

The best apps for nature lovers – from identifying birdsong to tracking lions

Level 3: Advanced – Teacher’s notes

Article summary: A review of eight nature apps that can help users identify plants, animals, fungi and stars, track animal movements, and have an immersive forest experience

Time: 60–90 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Collocations: adjective + noun

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. Ask students to complete the task in small groups. They can use the scientific classification system (i.e., fungi, animals, plants, Monera, Protocista, or where these things grow or live geographically or by ecological systems). Answers will vary.
- b. Encourage students to work in groups and add more words for three minutes. Then, have them take turns reading their words, have everyone else listen, and add the words they didn't write to each category.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to complete the task individually and check their answers in pairs. Encourage students to rephrase the words to check their understanding.

Key:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. <i>elusive</i> | 8. <i>ranger</i> |
| 2. <i>fungi</i> | 9. <i>hedgerow, hedgerows</i> |
| 3. <i>decomposer, decomposers</i> | 10. <i>meadow</i> |
| 4. <i>critter, critters</i> | 11. <i>haven</i> |
| 5. <i>nesting</i> | 12. <i>trample, trampled</i> |
| 6. <i>tagged</i> | 13. <i>immersive</i> |
| 7. <i>conservationist</i> | 14. <i>canopy</i> |

3. Comprehension check

- a. Encourage students to skim the text to get a general sense of the content. Then, ask them to scan the text again to find the information to complete the table. Have them compare their answers in small groups.

Key:

App	Who it's for	Main features
Seek	<i>curious kids who want to categorise plants, animals, fungi</i>	<i>take a photo to identify species and outline facts the global community that can confirm logged observations</i>
ChirpOMatic	<i>those who want to tell songbirds apart (in Europe, North America, the Caribbean, Australia)</i>	<i>identify songbirds with a phone using a recording</i>
Animal Tracker	<i>citizen scientists</i>	<i>track animals see past movements log sighting of animals</i>
eBird	<i>serious birders</i>	<i>track wild bird list by year, local path or other, record sightings</i>
LeafSnap	<i>gardeners, botanists, people who like plants</i>	<i>take an image of a leaf, flower, bark or fruit to identify a plant learn about plant care</i>
Seagrass Spotter	<i>swimmers, beachgoers, kayakers, divers</i>	<i>identify seagrass provide data for marine scientists to protect seagrass</i>
SkyView Lite	<i>campers, rambles, star-gazers</i>	<i>learn which stars, constellations, and planets you're looking at</i>
WWF Forests	<i>those unable to get outside</i>	<i>take a tour of temperate forests learn facts about forests and wildlife construct your own forest</i>

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4. Key language

- a. Ask students to identify the **adjective + noun** collocations. Then, check answers with the whole class before they discuss the questions in pairs.

Key:

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. e | 7. i |
| 2. j | 8. f |
| 3. c | 9. l |
| 4. a | 10. b |
| 5. g | 11. d |
| 6. k | 12. h |

- b. Ask students to write their own questions and elicit examples from the class. Then, ask students to discuss their questions in small groups. Monitor and make a note of recurring errors and good language to share with the class at the end of the activity.

5. Discussion

- a. Ask students to discuss the statements in small groups. Have them say whether they agree or disagree and explain their answers. Encourage them to use newly acquired vocabulary but focus mainly on having them engage with the topic and practise their fluency.

6. In your own words

- a. Ask students to explore a nature app. It can be one from the article or a different one. Have them make notes as they use it.
- b. Ask students to write a short review using their notes. Encourage ~~students~~ to peer edit in ~~pairs~~. ~~You can ask students to~~ share their reviews in small groups or on the class (digital) wall.