
  - ‘dying stars’
  - ‘exploding suns’
  - ‘dark matter’
- How do you feel when you think about deep space?

Further reading
- Find information and images by painting and using materials you think you might need to create the desired result.
- Research challenge: Identify the yellow flowers in the painting.
- Search: Visual Art

Create a recipe spell for ‘Being of good cheer.’ Think of the ingredients and how you would combine them to create the desired result.
- You might need to have the spell read more than once!
- Swap roles.
- Discuss the results. What worked well? What might you have done differently?

Add music or sound effects with arranging them on the page to suggest the flight of the lark, thinking carefully about design: colour and word letter size.
Seek, find, speak
- Read the spell again. In what ways has your understanding of it developed from the first reading?
Magpie 3
Seek, find, speak
- What time of year is it in the painting?
- What creatures are absent?
- Research challenge: Find out about these creatures and create an infographic, showing their Latin name and the family to which they belong, the development of the chicks; any other interesting information.
Search: RSPB Magpie; Wikipedia Magpie

Magpie 2
Wonder words
- What do these mean?
- Manifesto
- Bicker
- Snicker
- Interject
- Intercept
- Intervene
Can you find any synonyms? Try using them with a partner by creating different sentences.

Newt 2
Wonder words
- Manifesto
- Bicker
- Snicker
- Interject
- Intercept
- Intervene
Can you find any synonyms and antonyms? Try using them with a partner by creating different sentences.

Seek, find, speak
- What techniques has the writer used?
- What sort of effect is created?
- What do the last three lines of the spell tell you? Can you think of any other creatures that behave in this way?
- Think, pair, share: describe the character of the magpie in your own words.
- Think of a bird which is a complete contrast to the magpie.

Further reading and connections
- Traditional rhymes
Search: Wikipedia One for Sorrow
- Find different versions and create your own, using the same rhyme scheme.
- Find out about the storyline to Rossini’s opera, The Thieving Magpie.
- Read the poem by Sian MacKay
Search: Sian MacKay Magpie
- The Adventures of Tintin: The Castafiore Emerald.
- Dreamtime myths
Search: World Stories First Sunrise
- The Magpie, a painting by Claude Monet
Search: Monet Magpie

Newt 1
Seek, find and speak
- What class of animals does this one belong to?
- Judging from the outline, which sort do you think this is?
- What sort of plant do you think is in this picture?

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Newt
Seek, find, speak
- Why do you think the artist chose to paint the newt so large and the coot in the distance? What features can you identify?
- Find out about coots and crested newts and add to your fact files.
Otter 1
Seek, find, speak
What is depicted in the painting?
How would you indicate an absence of otter?

Otter 2
Wonder words

◆ falter
◆ holt
◆ skein
◆ ore
◆ silver-miner
◆ delves

Try using them with a partner by creating different sentences.

Otter 3
Seek, find and speak
How does this painting reflect the spell? Pick out the words and phrases that you think have clearly influenced the artist’s interpretation.
What else do you notice in the painting?

Further reading

◆ Tarka, the Otter by Henry Williamson
◆ An Otter a poem by Ted Hughes, from ‘The Cat and the Cuckoo.’
◆ One Moonlit Night by T. Llew Jones, adapted by Gillian Clarke and illustrated by Jac Jones
◆ Gwion and the Witch, which tells the story of Taliesin who has the art of shape-shifting. There’s also a folk song version on YouTube.
Search: Wales History Taliesin; YouTube Ceridwen Taliesin

Raven 1
Seek, find, speak
Another feather! How is this one different from Heron’s?

Raven 2
Seek, find, speak
Wonder words

What do these mean?
◆ rasps
◆ swagger
◆ peak
◆ Guile
◆ ventures
◆ scoffs
◆ scarp
◆ familiar
◆ hexes

Can you find any synonyms? Try using three of them with a partner by creating different sentences.

