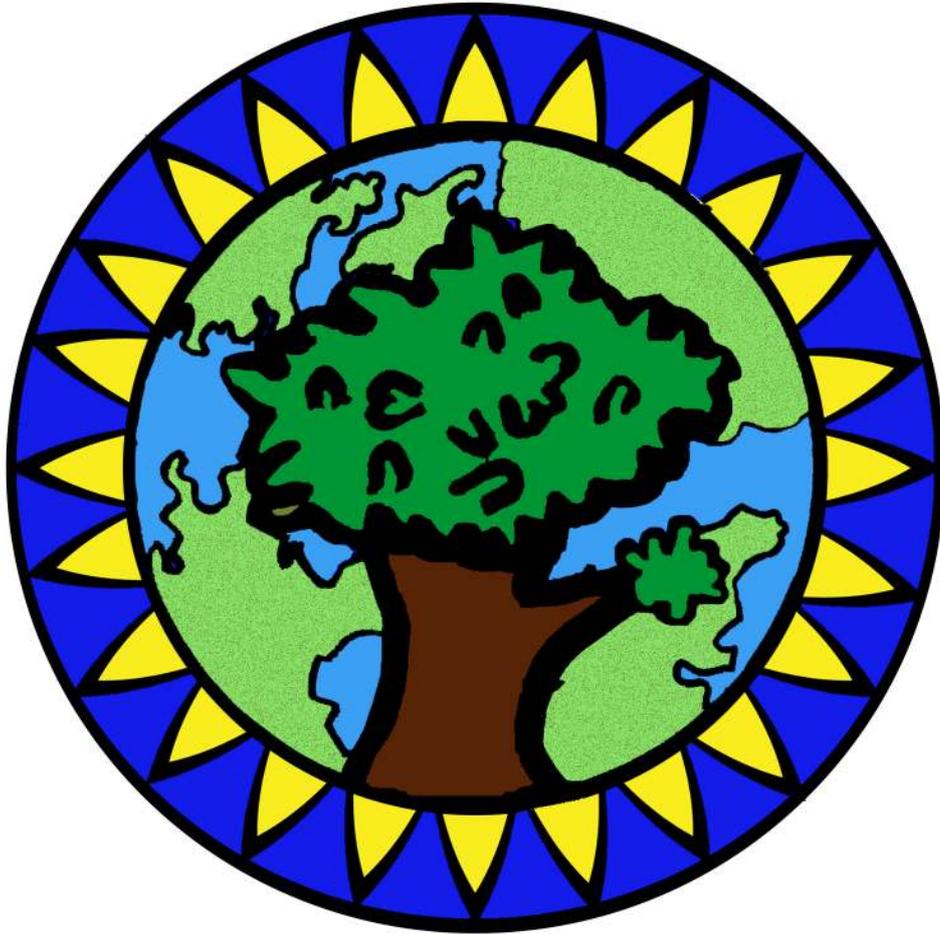


Branch Out World



Picture Book Explorers
Series 1 – The British Isles

Floss

The **Picture Book Explorers** series is written primarily for use by Home Educating families but it will be useful for any parent who wishes to support their child's learning whether they attend school or not. The intended age range is approximately 5 to 9 years but can easily be adapted for older or younger siblings accordingly. This helps to keep Home Education a truly family experience.

This PDF file refers to a single male child throughout. I use this convention because it is just a shorter and easier way to write this material. It by no means is meant to imply that this material is aimed at boys only, or at one child families. It's not. It's equally as relevant to girls as to boys and can be used in family groups of siblings of mixed ages and abilities with differing interests.

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All rights reserved. Not for resale.

This material is not endorsed either by the author or the publisher of the picture book being explored. This unit is put together in the hope that other families will enjoy the learning journey that the picture book inspires.

Branch Out World's 'Picture Book Explorers' are designed to encourage the love of learning in children by making use of one of the most treasured family times - sharing a book. Reading aloud to children brings a closeness between parent and child that helps to enhance the learning experience, making children more receptive and eager to learn. Learning then becomes something to look forward to and enjoy - hopefully, making beautiful memories for the future.

