



SUMMER



LEARNING PACK



59 fun (and educational!) things to do in the summer holidays



Summer holidays – sorted!

Already dreading the thought of six long weeks of summer holidays, punctuated only by sibling squabbles, cries of “I’m bored” and a visible emptying of your wallet? Panic not! Whether you’re at home, on holiday or just out and about locally, this fantastic activity pack will keep boredom at bay and make sure their minds stay active, so they start back in September ready to tackle the new school year with confidence.

Research consistently shows that children who don’t stay mentally alert during the summer tend to lose up to a third of what they’ve learned during the academic year. We’re not talking daily spelling tests and compulsory reading practice – this pack is full of 119 easy, boredom-busting activities your kids will enjoy so much they won’t even realise they’re learning. From at-home activities to hone their maths skills and travel games that boost creativity, there are four things to do every single day of the six-week holidays.

Educational at-home activities... for all ages

It is possible to stay at home and keep your children entertained, without resorting to the TV or games console. With a little bit of planning, your kids can learn as much as they do at school, without even leaving the living room! And better still, they won’t guess it’s helping beat the summer brain drain, too.

Who needs dough?

Think you need plenty of dough to keep children amused? You do! Playdough is easy and cheap to make and can provide hours of entertainment, while improving their creativity, imagination and manual dexterity. To make the dough you need a cup of plain flour, two teaspoons of cream of tartar, a cup of water, half a cup of salt, a tablespoon of cooking oil and food colouring. Children can help combine all of the ingredients, then you cook the mixture in a saucepan on a low heat, stirring continuously for a few minutes, until it takes on a doughy texture. Let younger children use the dough to make interesting creations – encourage them by suggesting they make an animal, a mode of transport or perhaps their favourite food. Older children can play 3D Pictionary, where one person makes a model and everyone else tries to guess what they’re making. Make sure you keep your dough in an airtight box in the fridge between play sessions.

Watch the birdie

Imagine your children quietly looking out of the window. No, we’re not joking! If you have a garden, assign half an hour every day to be ‘birdwatching time’ – encourage birds using feeders or scattered seeds – and peace will be yours. Set your kids up with notepads, pencils and perhaps cameras, and ask them to note down any bird they see; great for their observation skills. Younger children can name bird colours and draw pictures, while older ones can try to identify the birds they see in reference books. Making a chart to record the number and types of birds seen is great maths and designs practice. Visit www.rspb.or.uk or www.birdwatchersdigest.com for tips.



Smooth operator

Struggle to get them to eat one-a-day, let alone five? Smoothies are a delicious summer treat and the perfect way to get more fruit into your children. Provide recipes for your child to choose from plus a big bowl of fruit, any other ingredients you require like yoghurt, ice or fruit juice and a blender. Recipes will help their reading skills and following the instructions is a great lesson in sequencing. Encourage your kids to make up their own creations, too. It can even be a competition, with dad/gran/a neighbour as chief judge, and the winning recipe written out for the next time.

How does your garden grow?

Growing things is always a hit, and it's an excellent hands-on way to explore biology. Cultivating herbs is especially good, as you can grow them either in the garden or an indoor pot. It's also really satisfying for children to see something they've grown used in cooking a family meal. All you need is a planting area or pot, compost, gardening tools and herb plants or seeds. Older children can decorate the pot and keep a written or photo diary of the growth of their plants while younger children with shorter attention spans may prefer to grow cress, which is ready in a matter of days.

Whatever the weather

According to folklore, the weather on the 15th July (St Swithin's Day) will continue for the next 40 days. Challenge your kids to put this to the test by creating their own weather station. Notepads, clipboards and pencils can be used to devise a weather-recording chart, which will help their design and logic skills. An empty drinks bottle and funnel can be used as a rain gauge – measure the water in a measuring jug for some hands-on science. A simple home-made flag or wind sock can teach them about wind direction and reading a thermometer will help kids to understand temperature. Budding actors may like to put it all together to produce a mini-weather report and 'present' their own forecast.

Dig it

The Festival of British Archaeology offers family-friendly events all over Britain (visit <http://www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk/>). It's a good way to introduce your children to how archaeologists discover things about people from the past by digging up artefacts and using them as clues. Introduce the idea of a 'time capsule' and provide your children with a box for objects that they think will inform people in the future about how we live today. They might want to include a letter too. They'll find themselves getting excited about concepts relating to history without even realising it.

Where are we going today?

The perfect holiday activity, you can repeat this time and time again. Let your children select a country on the world map and then designate the whole day as, for example, 'France Day'. Encourage them to use the internet or reference books (ICT and literacy skills at the ready) to find out more about the country, including where it is – a boost for their geography knowledge. They could draw and colour in the nation's flag or create the country's national costume from dressing-up clothes, then learn a few words in the language of that country ("hello", "goodbye", "please" and "thank you" are nice and simple). If you have time, go to the supermarket and help your children select foods from that country to complete their celebrations.



