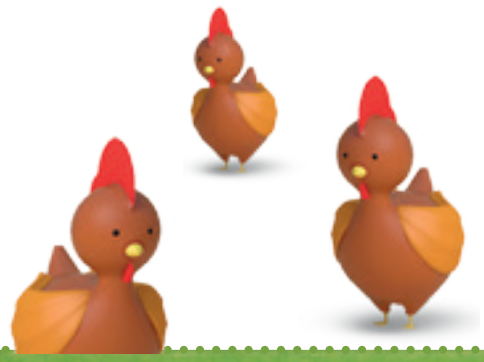
The environment is everything around us. In Part 1 you'll explore local ecosystems and investigate how all of the living things there (plants, animals and organisms) interact with each other and their non-living environments (weather, earth, sun, soil, climate and atmosphere). In Part 2 of the project you'll visit an arable farm. There you will see how farmers work for us, not just in producing healthy food but also protecting nature and safeguarding the environment and its biodiversity.

Part 1

Working in groups of three **become eco-reporters** for a 2 m^2 area in the school grounds, on the street or in a nearby park. Discover and record everything you can about your plot, the soil structure, what lives in this ecosystem, what grows there and all the living and non-living things that depend on one another. Each area should be as different as possible in terms of its biodiversity (e.g. an area in a flower bed, under trees, grass area, in the shade, near a pond).

Sunlight, water, air, food (nutrients) and a habitat are what all life requires. Record the insects and pollinators in your habitat — these will probably include bees, which are the most recognisable pollinators! Photograph the invertebrates that you find and use identification guides to research them.

As a group, choose the main theme of your habitat, how you will record your findings and what kind of charts and graphs you'll use to present your results.



EN 5670

Part 2

Using what you have learned **prepare for a visit to an arable farm**. Brainstorm the questions you'll ask and the habitats and ecosystems you expect to find at the farm. Headings might include: type of crops grown; sowing and rotation practices; machinery used; and market for the crop. Select volunteers to ask the questions during the visit.

Take your camera on your visit to prepare for a photoessay on your return. Identify the environmental protections the farmer has put in place. The EU supports its farmers in managing the environment while producing high-quality food. Note how pollution is prevented and fertilisers are spread. Is the farmer involved in any environmental schemes to protect and enhance biodiversity on the farm? For example, are field margins left uncultivated, wildlife habitats maintained, biodiversity encouraged and sprays avoided?

When you return to class use the photos that your group has taken to create a photoessay. Decide on your theme and select and edit a series of photographs so that they are arranged to tell the story of your theme and through this how the EU can help its farmers to preserve natural resources. Add captions to your slideshow photoessay and present it to your 'audience'.

Did you know that around 85 % of European crop plants rely, at least in part, on pollination via insects, such as wild bees, honeybees and hoverflies?