



Species Stories Educational Resources

Species Stories is a partnership between Writing Our Legacy and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) that harnesses storytelling to reconnect us with nature; encouraging the awareness, empathy and active custodianship that will allow compromised ecosystems to not only recover, but thrive. Eight BIPOC writers were commissioned to create new work inspired by priority species of the South Downs – bees, bats, birds and butterflies. These educational resources were developed so that the commissioned writing can inspire children and young people across and around the South Downs to connect with wildlife through creative writing. They provide the foundation for a creative writing competition in Autumn 2025 that will allow individuals and groups to win prizes for their schools. They will also, along with the other rich stores of information and educational resources available on the SDNPA website, be available in the long term to continue to inspire young people in schools and beyond.

Species Stories is funded by the Foyle Foundation, South Downs Trust, South Downs National Park Authority with additional support from Arts Council England (through Writing Our Legacy's National Portfolio Organisation funding (2023–25)).

About these resources

- These resources were created with key stage expectations in mind. Tasks are designed to be clear and achievable, with opportunities for differentiation or extension.
- The lesson plans are detailed but teachers are encouraged to adapt activities according to the needs of their pupils, including the duration of sessions and the order of activities where appropriate e.g.: sentence starters and word banks can help less confident writers
- One poem includes themes of grief. We recommend teachers approach this section sensitively and provide extra space for reflection or discussion if needed.
- Where possible, please consider using digital platforms or using sustainable paper when printing resources to underline the importance of conservation in practice.
- Both Writing Our Legacy and the South Downs National Park Authority share further ideas and resources on their websites, which we encourage you to explore.

This teacher's pack includes:

- Comprehensive lesson plans with National Curriculum links, assessment statements and step-by-step instructions.
- Slide decks complete with an introduction to the project, *Species Stories* extracts, discussion/reflection prompts and information about the competition.
- Supporting worksheets with species facts and resources for pupils.
- Competition poster.



Key Stage: KS3 (ages 11-14)

Duration: 50–60 minutes

Learning objective:

Students will interpret stories about bats, bees, birds and butterflies; learn key facts about these species and create their own writing to explore how storytelling can give voice to the natural world.

Key Concepts & Vocabulary:

Symbolism/symbols, theme, literary devices, figurative language, epistolary, habitat, endangered, conservation.

2023-27 KS3 National Curriculum Links

English: Read critically, analyse how language/structure/form shape meaning, write for effect and purpose, discuss texts with literary terminology.

Science: Interdependence and ecosystems – importance of biodiversity and human impacts on species and habitats.

Resources:

- Teacher presentation/slide deck (project intro, extracts, prompts, competition info)
- Projector
- KS3 species worksheets (facts, resources prompts)
- Writing materials

Assessment Statements

By the end of this session:

- **All children** will be able to identify one fact about each of the four species and describe using five words.
- **Most children** will be able to craft their own response based on their chosen species.
- **Some children** will be able to create an original work about their chosen species that draws on creative prompts, symbolism, themes and literary techniques used in the extracts and factual information.

Session Plan:

- **Introduction** (5 min) - Introduce project via presentation; pose question: “How can stories help protect nature?”
- **Species Reflection** (5 min) - Recall prior knowledge; students write five words about each species on worksheets.
- **Reading & Brief Discussion** (10 min) - Read the short extracts and give students the opportunity to reflect and discuss each one.
- **Creative Writing** (20 min) - Students choose a species, writing form (e.g.: poem, story etc.) and a writing prompt to get them started on their own pieces.
- Optional sharing of work.
- **Wrap-up & Next Steps** (5 min) - Tell students about the competition and point to further resources on worksheets.

Notes:

Suggested support for less confident writers:

- Provide a word bank or sentence starters
- Allow sketches or mind-maps before writing
- Allow students to work in pairs or groups to brainstorm or even produce work.

Extension for early finishers/confident writers:

- Re-draft in a different form (e.g. diary → free verse) or add specific literary devices (e.g.: rhyme)



Further Resources

There are many organisations dedicated to supporting nature in the UK and empowering communities to protect the environment.

To find out more about South Downs National Park Authority and the work they do (including how to fund and/or plan a day trip), check out the website on: www.southdowns.gov.uk

The Wildlife Trusts is a federation of 46 independent organisations all working together to protect nature in the UK. You can find out more here: www.wildlifetrusts.org

Did you enjoy the Species Stories? You can read more about Writing Our Legacy at: <https://writingourlegacy.org.uk>

You can find out more about each of the species below.

Bees

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust at: www.bumblebeeconservation.org

The Bee Friendly Trust at: <https://beefriendlytrust.org>

The British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) at: www.bbka.org.uk

Bees Abroad at: <https://beesabroad.org.uk>

Bats

Bat Conservation Trust at: www.bats.org.uk

National Bat Monitoring Programme at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/>

Birds

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds at: www.rspb.org.uk

People's Trust for Endangered Species at: <https://ptes.org>

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) at: www.bto.org

Butterflies

Butterfly Conservation at: <https://butterfly-conservation.org/our-work>

Bug Life at: www.buglife.org.uk