



The Royal Highland Education Trust

Patron HRH The Princess Royal

Information for classroom speakers





Organising visits into schools

RHET would like as many children as possible to find out about food, farming and the countryside. Ideally this would involve the children visiting a farm, however this is not always possible.

Instead, RHET volunteers take the countryside to the classroom.

The majority of requests come through your local Project Coordinator. When the Coordinator receives the request they will find out:

- The age of the children
- The size of the class
- The preferred dates for the talk
- What the teacher would like the children to learn from the talk

This information is then used to try and match the most appropriate local volunteer to the school. If that is you, they will contact you and ask if you would like to do the talk and agree a day and time to visit the school.

The Coordinators try to spread the requests between the speakers on their list to reduce the commitment on any one individual. So we are always looking for names to add to the list.



Be prepared

Have a chat with the teacher beforehand to find out:

- ✓ How long you will have with the class?
- ✓ Check the classroom, or wherever you will deliver the talk, has the facilities you require e.g. enough space, a table, whiteboard. Are there any stairs?
- ✓ Where the best place to park is – remember you might be carrying a few items!
- ✓ What do the children know already? So you can use the appropriate level of detail while still challenging their abilities. You can adapt the talk if they are finding your questions too easy!
- ✓ Cancellation procedure – make sure you have a note of the school's telephone number in case you need to change arrangements.



Preparing a talk

The first talk will always take the longest to prepare. Preparation time will be less for subsequent visits. Talks can be amended to suit age/stage of children in order to pitch at the correct level.

A talk should have a beginning, a middle and an end. If it helps, you can make some notes prior to your talk and you should make sure you are familiar with your props.

If you are confident with computers, you could put together a PowerPoint presentation of photos. It will help you keep track of what you want to get across- children can easily distract you from your train of thought.

Children will ask many questions, therefore it is sometimes easier to ask the teacher to manage questions and ensure that everyone gets a turn and/or over enthusiastic individuals don't get carried away.

Ask the teacher if they have any children with Additional Support for Learning Needs, who may need a different approach with the content of the talk.



Topic examples

Once you have the basis of a talk you can expand on this if schools are looking for different topics.

For example you could cover:

- Problems facing food production which are out of the farmers control i.e. the weather
- Food miles and the effect that buying products from overseas has in the local markets and environment
- Different varieties of products available
- High welfare standards in Scotland
- Traceability of Scottish produce



Your kit

The age of the children you are talking to will determine how long you talk for. Younger children have shorter concentration spans and all age groups benefit from the use of props to keep them engaged.

Children love to touch or smell things that aren't usually within their teaching environment. Smells are actually proven to trigger memories so they will remember your visit with a bucket of silage. Children are also easily distracted so if you want their undivided attention, leave passing round the props until the end.

Ideas for props include:

- A cluster for a dairy talk
- Silage, hay, straw for a cattle talk
- Toy tractors, combines and trailers for an arable talk
- Wool for sheep talk

- Empty food packages for matching up with animal it was produced from
- Machinery parts (old & new)
- Shepherds crook
- Cattle/sheep horns



Quick Tip!

Make sure anything you use is clean and if you are taking in any feed samples or grains, check with the teacher if there are any children with allergies. You can also remind teachers about hand washing.



How we can help

RHET can provide a box with some basic items to get you started but make this box your own and add to it as you go along, every box will be different.

An example of some of the contents in a typical RHET speaker box.



If you are confident with computers you could put together a PowerPoint presentation of photos. It will help you to keep track of what you want to get across. Children can easily distract you along the way from your train of thought!



Quick Tip! Children are easily distracted, so if you want their undivided attention leave the props until the end!



Presentation skills

Always introduce yourself!

What is your role is within the farming community and why are you here today?

Try to be at the same level as the children.

Sit down on a chair beside younger children.

Be aware of the social and ethical issues affecting the audience and be respectful of the values and opinions of all audience members.

Be enthusiastic and encouraging.

You could say "good guess but not quite right!"

Provide unbiased information.

Let the children make up their own minds.

Try not to use jargon.

Some terms may be too advanced for the younger groups. Try to explain by comparing it to something the kids can relate to.

See the adjacent list for some examples.

Farming jargon

Silage = pickled grass
Heifer = young female cow

Slurry = animal waste

Fertiliser = crop food

Pasteurised = heat treated/cleaned

Dosing = feeding medicine to



Things to look out for

Don't be afraid of asking kids to raise their hands to answer your questions or asking the teacher to step in if you aren't comfortable with their behaviour.

Smile at the children - they will smile back.

Try to keep eye contact with the entire class rather than just the children at the front. It is sometimes useful to make a 'Z' shape of eye communication around the room.

Children will have to listen really hard if you drop the tone of your voice. This is useful if someone's attention is wandering.

Praise positive behaviour. e.g. children who are listening and

putting their hands up to answer questions. The rest of the pupils generally catch on!

Remember - you are the expert. You will always know more than the children. If there are any questions that you don't know the answer to, then just explain that it is outside your area of expertise. The children can then go away and find the answer themselves. The teacher will thank you for the homework exercise!

Ask questions! Find out what the pupils think or know and to check if they understood something you mentioned earlier. And remember to **enjoy yourself!**



RHET

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Royal Highland Centre
Ingliston, Edinburgh
EH28 8NB

rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk
0131 335 6227

Charity Number SC007492
Company Number 123813

www.rhet.org.uk