The premise is a simple one. A particular picture book is read every day for five days and then followed up by activities chosen from a suggested selection. There are five different sections of activities, one for each day you read the book. Preferably, this will take place on five consecutive days, but, if this is not possible, your child will still remain familiar with the story and get to know it in more depth because you read the book every time you sit down to explore together. You may find you have to extend the time frame for some reason, perhaps because of family commitments, or perhaps because your child has shown a particular interest in one, or more, aspects of the exploration. If this is the case, you may want to take a break from the book for a day or two while you look at certain topics in more detail, or, alternatively, you can make a note of your child's interests so that when you have finished the five sections, you and your child can **Branch Out** into further explorations of your own.

For a young child, one activity in each section may be enough, or if you have more than one child, they may each want to complete a different activity. An older child may want to do all the suggested activities in a section. Follow your child's lead in this, don't try to force him to do everything in each section if he doesn't want to. Remember, the aim is to maintain a love of learning.

Don't worry if you don't do all the activities in your five days of reading the book, you can explore each book again and again, as long as you make sure you keep a copy of this file.

A word of warning - from personal experience, keep up the momentum as best as you can. Too long a break during an exploration can result in your child's loss of interest in that particular book. If this happens, it may be best to leave it for a few weeks then come back to it, starting by reviewing briefly any of the completed sections again.

Before you start Series 1

- Get a library ticket
- Buy/print a map of the British Isles
- Collect magazine/newspaper photos of places of interest in the UK (travel brochures are good for this)
- Decide how you want to preserve a record of your child's written/art work and buy the appropriate stationery (see below)
- Start collecting modelling & art materials, glue, paint etc

How to record your child's work

You may want to keep a record of your child's learning journey with **Picture Book Explorers**. This can be done in a number of different ways, depending on how you use the Series.

- If your explorations are mainly discussion-based, you can keep a diary/blog of the topics you've discussed and the activities you've done together
- If you are only going to use **Picture Book Explorers** as a one-off, or very occasionally, a lapbook may be a fun way for your child to keep a log of individual exploration journeys.
- Poster-making is another effective way of recording explorations. You can add to this as part of your daily activities, or assemble the poster at the end of the exploration.
- If you are going to work your way through a complete series, it may be worth keeping a logbook of your explorations in a scrapbook or
- on A4 paper kept in a ring-binder, either with 5 subject dividers (one for each day), or with dividers for each book you explore rather than for the daily sections. You will also need page protectors, hole re-enforcers and card-stock.
- An older child may like a spiral-bound notebook to use as a logbook, with five colour-coded subject sections, again, one for each day. (I've bought these in pound-shops and at Lidl).
- Take PLENTY of photos, these can be added to any of the above logbooks
- Be your child's scribe when necessary. If the activities call for written work, let your child dictate his answers to you, ensuring that you insert punctuation as necessary. For younger children, or those not yet writing independently, this can be put straight into his logbook. Your older child may want to copy it out again for himself, either by hand or using a computer before putting it in his logbook. If older children are doing their own writing, encourage them to write their answers out in rough first so that they can concentrate more on the content first, spelling and punctuation later. Again, they can also use a computer or handwrite their final copy.

Before you start exploring

- Read through the weeks suggested activities
- Decide which activities you want to do with your child and gather all the necessary materials
- Collect together any go-along books/CDs/DVDs
- Gather together any toys/games/go-alongs which may be relevant to the story and put them in a container that is kept just for explorations.

The Daily Sections

Each exploration is divided into five sections, each section covering different subject areas.

- **Day 1 - *Exploring the Setting*** - when and where

This section focuses on history and geography, as well as looking at the themes presented in the book.

- **Day 2 - *Exploring the Words***

This section looks at literary devices and sometimes grammar, as well as providing opportunities for creative writing.

- **Day 3 - *Exploring the Pictures***

This section looks at the illustrations in more detail and suggests ways for your child to create their own artwork.

- **Day 4 - *Exploring Science***

This section looks at scientific topics that come up in the book - from animal studies to hands-on experiments.

- **Day 5 - *Exploring Maths, Crafts and More***

Finally, in this section, your child will lightly touch on maths activities in a way that relates to the story, when applicable. Maths will also often come into the suggested craft activities and recipes intended to bring a fun ending to your exploration journey.

Let's Explore....

Floss by Kim Lewis (1992) Walker Books Ltd
ISBN: 0-7445-2071-1

Go-along Books and Films

This is just a small selection. Visit your local library and see what others you can find.

