

Why Explorify?



Children are naturally curious and science at primary school should enable every child to investigate and understand the world around them. Through learning science, they explore scientific concepts and develop a range of transferable skills, especially those of enquiry, that will support them throughout their lives.

Wellcome developed Explorify¹, a totally free digital resource, to support questioning, thinking and reasoning about science, often in less familiar contexts. Teachers use Explorify as stand-alone short activities at the start of the day, after lunch, as lesson starters or for plenaries. Each activity is easy to deliver, with just the right amount of background science to give you confidence as a teacher to get discussion going with your class and support your children to get started with their own enquiries.

There are eight different types of activities to choose from, each one linked to the curriculum and the year group you teach, in whichever part of the UK you teach. We suggest trying a **Zoom In Zoom Out** activity to start with. These are a sequence of images that reveal a little more information each time. What do children think the image could be, and why? Encourage them to talk and explain, listening to each other and building on each other's ideas. Remember that every idea is valid when children can say 'why'.

Odd One Out activities follow a well-tested format² and give teachers a chance to probe children's thoughts deeply. Find out what children can tell you about the three linked images. Ask what is the same or different and encourage children to tell you more about their ideas. Finally, ask which would be the

odd one out for them and why – you could ask them to elaborate more in writing too, an opportunity for science to be the stimulus for explanation texts.

The **What's Going On?** videos are useful in enabling you to see something in practice, talk about it and then investigate yourselves, changing just one variable at a time. The **What if** activities encourage children to extend their thinking and apply their learning in new ways, offering insight into children's understanding of science concepts. As you complete more activities together, you'll notice the impact on your pupils, including better observation and explanations, use of scientific vocabulary, linking science concepts together and confidence to share ideas too.

The remaining four activity types may take a little longer to do in class, or need a little prep, but they're easy to include in your planning and will help to enrich your teaching and extend children's thinking. We're adding to the Explorify content all the time, from activities that link to topical issues and posts to help with teaching, rather like the content of this issue of *Primary Science*.

We're delighted to share articles from UK teachers in this issue of *Primary Science*, which show how they are raising the profile of science in school, how Explorify has helped them to achieve this and their top tips for teaching and leading science. If you're not using Explorify yet, why not sign up?

'Explorify has opened up the children's minds to what science really is and how we can explore it in our everyday lives. It has helped me to encourage the children to think outside the box and to make links to our everyday surroundings'

(Teacher, June 2019)

¹ <https://explorify.wellcome.ac.uk>

² EEF (2015) Thinking, Talking, Doing Science - Evaluation report and executive summary. London: Education Endowment Foundation. <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/thinking-doing-talking-science-effectiveness-trial>