

Autumn 2 Week 1: Signs of Autumn

Reception Understanding the World: The Natural World

A full week-one provision pack for observing seasonal change, exploring autumn objects and developing early scientific vocabulary.

Autumn 2 Week 1 Provision: Signs of Autumn

Focus Area	Autumn 2 Week 1 Provision: Signs of Autumn
Weekly Focus	Signs of autumn: observing seasonal changes in the local environment, noticing leaves, trees, weather, colours, seeds and natural objects, and beginning to describe what has changed since the start of term.
Learning Objective	To observe and describe signs of autumn in the local environment.
Success Criteria	I can look closely outdoors. I can name some signs of autumn. I can describe what has changed. I can use words such as autumn, season, leaves, tree, weather, cold and change.
Linked Reading Book	<i>Leaf Man</i> by Lois Ehlert. This book links strongly to autumn leaves, seasonal change, natural loose parts, imaginative leaf pictures, movement caused by wind and descriptive language. Alternative or additional texts: <i>Fletcher and the Falling Leaves</i> by Julia Rawlinson or a simple non-fiction book about autumn and seasons.

Reading Comprehension Sessions

Session 1: Handling the Book and Reading the Story	Focus: introduce the front cover, back cover, title, author, illustrator and careful book handling. Read the story aloud and invite children to look closely at the leaf pictures and notice autumn colours and natural objects. Suggested questions: What can you see on the front cover? Can you find the title? Who made the pictures? What season do you think this book is about? How do we hold the book carefully? What colours can you see? What natural objects can you spot?
Session 2: Inferring, Predicting and Explaining	Focus: reread selected pages and pause to predict where Leaf Man might go next. Encourage children to infer from the pictures and explain using autumn and weather vocabulary. Suggested questions: Where do you think Leaf Man will go next? How do you know? What might move the leaves? What does the wind do? Why might leaves fall from trees in autumn? What clues tell us it is autumn? Can you explain using "I think... because..."?
Session 3: Naming Book Features and Retelling	Focus: revisit the title, front cover, back cover and blurb. Sequence Leaf Man's journey using picture cards, leaf shapes or a simple story map. Retell using language such as first, next, then and finally. Suggested questions: Can you show me the front cover? Can you show me the back cover? What is the title? What might the blurb tell us? What happened first? Where did Leaf Man go next? What was your favourite leaf picture? Can you retell part of the journey?

Art Activities

- **Leaf Man or Leaf Creature Collage:** Children use collected leaves, twigs, seed pods and paper shapes to create a leaf person, animal or creature. Adults support children to choose and arrange natural materials, then scribe comments such as "My leaf creature has..."
- **Autumn Leaf Rubbings:** Children place paper over leaves and rub with crayons to reveal veins, edges and patterns. Compare rubbings made from different leaves and talk about shape, size and texture.
- **Autumn Colour Painting:** Children mix and use autumn colours such as red, orange, yellow, brown and gold to paint autumn trees, falling leaves or a windy autumn scene. Add child voice comments about what they noticed outdoors.

Observation, Exploration and Investigation

Observation Activities	Autumn walk around the school grounds; tree observation over time; leaf collection and comparison; weather watching; looking for seeds, berries, conkers, acorns and twigs; photograph changes in the outdoor area. Adults note whether children can look closely, name signs of autumn and describe change.
Exploration and Investigation	Set up autumn investigation trays with leaves, bark, twigs, conkers, acorns and seed pods. Children use magnifiers to observe colour, shape, size and texture. Add simple questions such as: Which leaf is biggest? Which leaf is driest? Which objects came from trees?

