

Nature Photography Competition Teachers' notes

Who is it for ?

Ages 11-14 / 14-16 yrs

How long will it take?

This activity is ideal as a club activity, with up to 4 sessions practicing nature storytelling through photos, videos and a group competition.

Learning outcomes

The overall aims of the competition are to:

- Increase young people's connection to and knowledge of nature.
- Build skills in creating digital nature content including: research, storytelling, shooting, and editing.
- Amplify young people's voices in nature conservation.

What do you need?

- Interactive whiteboard or projector
- Computer to connect to whiteboard or projector
- Species identification guides/app for species identification
- Access to mobile phones - for smartphone photography (we cannot accept camera photography in this competition)

Session 1: Introduction

- ARK's Nature Photography Competition: Introduction Session 1 Slides (PowerPoint)
- Print ARK's Species ID Activity worksheet
- Print ARK's Storytelling Activity worksheet
- Print ARK's Shooting Photos Activity Cards
- Objects to practice photography / access to outdoor space

Session 2: Competition

- ARK's Nature Photography Competition: Competition Session 2 Slides (PowerPoint)
- Print ARK's Shot Types Worksheet Activity
- Print ARK's Story Research Activity worksheet

Session 3: Feedback & Editing

- ARK's Nature Photography Competition: Feedback Session 3 Slides (PowerPoint)
- Nature Photography Competition - Photo Judging Sheet
- Note: Use a computer room if editing photos in this session

Session 4: Careers in Natural History

- ARK's Nature Photography Competition: Exhibition Session 4 Slides (PowerPoint)
- Careers in natural history info sheet

Summary

This hands-on four-lesson activity will teach students the basics of wildlife filmmaking and photography with the outcome of them entering our Youth Nature Photography Competition. The resources contained in this pack are designed to support young people in connecting with nature in their neighborhood and sharing their stories about it through photographs and short films in up to four sessions:

- 1 Session 1: Introduction** - Species identification, Storytelling, Shooting Photos & Film.
- 2 Session 2: Preparing Your Entry** - Key Competition Rules, Shooting photos, Finding and Telling your story, Safety & Ethics.
- 3 Session 3: Feedback & Editing** - Peer feedback, Edit photos.
- 4 Session 4: Careers in Natural History** - Learn about careers with Natural history, television, conservation and other green careers.

How to run sessions

Read through the teachers' notes to make sure you understand the activities for each session. These activities can be tailored to your resourcing - for example session 3 (feedback & editing) could be optional. There is deliberate repetition of some resource e.g. editing and storytelling to prompt students.

Session 1: Introduction

Download: ARK's Nature Photography Competition: Introduction Session 1 Slides.

Print: Activity Worksheets:

- ARK's Species ID Activity Worksheet
- ARK's Storytelling Activity Worksheet
- ARK's Shooting Photos and Films Activity Cards - print double sided and cut to create two sets of 9 double sided cards (18 total).

Bring: Objects to practice photography. Ideally of nature - e.g. plants, feathers. Or have access to an outdoor space where students can be supervised.

A) Species ID: Talk through the Introduction Session slides, starting with 'Finding nature'. Give students the Species ID Activity worksheet and encourage them to use ID technology on their phones/websites to identify each species to their Latin name. Discuss the pros and cons of different methods of identifying species and how to ensure accurate identifications.

B) Nature Storytelling: Encourage students to reflect on what they think makes a good story. Hand out Storytelling Worksheet and ask students to complete exercises. Feedback to discuss their answers as a group. Finish this section with a Think-Pair-Share of different events in nature and how they might fit into different film genres.

C) Shooting Photos and Films: If possible, challenge students to take a photo of an object in the room/ outside. Ask students to reflect on what they think makes a good photo. In pairs, hand out the printed and cut Shooting Photos & Films Activity Cards. There should be 9 double-sided cards for Shooting Photos. Ask students to consider which they think is most important and then share their thoughts with the group. Ask students to re-take their first image and lead a discussion on how they have improved from the first photo. Introduce free editing software.

Session 2: Preparing Your Entry

Download: ARK's Nature Photography Preparing Your Entry Session 2 Slides (PowerPoint).

Print: Activity Worksheets:

- ARK's Nature Photography Competition - Story Research Worksheet
- ARK's Nature Photography Competition - Shot Types Worksheet

Why connect with nature: Discuss why connecting with nature is important and how film and photography can be used to connect wider audiences with nature.

Key Competition Rules: entries must:

- Correctly identify at least one species
- Be taken on a smartphone
- Be of wild species only, no humans
- Be accompanied by a 200-word backstory.
- Winners will be judged by set criteria

Photo Shots: hand out the 'Shot types worksheet'. Ask students to match the type of shot to each image. Discuss with students the pros and cons of each shot.

Finding & Telling your story: discuss the power of storytelling and tips on how to find stories in nature. Highlight that research is crucial in idea generation and ensuring the accuracy of stories. Discuss how photos of nature can tell a story with examples.

Story Research: hand out the 'Story Research Worksheet' and challenge students to research the story behind a chosen species they care about or interact with. Ask students to share their work with the group if they are happy to.

Ethics: outline safety requirements whilst taking photos and films of nature, and the importance of leaving nature untouched.

Over to you: finish this session by instructing students to take a photo or film of nature by the next session. Students can either judge their own or each others' work in Session 3 (Feedback and Editing). If peer-marking then ask students to email their photos so that they can be collated.

Session 3: Feedback & Editing

If editing photos in this session, book a computer room.

Download: ARK's Nature Photography Competition: Feedback & Editing Session 3 Slides.

Print: Judging sheets, or set up a casual scoring system for each category, e.g. with whiteboards.

Discuss: Ask students to share their draft entries for the competition. They should have a photo already that they can share and discuss.

Judge: Students can then practice applying the judging criteria to their own work and/or others' work before submitting to the ARK competition.

Edit: Allow some time in this session to edit photos in a computer room. Talk through tips for photo editing or allow time to watch videos for training on different free products.

Session 4: Careers in Natural History

Download: ARK's Nature Photography Competition: Careers in Natural History Session 4 Slides.

Print: Careers in Natural History info sheets- one per table to encourage group discussion.

Discuss: Ask students to identify roles within the Natural History/ Conservation sector which they like - and come up with a list of skills they would need to do it.

Next steps: Use the CareerPilot links to browse careers related to nature and media.

Ask students to **submit** their **nature photograph** along with a short paragraph to the **Wildscreen ARK Youth Nature Photo Competition**, submission form can be found here www.wildscreen.org/ark