

Den Building Manual

Den building is fun, gets children working collaboratively and creatively, and creates opportunities for learning. This manual provides a few ideas about how to run some den-building sessions in your school.

This manual was developed in conjunction with the **Leeds Den Building Festival**, in summer 2014.

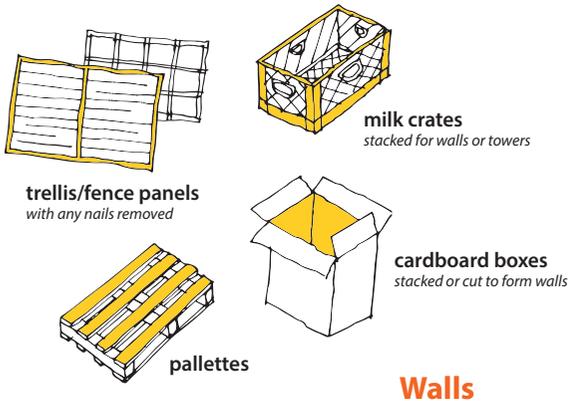
For full info see: <http://leedsdenfest.eventbrite.co.uk>

Materials for Building Dens

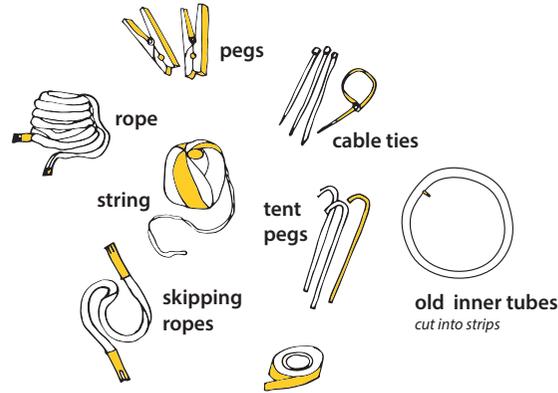
some suggestions of materials for den-building.

Using Unwanted Materials

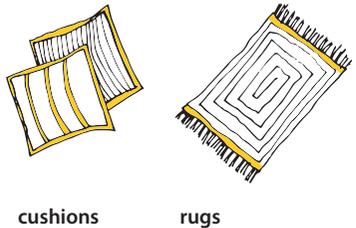
den-building can provide a use for unwanted materials that might otherwise be thrown away. contact businesses who may be able to donate old materials or offcuts, or ask children to bring in cardboard boxes or old curtains