Mask the boredom

Masks are a doubly fun way to keep your children occupied as they get to enjoy making them, then playing with them afterwards. Find some card (not too thick) and either lolly sticks or a length of elastic for them to hold/wear their masks. Glitter, stickers, paint or crayons can all be good for mask decorating, or you could give them a theme to work to – perhaps animals or their favourite TV character or superhero. Make sure you help littlies with any cutting, especially tricky bits like the eyes. Designing their mask will work on your children's creative skills, while making it will hone in on fine motor skills and of course playing with it can boost their imagination.

Five rainy day delights

1 Making music

Unless you have a headache, making and enjoying music is an all-round winner! It helps your children improve their musical ability, works on their rhythm – which is linked to maths and counting skills – and can even help release tension and restore calm. Challenge your children to come up with a home-made musical instrument band using anything in the house. For examples, glass containers of the same size and shape filled with varying amounts of water create different notes when gently struck; blowing over the top of plastic bottles produces low notes; tubs filled with dried pulses make good shakers; empty tin cans make soft chiming noises when hit with pencils and rubber bands strung over a tissue box create a makeshift guitar.

2 We are family

At home together for six weeks, you'd think you'd know each other inside out – but how much do your children really know about you? A family quiz is the solution. Get your kids to compile questions (ideal for honing their literacy skills and social relationships). Questions can include things like, "What's Peter's favourite flavour of ice cream?" and "What colour was Daddy's first ever car?" Making it a multiple-choice quiz will encourage your children to think logically and strategically as they attempt to come up with other plausible answers.

3 Birthday fun

If there's a family birthday coming up, the holidays are a good excuse to make something special, improving creativity along the way. Cards are a good starting point – either decorate with cut outs from old magazines or perhaps by drawing or painting a picture of the recipient. If there isn't an imminent birthday, your child could still make a postcard for a relative, perhaps drawing a picture of something you've done that week. Older children can write a message and then head out to buy a stamp and post it. Creativity is good for your children's mental development, their self-esteem and self expression.

4 Play date

Encourage their inner Shakespeare by getting them to write, rehearse and perform their own original play. They'll need to decide what sort of play to write (murder mystery, family drama, comedy etc) and create a script. This is a really fun way to work on literacy skills. Creative skills can also come into play here in designing and acquiring a set, prop and



costumes. Encourage them to make a real event of it by producing programmes, selling tickets and making popcorn for the audience. This project can last for several days and is great for firing children's imaginations and helping them work together cooperatively. Younger children can have fun dressing up and creating characters, then just make up a script off the top of their heads.

5 Cut and paste

Scrapbooking can absorb children of all ages for hours. Simply provide an empty scrap book or plain paper to bind into a book later. Give them a big stack of old magazines, fliers and catalogues along with child-safe scissors and some glue. Then all they need is a theme – for example, suggest an alphabet scrap book by drawing a large letter in the centre of each page and asking them to surround it with cut outs starting with that letter (perfect for improving their phonics). Other ideas include drawing people and sticking outfits on them, making funny faces using cut-out features or making a 'my favourite things' collage. Scrapbooking promotes your child's fine motor skills while teaching them to plan and execute a project.

Seven ways to get creative with day-to-day chores

You haven't put a wash on in days, can't remember the last time you hoovered and as for those plans to give the spare room a lick of paint? Forget it! If having your kids home from school is eating into your housework-time so much that the place is starting to resemble a bomb site, read on.

1 Design-a-sandwich

Who said you had to be the one to make lunch every day? This is a great way to get your children thinking about different foods and how they taste together, while also extending their vocabulary. The trick is to start long before lunchtime, so hungry tummies don't lead to meltdowns! Ask your children to think of their favourite ingredients (you may want to show them the contents of the fridge first, so a shopping trip isn't required) then get them to decide which two or three would go best in a sandwich. Older children could write their sandwich recipe down. Lastly set them to work preparing their 'designer' sandwiches – if the ingredients aren't too bizarre you could even get them to make yours, too.

2 Selling point

Got a garage, attic or spare room littered with unwanted stuff? Get your children to organise a car boot or garage sale. They should start by collecting together unwanted items like clothes they've grown out of, unwanted books, toys, games and CDs. This activity is packed with learning opportunities – from the teamwork required to collect items to numeracy and reasoning when pricing them up, and social and negotiation skills when selling – plus the sheer physical effort of organising it all.



