

Thatcher activity 2 Regions and roofs

Age range:
7-11

Duration:
Approx 60 minutes
to include worksheet
activity

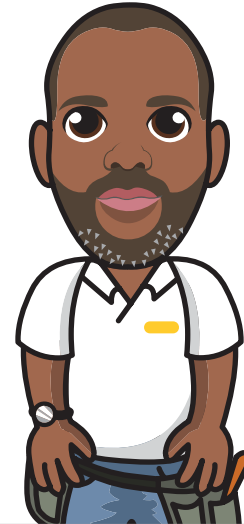
Aim

For pupils to learn that different regions of the country traditionally use different building materials for roofs and why this is.

Learning objectives

Pupils should learn:

- That thatched roofs are found mainly in certain parts of the UK
- That local materials are traditionally used to roof houses
- About the qualities of thatched roofs and how they are made



Curriculum links

England

- National Curriculum Citizenship: 1e
- Geography: 2d, 2f, 3a, 3d, 3f, 4a
- ICT: 1a

Wales

- National Curriculum Geography: Skills – Locating places 1, 3, 4,
- Understanding places 1, 2, Investigating 1, 2, Communicating 3
- ICT: Skills – Find and analyse information 1, 2, 3

Materials and equipment

- Rough books and pens/pencils
- Computers with Internet access
- Small cardboard boxes
- Straw or card art straws
- Elastic bands, scissors, glue
- Copies of Worksheet Th2 (one per pupil if required – see below)



Key vocabulary

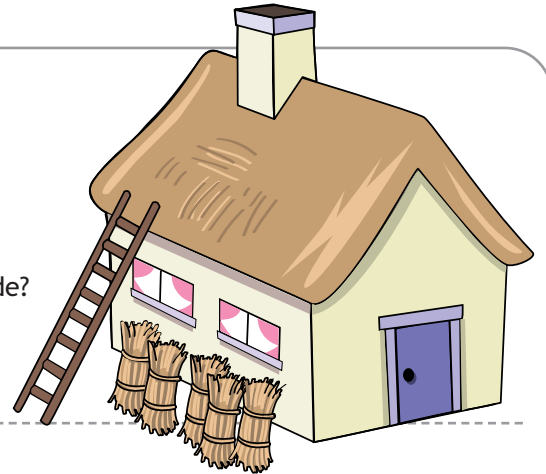
thatcher, thatch, straw, reeds, roof, region, materials, slate, tiles



Running the activity

a) Introduction:

Ask the class if there are thatched houses near to the school. Discuss why this is. Why are most thatched roofs found in the countryside? Talk about how, in the past, builders used local materials to make roofs: slates, stone tiles, clay tiles, heather, straw or reeds. Modern houses tend to have concrete tiles, which are cheap and easy to make.



b) Worksheet:

Worksheet Th2 will help pupils to find out in which parts of the country thatched houses are most widely found. An easy way to do this involves using the Internet. Search Google UK for 'thatched house' or 'thatched cottage' then click Images. The pupils can click each picture and write down which English county the house is in. This should give a rough idea that more thatched houses are found in the South East and South West than other areas.

c) Discussion:

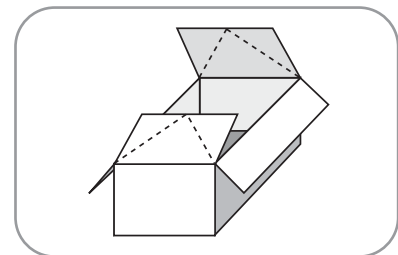
Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of thatched roofs compared with other roofs, e.g. slate or concrete tiles. Why is thatch not used much today? Why do many people with thatched roofs pay a lot of money to have them re-thatched instead of changing to tiles which will last longer? This brings in the question of environmental concerns and conservation – many people are keen to maintain regional variations and traditions. The pupils may be surprised to know that there are more thatchers working today than there were 40 years ago.

d) Quiz:

Direct pupils to [Village > Thatcher > Quiz](#) and ask them to complete the thatcher quiz to find out how much they now know about thatching.

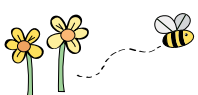
Extension activities

- 1 Pupils can have a go at making and testing a model thatched roof. First, use a cardboard box to represent the house, using the top flaps to make a pitched roof on which to glue bundles of straw held with rubber bands. Alternatively, paper 'art' straws can be used instead. Score and bend the box end flaps – as shown on the right – and glue these to the side flaps to make the pitched card roof base. When the two sides of the roof are covered with straw, cut some shorter pieces and bend these at right angles, then glue them onto the ridge of the roof to stop water getting in at the top. If you are brave, you can allow the pupils to test the waterproofing qualities of their dried thatch using a watering can outside. A piece of coloured paper can be placed inside the box to detect leaks.
- 2 Carry out a survey of local roof materials to find out which is most commonly used.
- 3 The locations of thatched houses found on Google Images can be marked on a map of the UK to give pupils a clearer idea of where they are.

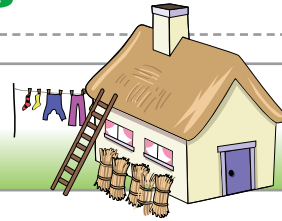


Background information for teachers

Go to [Teachers > Useful links](#) to find out more about thatchers and their work.



Th2: Regions and roofs



This worksheet will help you to find out where thatched houses are found in the UK. You can find out using the Internet, as follows:

1. Go to www.google.co.uk (not google.com).
2. Click 'Pages from the UK'.
3. Type in 'thatched house.'
4. Press enter.
5. Click the Images link at the top of the page.
6. You will now see lots of pictures of thatched houses in Britain. For each thatched house, try to find out which county it is in (e.g. Kent, Hertfordshire, Devon). You may need to click on the picture to discover this. Write down the locations of 10 thatched houses below.



Locations of 10 thatched houses in the UK

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Questions to answer

1. Are any of these counties near you? Use an atlas to find out then write down the nearest one.

2. What materials are your local house roofs made from?

3. Why are different types of roofs found in different parts of the country?

On the back

Watch the video again or use Google to find out what tools a thatcher uses and make a list of these, along with sketches of each one.