Writing challenge

In the last verse, what do the words bring to mind? [Big Bad Wolf in Little Red Riding Hood]

Research challenge

Find out about ravens.
Which other birds do they have links with in this book of spells?
Compare their size with other creatures in the spell book and arrange them in order.
The egg in the raven’s beak belongs to a guillemot. Find out three fascinating facts about guillemot eggs.

Further reading:

◆ Find out about the stories and myths which feature ravens:
  ◆ Greek: Apollo
  Search: Corvid Research Why Crow Black
  ◆ Norse: Hugin and Munin
  Search: DLTK Kids Hugin Munin
  ◆ Native American
  Search: Magma Raven Steals Sun
  ◆ Wales: Bran the Blessed
  Search: Bran Blessed
  ◆ The link with the ravens and the Tower of London.

Performance Poetry

In fives, divide the poem up and practise performing. Take care with the last verse.
Act it out. You could create an animation or use stick puppets for the performance.

Writing challenge

What is the collective noun for ravens?
Create a story or play with the collective noun as a title. Think about which characters will be involved and plan your storyline before you start writing.

Art challenge

Create a raven silhouette from black paper. Use images from books or the internet to help you with your design.

Search:

Wales History Taliesin; YouTube Ceridwen Taliesin
Starling 1
Seek, find, speak
What do these mean? Can you find any synonyms? Try using them with a partner by creating different sentences.
- sheen
- pitch
- shoaling
- murmuration

Seek, find, speak
Read the poem again carefully. What quality do the first two stanzas describe?

What techniques does the writer use to depict the quality?
- Hyphenated descriptions, similes, metaphors, alliteration, internal rhyme
- What quality of starlings is described in stanzas three and four?
- Pick out the words which have been selected to convey this quality. What do you notice?
- How does the writer convey the blackness of the starling’s eye?
- What do the final two stanzas describe?
- Which words are repeated? Why do you think the writer has chosen to do this?
- Find videos of the Northern Lights
  Search: YouTube Stunning Aurora Borealis

Further reading about the organisation to make the information accessible.
- VWT Mustelid Guide
  Search: VWT Mustelid Guide
- Arkive Weasel
  Search: Arkive Weasel
- BBC Nature Weasel
  Search: BBC Nature Weasel
- Watch: Weasel Wildlife Centre
  Search: YouTube Weasel Wildlife Centre

Weasel 2
Wonder words
What do these mean? Can you find any synonyms? Try using them with a partner by creating different sentences.
- Embers
- tinder
- pyre
- hot-wires
- gyres

Seek, find, speak
What is the extended simile chosen by the writer for weasel?
- With a partner, improvise a verse to frame the weasel, to fit with the painting!

Research challenge
- Which other animals are closely related to weasels?
  - Stoats, pine-martens, polecats, otters
  - Find out details about their relative sizes and create an infographic, adding other interesting facts that you have discovered. Think carefully about the organisation to make the information accessible.

Further reading
- The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Graham
- The story of Branwen
  Search: Tes Story Branwen
- The Starlings of West Pier, by 9 year old Roxanna Toyne
  Search: BBC Starlings West Pier

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Weasel 3
Seek, find, speak
What is suggested in this painting?

Further reading
- The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Graham
by creating different sentences. Try using them with a partner. Can you find any synonyms?

Wonder words
What do these mean?
◆ fuzzy
◆ etches
◆ glitches
Can you find any synonyms? Try using them with a partner by creating different sentences.

Seek, find, speak
What is meant by ‘the world around her slows’?
What is the chief characteristic that the writer conveys?
What techniques does the writer use?
[Alliteration, internal rhyme, repetition, onomatopoeia, half rhymes, pauses] Make a list of the words related to movement. Why do you think the writer chose these particular words?
What metaphors are used for wren?
What do these mean?
What do you notice about the twisted lines represent?

Further reading
◆ King of the Birds a fable from Aesop
Search: BBC Today Macfarlane

◆ King of Birds by Karine Polwart
Search: YouTube Polwart
Birds
Compare this with a traditional Zulu story.
Search: Canteach Birds Zulu

◆ What are the similarities and differences?
Birds and Words by Charlie Harper: compare the ways in which birds are depicted by Charlie Harper with the writing and art in The Book of Spells.