3 Supermarket sweep

A trip round Tesco can be as education as a full day at school, honest! Start by getting older children to help you write your shopping list – dictate what you need, then check the spelling together and make sure nothing's missing. That's literacy done for the day! Once you're at the shops, give your children a portion of the list and ask them to find their items. Perhaps ask them to find half of the fruit and veg you need, so you can keep an eye on them while still testing their problem-solving and reading skills. Lastly get them to tick items off their list as you load them onto the conveyor belt and, if you're paying cash, put them in charge of counting out the money and checking the change – a tick in the maths box.

4 Recycling, sorted

A great way to up their environmental knowledge and green credentials while getting a weekly chore done for you! Start by chatting to your kids about recycling, how it works and why it's so important (www.recyclenow.com/ can help). Then let them loose on the recycling pile! Ask them to sort it into paper, cardboard, glass, tins, plastic etc. You can also send them on a home hunt to root out any old newspapers, magazines and other recyclables lying around. Lastly get your little eco warriors to put their haul into the right bins or, if you don't have kerbside collections, take them to the local recycling centre and task them with putting each object in the right place. It's a good idea to have a quick look through before you allow them to start putting things in big bins, in case they've deemed your brand new novel recyclable!

5 Doing the washing

Maths, sorting and problem-solving can all be honed by getting your kids involved in wash day. Kids of all ages can help sort the wash pile into whites, colours and darks. You could also ask them to pick out certain delicate materials, such as silks or wools. Next get them to load the machine (without over-filling!), measure detergent into the tray and set it. Sunshine permitting, you could also get their help hanging clothes out to dry – even smaller children can sort the washing and pass towels, T-shirts or shorts as you ask for them.

6 Home help

Ok, so you might not want to trust your kids to dust the antiques, but that doesn't mean all cleaning is out of bounds. Younger children can help sweep the floor, older kids will love the challenge of seeing who can tidy a whole room first and any child can help strip dirty sheets off the bed. Encourage older children to take responsibility and problem-solve by drawing up a chart of weekly jobs, from tidying-up toys to making the bed, and asking them to tick off each task as they've completed it, ensuring they're all done by the end of the week.

7 Home car wash

Ok, so this may be a bit of a ploy to get your kids doing your dirty work but it'll certainly keep them occupied! Provide buckets of soapy water and sponges and let them loose (it may be best to restrict use of the hose, or supervise this bit of the operation!). They'll enjoy the challenge of getting every scrap of dirt off the car and you could set them tasks, such as cleaning certain sections within a minute. It's great for teamwork and manual dexterity, and a small treat at the end will make a nice reward.



In the garden

Desperate to get the kids out from under your feet but not sure how to keep them entertained outside for longer than five minutes? Being outdoors reveals a whole new space, where problem-solving skills can be honed, resourcefulness boosted and inventiveness let loose. And for children who struggle with classroom-based learning, exploring the garden could be the perfect way to improve their maths, science or literacy skills without them even noticing.

We're going on a bug hunt

From butterflies to caterpillars, worms to snails, creepy crawlies abound in the garden and hunting them is the most fun biology lesson your children can have. An easy starting point is listing some bugs you hope to find – perhaps look in a book with your child to identify their favourites – then venturing outdoors and seeing how many you can tick off the list, plus how many new ones you discover. Littlies might like to paint a picture of their favourite bug, while older kids could observe them going about their daily business, take some pictures and then write about how they move and what they do. All you really need for bug hunting is your children and some insects, but a magnifying glass, notebook, pencil and jam jar can help make it more fun.

Back to the old school

Even a tiny garden can be used to help children hone physical skills such as throwing, catching, passing, kicking and aiming. Tried and tested games like catch or football help children with their balance and coordination, while Frisbees present a bigger challenge. If you want to add in some maths work, try playing 100. One person uses a tennis racket to hit a ball up in the air. As it starts to fall again, everyone shouts a number between one and 100 (shrink the number for younger children). Whoever catches the ball wins that number of points – or has them deducted if they miss. The first to 100 wins.

Wacky races

Organise a mini-athletes tournament, great for burning off pent-up energy and honing their physical skills at the same time. You don't need specialist equipment; just get them to have running, jumping, skipping, hopping or rolling races – either against each other or the clock. It's a fun, competitive way to spend an afternoon, not to mention great exercise! For older kids, you could build a giant assault course using everyday objects – bin bags as sacks, chairs to crawl under and bricks as stepping stones.

Home from home

Girls and boys, little and big, all children love building secret hideouts... and all parents love the peace and quiet while they're doing it! All you need to do is provide the building materials – anything from old cardboard boxes, blankets and rugs to cushions, chairs and old tree branches can help fire up your children's imagination as they build an outdoor den. It's a great construction and problem-solving activity and will keep little hands occupied for hours. Once the den is built, encourage them to set up their own 'home' with books, posters, tea sets and teddies.



