

**Relaxed Farming Diary Topic Starters**  
**ENGLISH – Drama plus Science**

**‘Farmyard hullabaloo’ - animal communication**

Year: 3 or 4	Programme of Study: ENGLISH: Spoken language
<b>ENGLISH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Spoken language:</b> participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates</li> </ul>
<b>Science</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Working scientifically:</b> report on findings from enquiries, including oral and written explanations, displays or presentations of results and conclusions</li> </ul>
<b>Main Story</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Smallholding Hullabaloo – Autumn 2013</b></li> </ul>
<b>Diary Index</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content: Livestock: Behaviour - Social/Communication</li> <li>Content: Livestock: Behaviour - General</li> </ul>
<b>Elsewhere on the RF site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video Stories: Smallholding hullabaloo</li> <li>Photo Stories: Naughty or haughty</li> <li>Video Stories: Any of the animals feeding or playing</li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Communicate, communication, cacophony, onomatopoeia
<b>Other Reading/ Resources</b>	<p><b>Books and websites</b></p> <p>Any ‘Early Years’ books about farm animals and the noises they make</p> <p><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t25uVPsNUkE">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t25uVPsNUkE</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t99ULJjCsaM">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t99ULJjCsaM</a></p>

**The Relaxed Farming Story**

There are at least 10 different types of animals on the Relaxed smallholding and they all make their own sounds. The noise at feeding time can be deafening! But what are all those noises? Why do the animals make them? In what other ways do they communicate? Are there any links with human communication? This Topic Starter seeks to help children answer some of these questions.

**Introduction**

- Animal sounds.** Ask the children what sounds they think farm animals make. Maybe share an ‘Early Years’ book where sheep say ‘Baa’ and pigs say ‘Oink!’ Look at the *Diary stories under ‘Smallholding Hullabaloo’* about the animal cacophony at feeding time on the Relaxed smallholding and other stories. Watch the *Video Story: ‘Smallholding hullabaloo’* Does it sound like lunchtime at school? Do children just talk or do they shout, squeal, laugh, whisper, etc? Animals also make more than just one noise!!
- Why do animals make noise?** Allow children time to discuss or research before sharing ideas. It may help to start with asking: Why do children and adults make noise? Humans and animals communicate for many reasons: friendship and greetings, excitement, anticipating food, happiness, fear and alarm, aggression and fighting, warning others to stay away, searching for others, searching for parents or young, mating, telling each other who is the boss...
- Animal communication.** Allow children to do some independent research about animal communication – Independent Science activities 1 and 2 before moving on.  
Ensure that children understand that animals can communicate in many other ways, not just by making noises – posture and strutting like poultry, spitting like alpacas, teeth snapping like dogs, tail waving and wagging like dogs, goats, lambs and turkeys, colour changes like turkeys, wing flapping like cockerels, feet stamping like rabbits and goats, sniffing and scent production...

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**Teaching and Learning**

**Science Activities**

- **Independent 1:**  
**How many noises do the Relaxed animal s make** - re-read the *Diary extract* for 15<sup>th</sup> October 2013 and then explore the Relaxed smallholding website (especially the *Video Story: ‘Smallholding hullabaloo’*) to find out what the range of different noises that the animals make are - e.g. chickens don’t just cluck! What other sounds can they make? Make a table of all the animals on the farm and write words to describe the sounds they make: e.g. turkeys gobble, yelp, cackle and purr. How do animals make sounds? Vocal cords, wings, feet, teeth, etc.
- **Independent 2:**  
**How the animals make their noises** - explore the Relaxed smallholding website to find out in what other ways animals can communicate with one another. Use the *Diary Index to look up Content: Livestock: Behaviour - Social/Communication* plus and sections on individual animals to find out more. Children could produce a spider diagram to show the different ways they have found and then share with the class.

**Drama Activities**

- **Small groups:**  
**Happy or not** - give children pictures of the alpacas with different expressions (*resource supplied: 1* plus *Photo Story: Naughty or Haughty*). Can children guess what emotion the alpaca might be trying to communicate and can they then make an appropriate noise (you might want to tell them that alpacas hum)? Can they then perform for other children to guess the alpaca’s emotion?
- **Small groups:**  
**Change of mood** - in small groups the children can act out being a flock of chickens, a herd of sheep etc. The adult to introduce a different emotion or a change, e.g. food, a predator or new addition to the group. Children should then change their behaviour and animal sounds to match. This can be repeated several times. Small groups could perform to the rest of the class who try to guess what is being communicated.
- **Adult-led:**  
**What noise** - children make animal noises as whole class – farmyard hullabaloo. Adult or confident child ‘conducts’ the group by quietening groups/flocks/herds of animals gradually and then adding them back in. Predator could be released across the farm – how do noises change? Children could find out in what order animals go to bed at night and wake in the morning – this could be coordinated by the ‘conductor’.

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**English Activities**

- **Independent:**  
**How to say hello** - children could write information texts about one or two animals on the farm to describe the different ways they communicate and to compare and contrast them. Or they could write a similar text comparing the communication of an animal on the farm with human communication.
- **Independent:**  
**Check the mood** - children choose one animal and carry out some independent research about their communication. Their findings could be written up as a report with annotated drawings or video. For example they could find out about turkeys and how and why the males change colour, or all the various calls that chickens, cockerels and chicks make. Or they could choose one type of communication, e.g. tail movement and describe how different animals use their tails in different ways to communicate – dogs wave them in excitement, turkeys fan theirs when they’re looking for a mate, etc.
- **Adult-led:**  
**Cluck, cluck** - do children know the word onomatopoeia? This is used to describe when a word sounds like its meaning, e.g. bang, plop, etc. Most animal sounds are onomatopoeic. This could lead into a lesson on onomatopoeia and word formation.
- **Adult-led:**  
Listen to one or two simple songs on YouTube about the sounds that the animals make, e.g. ‘My dog goes bow-wow, my cat goes miaow, my cow goes moo moo and the rooster cock-a-doodle doo!’ (two suggested links above) How could children re-write this song based on what they now know about animal sounds?

**Plenary/ Talk Topics**

- Do all animals make a noise? What about rabbits? How do they communicate?
- A lot of communication is about ‘speaking’, looking and listening. What about humans and animals who have lost one or more of these senses. Would a blind sheep survive? What about a deaf chicken? How would the loss of a sense affect an animal?
- If you couldn’t make any noise with your vocal cords, how would you communicate? Do children know about signing or any British Sign Language (BSL) signs?
- How could you make some changes to the ‘Early Years’ book used in the introduction? What would very young children say if you told them that chickens don’t just cluck, they squawk, peep, cock-a-doodle, flap, etc.