

Let's Talk

Bogs

PUPIL SHEET

Peat bogs are very important habitats. They are found in Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales and in many other places in the world. The UK contains about 15% of the world's peat bogs. A healthy peat bog absorbs and stores carbon, and this is very important in helping to stop climate change. An unhealthy and drying-out bog releases carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. In the UK many peat bogs have been badly damaged by drainage, overgrazing, burning and industrial pollution.



Peat also acts as a giant sponge, soaking up and storing rainwater coming down from the surrounding hills. By soaking the water up, it allows a slow release of water into the surrounding waterways, rather than having fast-flowing water. This helps to reduce flooding further down valleys as the force and speed of the water has been reduced. Because the water is moving more slowly, soil erosion is also reduced.

Peat is made up of partially decomposed plants, especially **Sphagnum** mosses. The reason they are not completely decomposed is that in waterlogged conditions there is very little oxygen available, so the bacteria which normally break things down don't grow well. Sphagnum moss is an incredible sponge - it can hold 20 x its weight in water!

Peat bogs are full of unique and important animals and plants and exciting places for us to explore.

Bogs are also very important as they help understand the past - they are like history books showing so many things which happened years ago. Recently scientists have discovered human remains in bogs which are over 10,000 years old.



Peat can be used for many different reasons such as burning it as fuel and using it as a base for growing plants in tubs and hanging baskets as it holds onto water so the plants do not dry out.

Not everybody agrees about the importance of peat bogs - some people think they should be drained and used as farmland and, in some places people think the peat should be used to produce electricity in power stations.



Write a word or phrase about peat bogs in each petal of this flower.

What matters most?

Collect a Let's Talk Bogs picture. In each picture there are a number of statements. You have to give each statement an 'importance mark' out of 5 but you only have 35 points to give away. Write down your points in the table below.

Bogs	A	B	C	D	E
	F	G	H	I	J