The all-time classic

You've played it, your grandparents have played it and your kids will love playing it, too. Hide 'n' seek is a classic outdoor game that children will never get bored of. And it helps with everything from their investigational skills to counting, logic skills to team working. If you want to shake things up, play 'hide the object'. Whoever is 'it' hides a small object – traditionally a thimble – and the other players have to find it. For another new take, try challenging your children to a game of Find 'n' Seek, where they have a certain amount of time to find something smooth, prickly, flat, round, alive, dead, natural etc.

ON THE MOVE

10 ways to take the tedium out of travelling

Whether it's going on your summer hols to Cornwall, up to Scotland to visit relatives or just to the beach for the day, you'll need to be well-equipped if you want to keep the inevitable "are we nearly there yet?" to a minimum. These travel-friendly tricks will keep your children occupied, while making sure their minds are still ticking over.

1 Travel bingo

Make some bingo cards in advance, including pictures of things you're likely to see on your journey. For older children, you can just write the words. Easy things to look for include a pylon, a red car, a white lorry, a fire engine, a bus or a telegraph pole. If your children are older, you can include trickier to spot objects. Once you're on the road, get your children to cross off objects as they spot them. The winner is the first with a full-house; it helps to have a small prize handy!

2 Animal alphabet

If you're travelling in the countryside, get your children to write down the animals they spot and try and sort them into alphabetical order. If your children are too young to write, you could write a list of animals you're likely to see and get them to cross them off as they spot them. That's observation, writing and the natural world covered for the day, then!

3 Story bag

A little prep can go a long way! If you have time before you set off, put together a draw-string bag full of various objects; toys, a key, a box, a beaker etc. Players have to pull out objects in turn and tell a story about that object. So one child might pull out the key and say: "Once upon a time a small child found a large key". Then player two, on pulling out the box, might say: "The small child happened upon a box... will the key open the box?" and so on, making up the story using the props. Brilliant for their language and sentence-construction skills.

4 Sew happy

Sewing is perfect for children. Physically, the fine motor skills involved helps with writing and mentally, it's extremely therapeutic – nothing relieves the boredom of a long



motorway journey like getting engrossed in some cross stitch. Even boys can be persuaded if the pattern is right! Get them started learning basic cross stitches, threading a needle and tying knots at home, when you're on hand to help. It's a good idea to stick to simple patterns in the car, so they're not too hampered by bumps.

5 Alphabet advance

The ultimate way to boost alphabet skills and work on their writing on the go. Prepare a sheet of paper (using a stiff notebook can make it easier to write on the move) for each player with the letters of the alphabet and a blank line next to each. Your children have to write something they spot that begins with that letter on each line. For older kids you can make it harder by saying they have to spot things in alphabetical order.

6 Post-it people

Not just a game for grown-up dinner parties! On Post-it notes, write the names of famous people your children will know or, for younger children, use family members or their favourite characters. Each player sticks a Post-it on their forehead then takes it in turn to ask questions about their character to try and decipher who they are. It's a great entertainer and will sneakily hone their language and reasoning skills, too.

7 Tally ho

All kids love to do surveys – especially if you add a competitive element – and, in doing so, they'll be working on everything from their observation to maths and counting. Take along some clip boards and paper, and pre-draw columns for certain colours and types of vehicles that your children can tally up as they go along. At the end of the game, get them to add up how many they've seen to determine the winner.

8 Adding the signs

Probably better suited to slightly older children, this game is the definition of maths on the move. Take some pads and pens and, when passing a sign, your children have to add up the miles to all the destinations and write down their answers. The winner is the child with the most correct answers written down by the end of the journey. If signs are few and far between, your children could try adding the numbers from number plates instead.

9 Car sticker spotting

From 'Baby on board' to 'We've seen the lions of Longleat', getting your child to read the stickers they see in passing cars is great reading practice and will extend their vocabulary and comprehension, too. You could also add a tick to the 'counting' and 'adding' boxes by getting them to add up how many stickers they can see in, say, two minutes.

10 Name that tune

The car is a great place to improve their listening and musical abilities. From a simple game of 'name that tune' – where one child hums a tune and the others in the car have to guess it – to a game of 'follow the leader' – where you tap out a rhythm and your children have to copy it – you can while away hours and they'll be blissfully unaware they're honing their music skills.



Toy-free travelling fun

Sometimes even just nipping to the shop can lead to backseat tantrums or cries of "I'm bored!" thanks to unexpected traffic jams. Have a few of these tricks up your sleeve and you'll be able to keep squabbles at bay, whatever travel chaos you find yourself in.

