

# Dam Building



In this section you will find a teacher's introduction which includes background information on the building skills of a beaver, a suggested session, additional activity ideas, a resources needed list and a worksheet to help your students to record results and ideas.

**Dam Building Teacher Introduction**

**Dam Building Worksheet**

# Dam Building



Beavers live in slow moving, fresh water. If there is not a suitable area they will change one to suit themselves, much like humans.

To do this they build structures called dams, these cause water to build up but still allow a slow flow keeping the water moving so that it doesn't stagnate. In doing this they not only create the right habitat for themselves but also for a wide variety of different animals including insects, birds and mammals.

The higher water level also helps to cover the entrance to their home (lodge) so that no predators can get in.

Beavers build using the things that are around them, mainly branches and mud.

## **Suggested session:**

- Introduction about why beavers build dams.
- In smaller groups the students are given some sticks and they build a dam just like a beaver.
- After the allotted building time is up each group brings the completed dam to the front.
- Each dam is tested and the times recorded.
- Next the students are given a variety of building materials and they get to use whatever they like to build a dam.
- After the allotted building time is up each group brings the dam to the front.
- The students now predict which dam they think will be the best, and record this on the work sheet.
- Test each dam by pouring water into one side of the tray and note if the water gets through.
- Students now evaluate their own dam by answering the questions on the work sheet, was it successful? What changes could be made?
- Each student now has the opportunity to design the perfect dam.

## **Additional activities:**

- Students can now build other animal structures eg. nests, beaver lodges.
- This activity links well with habitats and keystone species activities so students can find out what happens when a dam is built.

## **Resources:**

- Tray for building in, water, paper, cardboard, modelling clay, material/cloth, string, plastic, wood..... any items can be used, whatever you can get hold of
- Dam building work sheet

# Dam Building



Which dam do you think will be the best? \_\_\_\_\_

Was your prediction right? Yes  No

Did your dam work? Yes  No

How could you make your dam better?

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What would you use to build the perfect dam?

Write all of your materials in the box below and explain why you have chosen them.