



The Natural World

Note-taking: rock pool surveys | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. What natural places can students study near the sea?
2. Why should people be careful around rock pools?
3. What information could students record during a field trip?
4. How can school trips protect wildlife?

Exercise 3 at a glance

In this activity, you will read one factual text and complete notes using information from the text. In the exam, this task is usually worth 7 marks. This practice version includes extra notes to help you build confidence. Use short words or phrases from the text, not your own ideas.

2. Read for overall understanding

Read the text. Why are rock pool surveys useful for students?

Rock Pool Surveys

Rock pools are small pools of seawater left behind when the tide goes out. They can contain crabs, small fish, shells, seaweed and other living things. Schools sometimes organise rock pool surveys because they help students observe wildlife carefully and record changes in a natural habitat. A short visit can show how much life exists in a small area.

Before students begin, teachers explain safety rules. Students must check tide times, wear shoes with good grip and avoid turning over heavy rocks. If they lift a small stone, they should replace it gently because animals may be hiding underneath. Students are also told not to remove living creatures from the shore.

During the survey, groups record what they find in each pool. They may count different species, note the water temperature and sketch where seaweed is growing. Some classes compare pools near busy paths with pools further away. This can lead to discussion about pollution, tourism and how visitors affect coastal habitats.

Rock pool work needs patience. Many animals hide quickly when shadows move across the water, so students must watch quietly before making notes. The best surveys are repeated at different times of year because some species are easier to see in particular seasons. Students often leave with a stronger respect for the natural world and the need to protect it.

Teachers usually prepare students before the trip by showing pictures of common species. This helps students recognise a crab, limpet or anemone without touching it unnecessarily. They may also practise using a simple recording sheet in the classroom. After the visit, students can compare their findings and discuss why two groups looking at nearby pools may record different results. This turns the trip into a scientific investigation rather than a simple day out.

The activity can also teach students about responsible tourism. If visitors step carelessly, leave litter or collect shells with living creatures inside, the habitat can be damaged. Students therefore learn that enjoying nature and protecting it must happen at the same time.

Back in class, students can use their notes to create charts or short reports. This follow-up matters because fieldwork is not only about collecting information; students also need to organise results and explain what they might show.

Students may also compare their findings with information from conservation groups. This helps them see whether their small survey connects with wider environmental monitoring.

3. Strategy focus

Match notes to purpose

Some details describe safety rules, while others describe scientific observations. Check the heading before copying a note.

4. Practice note-taking task

Complete the notes using information from the text. Use short words or phrases from the text. Do not add your own ideas.

Notes	Write short answers
Wildlife found in rock pools	- - -
Safety rules	- - -
Information students record	- - -
Survey challenges and benefits	- - -

5. Vocabulary notebook

Underline five useful words or phrases from the text. Check their meaning, then record them in your vocabulary notebook.

6. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: What rules should students follow on a wildlife field trip?
2. Strategy: Choose three answers and underline the exact phrase in the text, stopping before extra explanation begins.
3. Writing: Write a short field-trip guide for students visiting rock pools.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to animals, landscapes and conservation.

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Note-taking: rock pool surveys

2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: they help students observe wildlife carefully and record changes in a natural habitat.

4. Practice note-taking task

Wildlife found in rock pools

- crabs
- small fish
- seaweed

Safety rules

- check tide times
- wear shoes with good grip
- avoid turning over heavy rocks

Information students record

- different species
- water temperature
- where seaweed is growing

Survey challenges and benefits

- animals hide quickly
- surveys are repeated at different times of year / repeated at different times of year
- stronger respect for the natural world

Notes for checking

This is an extended practice version of the IGCSE ESL note-taking task. The live exam normally has fewer marks, but this version includes extra notes to build confidence and selection skills.

Accept short phrases that keep the same meaning.

Learners should avoid copying a whole sentence if a shorter note answers the heading.

Some answers need more than one or two words, especially when the key detail is a phrase.