Tricky I-spy

Sometimes the old ones are the best... I-spy has entertained in backseats for generations! To make it trickier you can decide on different rules; maybe your children have to get to the correct answer within five guesses or start with A and work their way through the alphabet. If you're not moving enough for them to see new things, try "how many words can you think of beginning with the letter...?" so they're less restricted. Thinking of I-spy topics will help get them observing their surroundings while guessing is great for promoting logic.

"NOW!"

Work on your children's judgement, plus their sense of distance and perspective with this super-simple game. When your child sees an object ahead of them, say a sign, they close their eyes and shout "NOW" when they think the car has moved far enough to be beside it. Not ideal if you're stuck on the motorway, but perfect if you're crawling slowly through a town in traffic.

20 questions

Teaching your children this game is a real investment – it could keep them occupied during many an otherwise tedious moment, and each time they play their language and questioning abilities will get a boost. The rules? One child has to think of something and the other player can ask up to 20 questions to find out what it is. The catch? Only questions that have yes/no answers are allowed. If inspiration for objects runs thin, try getting them to think of a person; perhaps a sports star or celebrity. The "guesser" can ask questions such as "are you female?" but again, only those with yes/no answers.

Odd or even?

Simple yet effective. On the count of three, both players have to hold up a random number of fingers and shout out either "odd" or "even". The two players then add up their fingers and see if it's an odd or even number. Whoever guessed correctly is the winner and they'll never know they've been working on their numeracy the whole time.

Get dramatic

It's hard to encourage their drama skills when you're stuck in a car, but this game will certainly challenge their creative minds. One child thinks of an emotion and the others in the car have to guess what it is just by having a normal conversation with them and listening to their voice and expression. Great for acting enthusiasts!



Pub cricket

Not as inappropriate as it sounds... The challenge is to look for pub signs and see how long it takes to collect five heads, 10 arms and 20 legs. To do this, you simply count the number of legs and arms depicted on the pub sign, or in the name. So the Phoenix and Falcon would have four legs, but the Rose and Crown would have none. Cracks numeracy and boredom in one simple game!

Planes, trains and panic stations...

When being noisy isn't an option and you're running out of inspiration fast, try keeping them busy with these quick and easy brain-boosters.

Snap!

An oldie, but nevertheless a goodie. Plane and train tables provide the perfect surface for a game of snap and it's ideal for stimulating their responses.

Word association

This is a great game for getting children thinking. The first player thinks of a word, for example 'fish', the second has to say an associated word, such as 'swim'. The player who hesitates or repeats a word first loses.

Alphabet school

This really gets children practising their alphabetical ordering and works on memory, too. The first child says "I went to school and I took an apple (or anything beginning with A). The next continues "I went to school and I took an apple and my book" (or anything beginning with B). The aim is to try and get as far through the alphabet as they can.

Hangman

Another traditional game that can't be beaten for spelling practice – and can be played anywhere as long as you have pen and paper. Choose a word at your child's level and get them guessing. It's a good idea to encourage them to go through the vowels first and make sure every child has a go at being hangman and the guesser.

The BIC Picture

Visit <http://www.bickids.com> to find out about The BIC Picture competition, a summer art competition open to children between the ages of five and 11. Producing their best work to enter will help children hone their artistic talents... and who knows, they might even win a prize!



DAYS OUT THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK

Museums and more

Day trips can be the perfect way to break up the monotony of the holidays and bring learning to life, and they don't all have to cost a fortune. Look through this list of museums, castles, parks and galleries for a selection of innovative (and sometimes completely free) outings that will keep the whole family occupied, give you a chance to try out something new and still leave some money in your wallet. Your biggest problem will be deciding where to go first!

England

- o Southbank Centre - <http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/>
- o Wolverhampton Art Gallery - <http://www.wolverhamptonart.org.uk/>
- o Discover - <http://www.discover.org.uk/>
- o Museum of London - <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/>
- o Life - <http://www.life.org.uk/>
- o Thinktank - <http://www.thinktank.ac/>
- o Imperial War Museum North - <http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-north>
- o National Media Museum - <http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/>
- o Shakespeare's Globe - <http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/>
- o Black Country Living Museum - <http://www.bclm.co.uk/>
- o HMS Belfast - <http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/hms-belfast>
- o Royal Gunpowder Mills - <http://www.royalgunpowdermills.com/>
- o London Transport Museum - <http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/>
- o Natural History Museum - <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/>
- o World Museum - <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml/>
- o International Slavery Museum - <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/>
- o York Castle Museum - <http://www.yorkcastlemuseum.org.uk/>
- o National Portrait Gallery - <http://www.npg.org.uk/>
- o National Railway Museum - <http://www.nrm.org.uk/>
- o Nottingham Contemporary - <http://www.nottinghamcontemporary.org/>
- o Ashmolean Museum - <http://www.ashmolean.org/>
- o Tiverton Museum - <http://www.tivertonmuseum.org.uk/>
- o Museum of London Docklands - <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/Docklands/>
- o @ Bristol - <http://www.at-bristol.org.uk/>
- o Science Museum - <http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/>
- o Yorkshire Sculpture Park - <http://www.yssp.co.uk/>
- o Reading Museum - <http://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/>
- o Stoke-on-Trent Museums - <http://www.stokemuseums.org.uk/>
- o Bank of England Museum - <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/>
- o The Geffrye Museum - <http://www.geffrye-museum.org.uk/>
- o Haslemere Museum - <http://www.haslemeremuseum.co.uk/>