Just like Floss by Kim Lewis ISBN: 0744572878

The Shepherd Boy by Kim Lewis ISBN: 0744517621

Hometown History Newcastle by Peter Hepplethwaite ISBN: 1849930244

Children's History of Northumberland by Keith Gregson ISBN: 1849932336

Woolly Jumper: The story of Wool by Meredith Hooper ISBN: 0744583004

Shaun the Sheep DVD by Aardman Productions

Mist: Sheepdog Tales DVD from Channel 5 TV

Extra supplies you will need:

Day 1

1. Travel brochure of Northumberland

At time of writing, these are available from

<http://www.visitnorthumberland.com/brochures>

Day 2

Day 3

2. Family photo album
3. Sepia or brown colouring pencil

Day 4

4. Two flat trays, kitchen towel, cotton wool, cress seed
5. Black and white plasticene

Day 5

6. A football
7. Black pipe-cleaners, white or cream ball of wool, googly eyes
8. Cooking ingredients

Story Summary:

The book tells the story of a sheep dog who starts life in the city and is taken to a family farm where she has to learn to work.

The sheep in the book and on the author's real-life farm are Blackface ewes. Blackface is a breed of sheep. It is the most numerous breed in the British Isles. They have either completely black, or black and white faces and legs. They all have horns. There is no black wool in the fleeces. The fleeces are used either for spinning to make carpets or for stuffing mattresses depending on the quality of the wool. Their size can vary from approximately 45 - 70 kg/ 100 - 155 lbs being determined by the landscape in which they are raised.

There are two mini-books in the Appendix to add to the logbook. These can either be printed out on white paper so that your child can colour in the text and illustration, or they can be printed on to coloured paper to add variety to your child's logbook.

Make model sheep from black and white plasticene.

Farms & Farming

In Britain, there are two distinct types of farming - arable and pastoral.

Arable farming is the growing of food in land that has been ploughed.

Pastoral farming is the raising of livestock in grass pastures.

The regional landscape plays a large part in a farmer's decision of which type of farm to run. Pastoral farming takes place in hilly regions where there is a lot of rainfall, predominantly in the north of England. Arable farming is mostly found in the South of England; the climate is drier and the soil is deeper and the landscape is flatter.

Which type of farming is most common in your region? Discuss with your child how your local landscape affects this?

You can do a simple experiment with your child to show how much easier it is to reap crops grown on flat land. You will need some cress seed, two flat oblong containers (clean, empty food packaging will do), some cotton wool and some paper kitchen towel and some water. Ensure that the trays don't dry out while the cress is growing.

Carefully fold the paper kitchen towel so that it lies flat in one of the trays.

Pour some water on the towel so that it is soaked but not flooded.

Sprinkle the cress seed on the towel as evenly as possible. The seed could also be laid in rows, just as a farmer plants his fields in rows.

Wet the cotton wool and don't squeeze it.

In the second tray, make a lumpy mound of the wet cotton wool, arranged so that the bottom of the tray is covered.

Sprinkle the cress seed on the cotton wool as evenly as possible.

It should be much harder to get the seed to spread evenly this time, and nearly impossible to get straight rows.

Explain to your child that rocky, uneven, hilly landscapes make it harder for a farmer to plant his seeds in rows, especially with modern mechanised methods of farming. Tractors need flat fields to be able to plough straight lines.

When the cress seeds have grown, if possible, cut the 'crop' with scissors. How many cuts does it take to cut the cress in each tray? Which tray is the easiest to