Walls

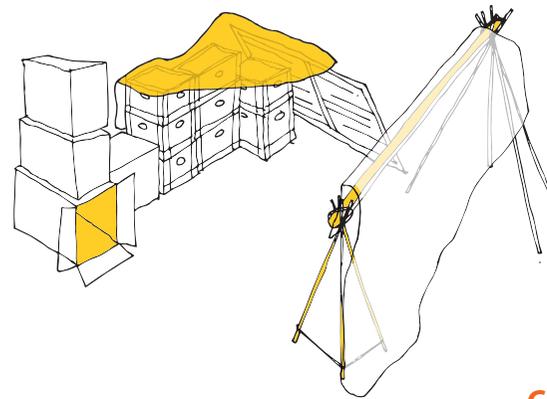


Fixings

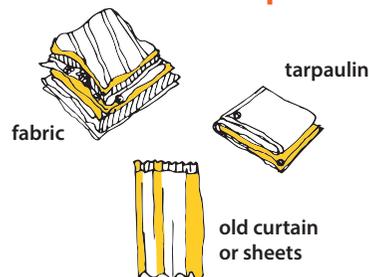


Interior

Supports

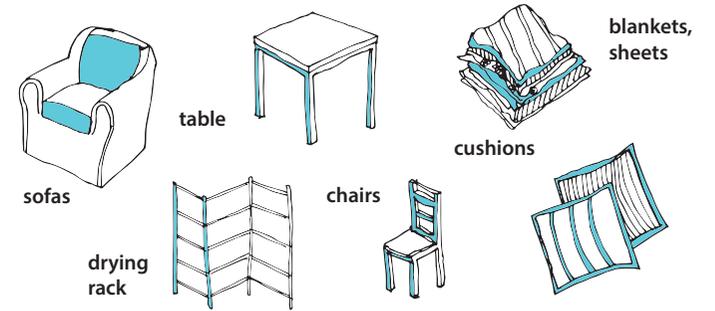


Canopies



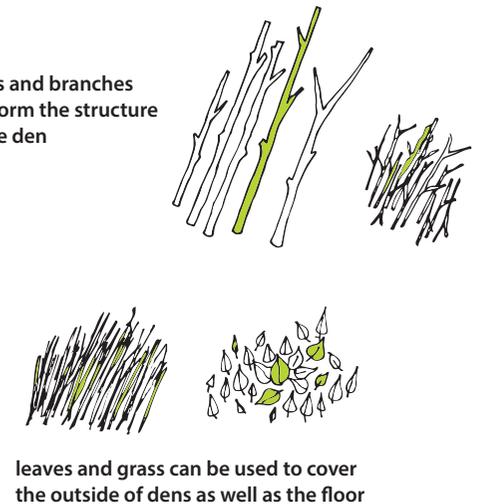
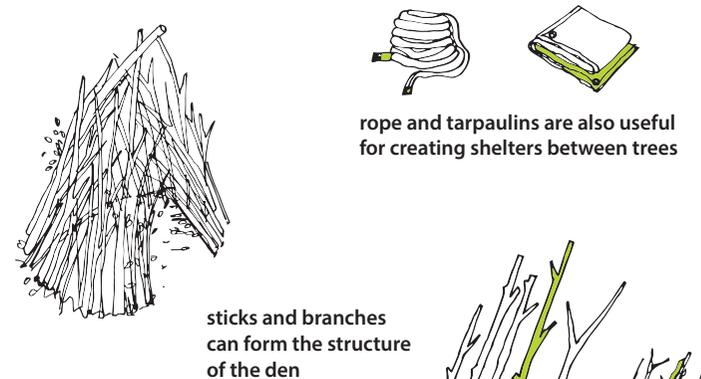
Household Den-Building

children can easily build dens at home, using chairs, sofas, tables along with sheets and blankets



Natural Den-Building

dens can easily be built from trees and branches if you have access to woodlands



Lesson Plan

Running a Den-Building Session

Preparation

Find a suitable space:

A grassy surface or woodland space is easiest to build on, as canes, sticks, tent pegs etc are easy to fix into the ground. On tarmac, or inside a gym, weights or tape may be necessary to fix the dens down.

A large space is necessary, but existing walls, fences, trees, or classroom furniture can also be useful for building the dens around.

Collect materials:

See what suitable materials you can collect.

Ask local businesses to donate their unwanted materials, see what you already have in the school, or ask children to bring in old cardboard boxes, sheets, curtains, pegs etc.

The Session

Lay Out Materials:

Spread all the materials out for the children to pick from and build together, or divide into sets for small groups of children to use.

The brief:

Set a brief for building a den, to allow the children to think about what they are trying to create. There are some suggested briefs on the following page.

Design:

Allow some time for children to think about the design of the den, how they can make it suitable for the brief, and how they can build it from the materials provided.

Depending on the age-group, this could involve a discussion in groups or as a class, drawing sketches of the type of space they would like to create, or drawing a more detailed design showing how the materials provided could be put together to create a den.

Building Dens:

Start building!

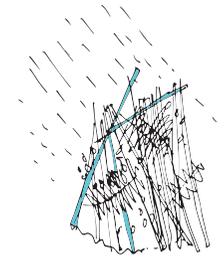
Evaluation:

Spend some time looking at the dens, testing them, and discussing the things that did and didn't work, and what could work better.

Suggested Briefs

Building a Shelter

This could be linked to geography topics around homelessness, shelter, refugees, or science, through thinking about protection from the weather.



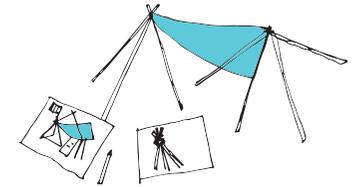
You have nowhere to stay, and need somewhere to keep warm for the night. How can you make a shelter from the materials you have around you?

Think about what you need to keep the group comfortable overnight. How will you keep warm, and be protected from rain/wind/snow? How much space do you need?

Once it is finished, do you think it works? Will it keep you all warm and dry? How could you adapt or improve it?

Designing a Den

This could be linked to science and maths through thinking about why things stand up, how materials can be fixed together. It could allow children to start thinking about design, and how their decisions influence the spaces they create.



Design and build a space for storytelling/playing/reading/another activity. Think about how the design of your den makes it suitable for the activity it will be used for.

Do you want it to be small/cosy/comfortable/spacious/dark/bright/enclosed/open/narrow? How can you use the materials around you? How will you fix them together?

Did it turn out the way you expected it to? Which den is most suitable for the brief? Which materials, or fixings worked best? How could you improve your den?

Online Resources

There are lots of online resources on den-building. Here are a few good ones:

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/learn/children-and-families/nature-detectives/den-building/>

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/earlyyears/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=34041>

<http://www.edenproject.com/blog/index.php/2011/06/how-to-build-your-own-den/>

<http://www.ads.org.uk/resources/4801-den-building-3>