- o [Oceanarium](http://www.oceanarium.co.uk/) - <http://www.oceanarium.co.uk/>
- o [Kew Gardens](http://www.kew.org/) - <http://www.kew.org/>
- o [Cutty Sark](http://www.rmg.co.uk/cuttysark/) - <http://www.rmg.co.uk/cuttysark/>
- o [National Maritime Museum](http://www.rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum/) - <http://www.rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum/>
- o [Royal Observatory](http://www.rmg.co.uk/royal-observatory/) - <http://www.rmg.co.uk/royal-observatory/>
- o [V & A Museum of Childhood](http://www.museumofchildhood.org.uk/) - <http://www.museumofchildhood.org.uk/>
- o [Eureka](http://www.eureka.org.uk/) - <http://www.eureka.org.uk/>
- o [Seven Stories](http://www.sevenstories.org.uk/) - <http://www.sevenstories.org.uk/>
- o [Sir John Soane Museum](http://www.soane.org/) - <http://www.soane.org/>
- o [The Wallace Collection](http://www.wallacecollection.org/) - <http://www.wallacecollection.org/>
- o [Historic Dockyard Chatham](http://www.thedockyard.co.uk/) - <http://www.thedockyard.co.uk/>
- o [Jorvik Viking Centre](http://jorvik-viking-centre.co.uk/) - <http://jorvik-viking-centre.co.uk/>
- o [The Eden Project](http://www.edenproject.com/) - <http://www.edenproject.com/>
- o [Chislehurst Caves](http://www.chislehurst-caves.co.uk/) - <http://www.chislehurst-caves.co.uk/>
- o [National Army Museum](http://www.nam.ac.uk/kids) - <http://www.nam.ac.uk/kids>
- o [Jewish Museum](http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/) - <http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/>
- o [Brixham Heritage Museum](http://www.brixhammuseum.org.uk/) - <http://www.brixhammuseum.org.uk/>
- o [Pitt Rivers Museum](http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/) - <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/>
- o [Falmouth Art Gallery](http://www.falmouthartgallery.com/) - <http://www.falmouthartgallery.com/>
- o [Museum of Farnham](https://farnhammaltings.com/museum/) - <https://farnhammaltings.com/museum/>
- o [Wordsworth Trust](https://wordsworth.org.uk/home.html) - <https://wordsworth.org.uk/home.html>
- o [Weston Park Museum](http://www.museums-sheffield.org.uk/museums/weston-park/home) - <http://www.museums-sheffield.org.uk/museums/weston-park/home>
- o [Dulwich Picture Gallery](http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/) - <http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/>
- o [The Herbert](http://www.theherbert.org/) - <http://www.theherbert.org/>
- o [Mansfield Museum](http://www.mansfield.gov.uk/museum/) - <http://www.mansfield.gov.uk/museum/>
- o [Bronte Museum](http://www.bronte.org.uk/) - <http://www.bronte.org.uk/>
- o [Enginuity](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/our-attractions/enginuity/) - <http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/our-attractions/enginuity/>
- o [The Story Museum](http://www.storymuseum.org.uk/) - <http://www.storymuseum.org.uk/>
- o [Oxford Castle](http://www.oxfordcastleunlocked.co.uk/) - <http://www.oxfordcastleunlocked.co.uk/>
- o [Warwick Castle](http://www.warwick-castle.com/) - <http://www.warwick-castle.com/>
- o [Arundel Castle](http://www.arundelcastle.org/) - <http://www.arundelcastle.org/>
- o [River and Rowing Museum](http://www.rrm.co.uk) - www.rrm.co.uk
- o [Great North Museum](http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/great-north-museum.html) - <http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/great-north-museum.html>
- o [The Mary Rose Museum](http://www.historicdockyard.co.uk/) - <http://www.historicdockyard.co.uk/>

