

# EDUCATION

(2009)  
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## YOU NEED

- A net (you can make one with a piece of wire and the foot of a pair of tights)
- Jam jars
- Flat inspection trays (old lunch boxes – white is best)
- A hand lens is very useful for examining the small animals close up.

## WEAR

Wellington boots or old shoes with non-slip soles

## FIND

A small pond (it does not need to be big or deep – you will still find plenty of life there)

1. Approach your pond very quietly and slowly. You never know what animal life might be visible at the water's edge. There could be a fox or stoat drinking or a heron fishing.
2. As you get nearer the edge of the pond look for the tracks of birds or animals on the muddy shore.
3. Go very slowly as you near the water itself so that the sudden sight of your reflection and the vibrations from your footsteps do not frighten away tadpoles, beetles and small fish from the shallow water.
4. Morning and early afternoon are probably the best times for pond dipping as with the warmth of the sun the small creatures are more active and there is plenty of light for you to study them. Select one area of the pond to dip. Do not disturb too much of the surrounding vegetation.
5. Sweep your net across the pond and empty it into the flat tray which has some pond water in it. The trays should be deep enough for the animals to move about in.
6. If you have a few flat trays you can put different animals in different trays.
7. Do not leave the trays in hot sun.
8. As you dip you will find that different animals you find live in different parts of the pond: on the surface

e.g. pond skaters; hanging just below the surface  
 e.g. mosquito larva, water beetles; swimming e.g. sticklebacks, great diving beetles; on the pond weed  
 e.g. pond snails; on the pond floor under stones e.g. caddis larva, dragonfly/nymph.

9. You can collect from ponds all the year round but be very careful when there is ice covering the pond.

**REMEMBER** - Always put the animals back into the pond when you have finished looking at them. Take great care when near water. Do not damage trees or plants surrounding the water's edge. Do not go alone and always tell someone where you are going.