Continuous Provision Areas

Role Play	Autumn woodland, park ranger station or nature explorer role play with baskets, clipboards, magnifiers, maps, leaf identification cards, pretend binoculars and weather symbols. Children act as autumn explorers and report what they have found.
Building and Making	Build a woodland floor, autumn tree, hedgehog home or Leaf Man journey using blocks, loose parts, cardboard tubes, fabric, leaves and natural objects. Make simple wind streamers or leaf mobiles to explore movement in the air.
Matching and Sorting	Sort leaves by colour, size, shape or condition; match leaves to tree pictures where appropriate; match autumn objects to word or picture cards; sort natural objects into leaves, seeds, twigs and other; sequence pictures showing green leaves changing colour and falling.
Small World / Tuff Tray	Create an autumn woodland tuff tray with leaves, twigs, bark, pinecones, conkers, small-world animals, trees, baskets, magnifiers and mark-making labels. Children can create Leaf Man journeys, woodland homes or autumn story scenes.

Adult Observation Prompts

- Can the child describe signs of autumn?
- Can the child notice changes in leaves, trees or weather?
- Can the child compare natural objects by colour, size or shape?
- Can the child use vocabulary such as autumn, season, change, leaves and weather?
- Can the child retell part of the story using pictures or natural objects?

Key Vocabulary

autumn, season, change, leaves, leaf, tree, branch, twig, seed, conker, acorn, weather, wind, rain, cold, colour, red, orange, yellow, brown, fall, dry, crunchy, observe, notice, because

Resources

Linked reading book, leaves, twigs, conkers, acorns, pinecones, bark, seed pods, baskets, magnifiers, clipboards, autumn picture cards, leaf identification cards, crayons, paper, paints, glue sticks, collage materials, cardboard tubes, string, fabric, small-world animals, weather symbols, camera or tablet if appropriate, and floor-book or observation notes.

Printable Resources: Week 1 Signs of Autumn

These printables are designed to be copied, printed and cut out. Use the larger cards for vocabulary, matching, sorting, display work, adult prompts and continuous provision.

Resource 1: Autumn Object Picture Cards

Leaf



Tree



Conker



Acorn 	Pinecone 	Seed 
Twig 	Bark 	Fallen leaves 

Cut along the table borders to create individual autumn object cards.

Resource 2: Autumn Walk Checklist

Look for...	I found it	What did I notice?
A leaf that is red, orange, yellow or brown	☐	
A tree with fewer leaves	☐	
A fallen leaf	☐	
A twig or small branch	☐	
A conker, acorn, seed or pinecone	☐	
Something dry or crunchy	☐	
Wind, rain, clouds or cold weather	☐	
Something that has changed since summer	☐	

Resource 3: Autumn Vocabulary Cards

autumn	season	change	leaf
leaves	tree	branch	twig
seed	conker	acorn	pinecone
weather	wind	rain	cold
red	orange	yellow	brown
dry	crunchy	observe	notice

Cut along the table borders to create vocabulary cards. Use for matching, display, sentence work and outdoor talk.

Resource 4: Seasonal Change Photo Prompts

A green tree in summer



Talk prompt

What might this tree look like in autumn?

An autumn tree



Talk prompt

What has changed?

Leaves on a tree 	Talk prompt What might happen to the leaves?
Leaves on the ground 	Talk prompt Why might the leaves have fallen?

A windy or rainy day



Talk prompt
What might we wear outside?

A basket of autumn objects



Talk prompt
Which objects came from trees?

Cut each row into a prompt card, or fold each row so the image prompt is on one side and the question is on the other.

Resource 5: Sorting Mats

Leaves



Seeds, conkers, acorns and pinecones

Place, draw or glue tree objects here.

Twigs and bark



Other autumn finds

Place, draw or glue other autumn objects here.

Use as four large sorting mats, or cut into separate mats for group work.

Resource 6: Child Observation and Assessment Notes

Child's name	What did the child notice?	Autumn vocabulary used	Evidence observed	Next step

Use one row per child or focus child. Evidence might include child voice, a photograph, a drawing, sorting work, an outdoor observation or adult notes.

Resource 7: Sentence Stem Cards

I notice...	I found...
It feels...	It looks...
It has changed because...	I think it is autumn because...
This leaf is...	This object came from...

Cut along the borders to create sentence stem cards for adult-led talk, outdoor learning and continuous provision.