Wales

- o [The Cardiff Story](http://www.cardiffstory.com/) - <http://www.cardiffstory.com/>
- o [National Museum Cardiff](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/) - <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/>
- o [National Roman Legion Museum](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/roman/) - <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/roman/>
- o [Big Pit National Coal Museum](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/bigpit/) - <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/bigpit/>
- o [National Waterfront Museum](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/swansea/) - <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/swansea/>
- o [St Fagans National History Museum](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/stfagans/) - <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/stfagans/>
- o [Techniquet](http://www.techniquet.org/) - <http://www.techniquet.org/>



- o National Trust in Wales - <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/local-to-you/wales/>
- o Tenby Museum and Art Gallery - <http://www.tenbymuseum.org.uk/>

Northern Ireland

- o Castle Espie - <http://www.wwt.org.uk/visit/castle-espie/>
- o W5 - <http://www.w5online.co.uk/>
- o Ulster Museum - <http://www.nmni.com/um>
- o Armagh County Museum - <http://www.nmni.com/acm>
- o The Belfast Barge - <http://www.laganlegacy.com/>
- o Titanic Belfast - <http://www.titanicbelfast.com/Home.aspx>
- o Armagh Planetarium - <http://www.armaghplanet.com/>
- o Navan Centre - <http://www.armagh.co.uk/place/navan-centre-fort/>
- o National Trust Northern Ireland - <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/northern-ireland/>

Scotland

- o National Museum Scotland - http://www.nms.ac.uk/our_museums/national_museum.aspx
- o National Museum of Flight - http://www.nms.ac.uk/our_museums/museum_of_flight.aspx
- o Glasgow Science Centre - <http://www.glasgowsciencecentre.org/>
- o National Galleries Scotland - <http://www.nationalgalleries.org/>
- o Dynamic Earth - <http://www.dynamicearth.co.uk/>
- o Glamis Castle - <http://www.glamis-castle.co.uk/>
- o Robert Burns Birthplace Museum - <http://www.burnsmuseum.org.uk/>
- o Satrosphere - <http://www.satrosphere.net/>
- o Kenilgrove Art Gallery and Museum - <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/our-museums/kelvingrove/Pages/home.aspx>
- o Scotland Street School Museum - <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/our-museums/scotland-street-school/Pages/home.aspx>
- o People's Palace and Winter Gardens - <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/our-museums/peoples-palace/Pages/home.aspx>
- o Museum of Childhood - <http://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/Venues/Museum-of-Childhood>
- o Museum of Edinburgh - <http://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/Venues/Museum-of-Edinburgh>
- o Shetland Museum - <http://www.shetland-museum.org.uk/>
- o National Trust for Scotland - <http://www.nts.org.uk/Home/>
- o Hopetoun House - <http://www.hopetoun.co.uk/>



ON HOLIDAY

Holiday helpers

Getting away from it all can be one of the best ways to keep your children entertained during the school holidays, but little minds like to be kept occupied and even the best of us run out of inspirational ideas now and again. Whether you're holidaying at home or abroad, these tricks, games and tips should make sure your children are busy and content – leaving you time for some much-needed R&R.

Wonder walks

From British beaches to Croatian campsites, the Yorkshire Dales to the south of France, you can always don your trainers and take to the countryside for a wonder walk. It'll keep eager minds occupied and help sharpen everything from their observations and life skills to vocabulary. Challenge your little explorers to count the different animals or birds they see, spot three farm vehicles, collect five different types of leaf or flower, collect pine cones or guide you to a set destination by following a map (or for older children a compass).

Rub a dub

Ok, so churches – let alone graveyards – may not seem like an obvious place to while away a holiday afternoon, especially if you're not religious, but there's nothing to stop you wandering in and having a look around. Stained-glass windows can be great inspiration for making up stories and you may find the church offers kids' brass rubbing sessions. You can also take your own paper and wax crayons to do rubbings of the headstones. It's an instant hands-on history lesson.

Campsite capers

Set your children a map challenge and, in doing so, help improve their design and logic skills. Little ones may need help, but older children should be able to walk around the campsite (or resort if you're in a hotel) and draw their route on a piece of paper to make a map. Encourage them to mark on your tent and create a key using symbols for things such as the shower block, swimming pool, barbecue site, games room and shop. They could also add landmarks such as trees, gates, hedges, fences and taps.

Holiday nights

If you live in a city and town, your children may struggle to spot stars, but away from it all on holiday the sky is often much clearer. All you need in advance is a simple astrology book and your children will be occupied pre-bedtime looking for constellations such as The Big Dipper or The Great Bear.