◆ Little Wren performed by Kerry Andrew
Search: YouTube Kerry Andrew Wren
There is significant potential for using The Lost Words and activities in this Explorers’ Guide as part of creative, active, outdoor-based approaches to learning. Use it to initiate, or as part of existing programmes and lesson plans, and to work towards curriculum outcomes. Promote cross-curricular links – across literacy, art, Religious & Moral Education (values, spirituality, inter-relationships), maths…

Take learning outside
Explore school grounds. Use it as a prompt into local greenspace, parks and community woods. Integrate activities with field trips and outdoor residentials (see #BrilliantResidentials).

England, Wales and Northern Ireland
The Curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers develop exciting and stimulating lessons. Its aim is to promote the development of pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills. It is just one element of a young person’s education; wide-ranging experiences can be planned within the school day. “Giving children the opportunity to discover, learn about and experience the natural world is hugely important - it can help create a sense of belonging rooted in their local environment, enhancing their health, wellbeing and educational outcomes.”

TRANSFORMING OUTDOOR LEARNING IN SCHOOLS, LESSONS FROM THE NATURAL CONNECTIONS PROJECT, 2016

Scotland
Curriculum for Excellence places an emphasis on the development of children to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. It focuses on developing skills for learning, life and work and contributes to raising attainment for all. It encourages an active, healthy and environmentally sustainable lifestyle and aims to support children and young people to learn beyond the classroom. In Scotland, attainment is interpreted as a broad term beyond a narrow definition of exam results or test scores. It’s ‘the measurable progress which children and young people make through and beyond school, and the development of the range of skills, knowledge and attributes needed to succeed in learning, life and work.’ It is dependent on certain key foundations for learning: good literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. The lead commitment in Learning for Sustainability Vision 2030+ is that ‘All learners should have an entitlement to Learning for Sustainability’, with Recommendation 1 stating: ‘Progressive and curriculum-led approaches to outdoor learning should continue to be promoted’.

“All teachers and school leaders are required to demonstrate Learning for Sustainability in their practice as it is an integral part of the General Teaching Council of Scotland Professional Standards. It is an important prerequisite for all who deliver Scottish education.”

JOHN SWINNEY MSP, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Further reading
- Kathleen Jamie, Here lies our land
- Landmarks by Robert Macfarlane: find words which connect with the subjects of the Spells and add to your word-board.
- The Reader’s Digest Field Guide to the Wild Flowers of Britain
- Flora Britannica by Richard Mabey
- The Tales of Beatrix Potter
- The Tales of Brambly Hedge by Jill Barklem

Writing challenge
- In pairs, create rhyming couplets for a chosen animal. Make sure everyone chooses a different creature.
  e.g. A kaleidoscope of colour
        As butterflies flutter.
        A flamboyance of flamingos
        Striking a fluorescent pose.
        A marching line of militants,
        An army of ants.
- Create a group incantation by collating everybody’s work, illustrating the charms, and deciding which order works most effectively by reading the lines aloud.
- Perform!

Personal challenge
- How can you make a difference in helping to preserve our wild creatures and places?
  johnmuirtrust.org
  wildlifetrusts.org/natureclubs
  woollandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives
  plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants
  nature/children-families
  rspb.org.uk
- Seek, find, speak
  A charm of goldfinches ’flit through the pages’ in The Spell Book. Why do you think the creators of this book chose to use goldfinches as a symbol?
  Select your favourite spell and explain why that one particularly speaks to you.
  Choose your favourite painting and explain why it appeals to you.
  Why might it be important to know the names of plants and creatures?
- Create wild chains, finding links and connections between creatures and plants.
- Consider which other wild words we are in danger of losing and create your own illustrated spell book.

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  johnmuirtrust.org
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  woollandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives
  plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants
  nature/children-families
  rspb.org.uk
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