Sheep Mini-books

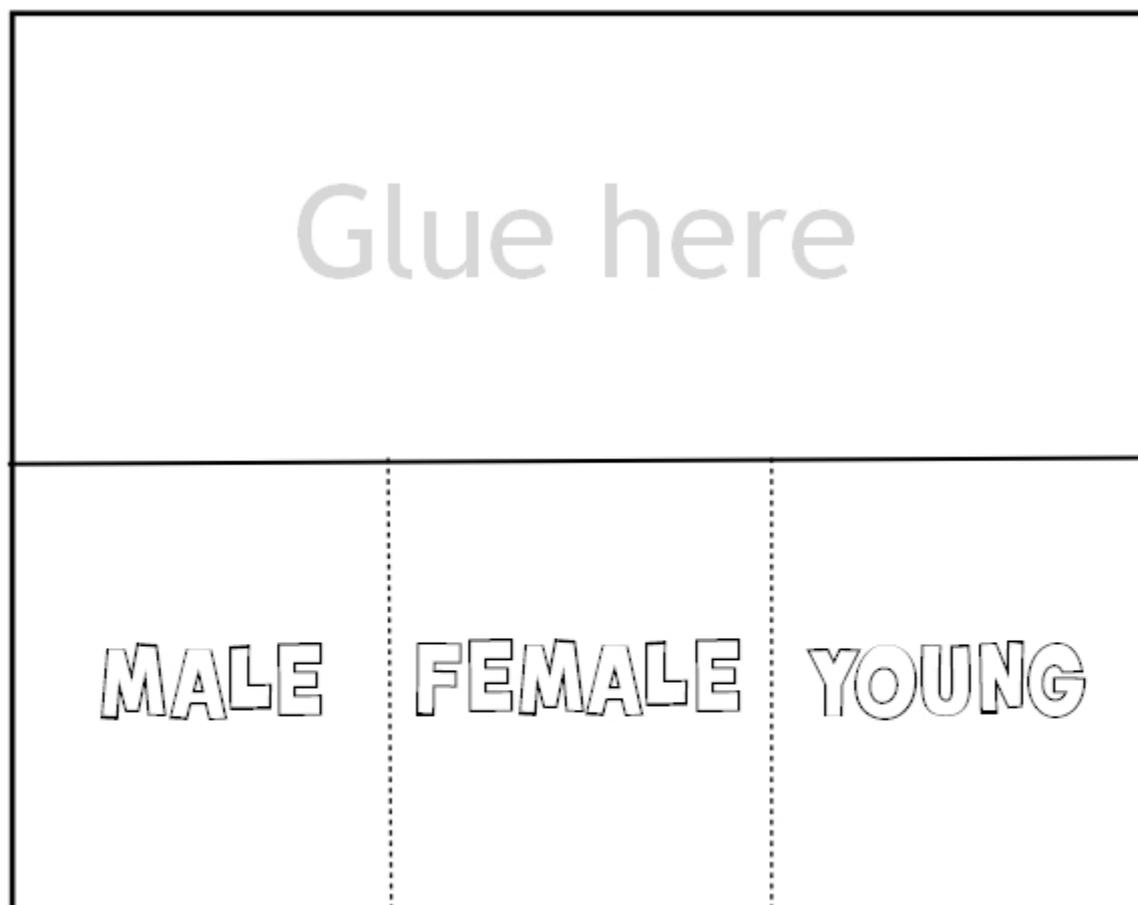
Cut out the main mini-book piece.

If your child is not going to write his answers in the mini-book, also cut out the 3 answer pieces.

Fold along the horizontal line so that the text is on the front cover of the book.

Cut along the dotted lines to create 3 flip-ups.

Now your child can write or stick his answers into the mini-book to complete it.

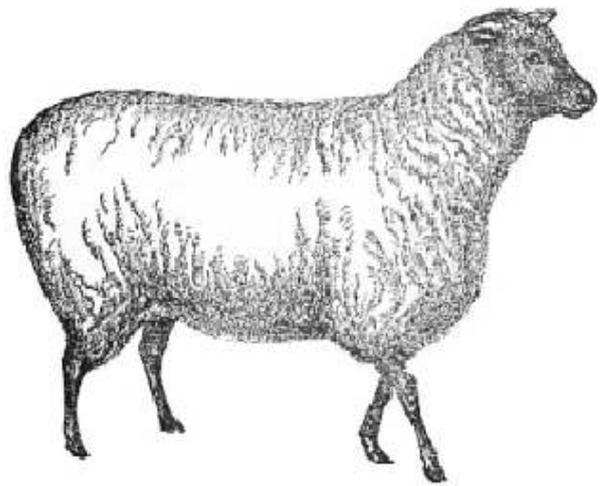


Cut out mini-book in one piece.

Fold along central vertical line so that the text is on the front cover.

Fill with sheep facts and/or pictures.

Glue
Here



SHEEP

Thank you for purchasing this
Picture Book Explorers unit by **Branch Out World**
I hope you and your child have enjoyed your exploration
and learnt a few things along the way.

I am always looking to improve my products to give
customers more of what they want. Your feedback is
always welcome. My aim is to help you facilitate your
child's learning journey in a fun and positive way whilst
creating happy memories together.

If you have any questions, or suggestions for future
units, please don't hesitate to contact me by email at
branchoutworld@hotmail.co.uk

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