Postcard writing

Children as young as five can start postcard writing and it's great for literacy and spelling. Sit down together and compose a few lines to aunts, uncles, friends or grandparents about what you've done, where you've visited and the things you've seen. Make sure your child is the one thinking up what you say on the postcard – even if all they want to talk about is the ice cream



they had yesterday! Add a maths element by going to the post office together, working out how much the stamps cost and posting your card in the postbox. If you're abroad this is a great chance to up their language skills with the odd word or two ("please" and "thank you" will do!) in the local language.

Spot the difference

If you're staying somewhere that looks and feels different from home, challenge your children to a game of spot the difference and you'll be helping them learn about new people and places at the same time. Perhaps ask them to spot five day-to-day objects that look dissimilar to those at home (post boxes, lamp posts, bins and bus stops, for example) or give them a list of common sights in the country you're visiting and get them to play holiday bingo – the first one to spot all the sights wins.

Pretty as a picture

In a twist on the traditional holiday journal, encourage your children to keep a photo diary. Even younger children can take snaps of one or two things you do every day and think about what the captions will be when you print them out at home. Using a digital camera means you can look at their pictures together in the evening and get them to write the captions in a blank book, ready for the prints. This will improve their ICT and literacy skills. Older children can turn their journal into a scrapbook by collecting memorabilia from each day – everything from bus tickets to seashells will help bring their creation to life.

Bus about

The idea of a bus trip might not fill you with joy but if you tend to travel by car most of the time, your children will find it an exciting novelty. You can either opt for the open-top tourist kind, or just hop on any bus that takes your fancy and see where you end up. Buses are also a good way to get to the local beach or tourist attractions without splashing out on car hire. If you can opt for a double decker, even better – every child will love pretending to be the driver in the front window seat. Children under five usually travel free, so you'll only have to pay your own fare.

DIY HOLIDAY DAYS OUT

It's great to get away, but there are some holiday days when you just have to get them out from under your feet before you go mad. If you don't want to splash out on yet another day trip, we've come up with five spur-of-the-moment activities that will also keep them learning.

1 A good day's hunting

Set your children a scavenger hunt. This involves writing a list of items for them to collect. For rainy days, an indoor scavenger hunt can involve anything from 'a red sock' or 'a book that has a title starting with "b"' to 'three spoons of different sizes'. Outdoor scavenger hunts can involve a whole host of natural items. Reading and understanding the lists is good comprehension and literacy practice, and your children could also take photos of items rather than physically collect them (allowing you to put larger items such as 'a house with two chimneys' on the list), thus brushing up on their ICT skills.



2 A flora/fauna picnic

It doesn't matter whether you're at home or abroad, a picnic has to be the nicest way to boost their biology knowledge and bring out their natural sense of adventure. Head somewhere green with your packed lunch, a pad and some pens, and set your children nature-based challenges. It could be how many different types of trees they can spot, how many different leaves they can collect or how many animals they can see without leaving the picnic rug. You could also challenge them or create a list of likely sights you'll see so they can tick them off as you come across them. Take along some binoculars, explain how they work and you'll be giving them a hands-on science lesson, too.

3 Magic at the museum

Most UK museums are now free, so they're the perfect budget yet brain-boosting day out – especially if it's pouring! Instead of just wandering around looking at the artefacts, which can get boring for kids if it's not an especially child-friendly museum, ask them to pick something they like and make up a story about it. Prompt them by asking who might have used it, what it might have seen or done in its lifetime etc. Composing stories is an excellent way of using different literary skills and honing their natural story-telling abilities, and it'll also instil the importance of looking after our heritage.

4 Beach bonanza

There's more to do at the beach than just building sandcastles – although if you get your children to try to build a sandcastle with dry sand, or add in a moat or a dam then that's a great hands-on outdoor science lesson in itself! You could also challenge them to find different shells or pebbles of different shapes and colours, draw letters and pictures in the sand or hunt for creatures in rock pools. All you need is a net and a bucket of water to look for limpets, anemones, crabs, shrimps, winkles, fish and seaweed. Once they've finished studying, remember to find a safe place to set them free again. And don't forget the sea. Can they see anything sailing and if there are boats, can they count them? If all else fails, there are hours of fun and a numeracy boost to be had simply by counting waves and throwing stones into the sea.

5 Pedal power

Whether they're still using stabilisers or already beating you up the hills, nothing beats a bike ride with children. It's great exercise, the perfect way to release any pent-up tensions and you can add an educational twist by getting them to plan your route on a map before leaving home. Your children will also be learning about cycle safety – from using the correct hand signals and following road signs to anticipating other road users – and basic mechanics, like understanding how their gears work. You don't have to go far from where you're staying; even a couple of trips round the block will be enough. Make sure if you're hiring bikes you remember helmets, too. For child-friendly cycle routes near you, visit www.sustrans.org.uk/ and to find out more about cycle safety, log onto www.bikeability.org.uk.

