



# Eco Activity: June

## Compost documentary photography

Pupils learn about documentary photography and experiment with taking inspiring photographs of the school's composting. They write captions to accompany their images, and display them for the whole school to enjoy.

<b>Group</b>	Eco Team
<b>Space needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A classroom with interactive white board (IWB) and internet access for whole-group introduction.</li> <li>• Pupils move around the school to take photographs, both indoors and in the school grounds .</li> <li>• A classroom with IWB for reviewing your photographs and writing captions (session 2).</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 hour for taking photographs.</li> <li>• 1 hour for selecting the photos to display and writing captions.</li> <li>• 30 mins for displaying the photographs (this can be done by an adult, if necessary, although involving pupils is preferable.)</li> </ul>
<b>You will need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital cameras – one per pair of pupils if possible.</li> <li>• Lead, to download your photographs from the cameras to the school server (or a computer with a card reader.)</li> <li>• Paper and pens and / or computers for writing captions.</li> <li>• A colour printer to print your photographs.</li> </ul>
<b>Health and safety</b>	Pupils must be adequately supervised at all times. Demonstrate safe ways of taking photographs from different angles (e.g., how to take aerial shots without climbing onto furniture; checking the ground before lying down to take a shot from below.)
<b>Introduction</b>	<p>What do pupils understand by the term 'documentary'?</p> <p><i>A definition is "Using pictures or interviews with people involved in real events to provide a factual report on a particular subject." Pupils will probably volunteer examples of television documentaries about wildlife or history.</i></p> <p>Explain that documentary photographers use photographs and captions to inform people about what is happening in the world. A group of photos and captions on a theme is called a photo essay. Well taken photographs and inspiring captions are a great way to spread positive messages about caring for the environment.</p> <p>Show pupils the stunning photographs of documentary photographer Rodney Dekker on the theme of 'Waste'. At <a href="http://www.rodneydekker.com">www.rodneydekker.com</a> click on 'Photos' then select the photo essay named 'Reclaimed Journeys'.</p> <p>Use the arrow buttons at the bottom of the page to scroll through the images. To see the captions hover over the word 'INFO'. Looking at the photos, introduce pupils to some features of documentary photography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action shots of people doing things (e.g., photos 6 and 11)</li> <li>• Taking photographs from interesting angles (e.g., photos 4 and 7)</li> <li>• Portrait shots of key individuals (e.g., photo 14)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Main session</b></p>	<p>Explain that the team is going to become documentary photographers and take photographs of the wonderful composting taking place at the school. Make a list of possible shots for your photo essay e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A child putting an apple core into a compost caddy</li> <li>• Children carrying the compost caddies through the school</li> <li>• A portrait shot of the school cook or caretaker</li> <li>• Pupils collecting up cardboard / leaves / other materials for composting</li> <li>• An aerial shot of a full compost caddy</li> <li>• A close-up of the contents of your compost bin</li> <li>• Children using the finished compost to grow fruit and vegetables in the school grounds</li> <li>• An empty classroom rubbish bin</li> <li>• Children / adults enjoying eating produce from the school grounds.</li> </ul> <p>The exact photographs taken will depend on your school, the time of year, and pupils' own suggestions. The most important thing is to capture different stages of the composting process.</p> <p>Don't forget to ask permission from people before taking their photograph.</p> <p>Make sure the pupils know how to use the digital cameras. If necessary, explain about taking outdoor shots with the sun behind you. A free download of top tips for photography is available here:  <a href="http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/packs/photography_pack.htm">www.naturedetectives.org.uk/packs/photography_pack.htm</a></p> <p>Organise the team into groups and discuss how you are going to share out the photographs on your list. It may be useful to set a limit for the number of photographs taken on each theme – quality is more important than quantity, but it's also fun to experiment with different camera angles etc.</p>
<p><b>Plenary</b></p>	<p>Download all the photographs onto the school's server and discuss them as a team. Decide which are the best shots to include in your photo essay. Write factual captions to accompany each one, and display your finished photo essay on a prominent display board for the whole school to see.</p>
<p><b>Extension or simplification</b></p>	<p>A photo essay usually includes at least one quote. Discuss with the team who you could interview to get an interesting quote for one or more of the captions (e.g., the headteacher, caretaker, school cook.)</p> <p>Build on the documentary photography experience by taking photographs of other 'eco' activities in the school, such as recycling, reusing, saving energy or healthy eating.</p>



**Don't let Devon go to waste**