



## Nature Story Walk

Most of our native creatures, particularly mammals, are very hard to see. Especially if you have a group of noisy kids!

This is a group activity, firmly led by the storyteller. Use question and answer as a means of piecing the story together. Put in the information where necessary.

The object of this story is to create a picture of what might have been seen. A piece of evidence which proves a creature was here, at this very spot, is an excellent starting point. (It's a very good idea to know where you are going to find something – or even plant something in advance. A little preparation goes a long way.)

Keep repeating the story as it develops. Always look for fun phrases, like **bum shuffly** and repetitions, like **sniff, sniff, sniffing**. Create actions, especially with smaller children and keep using them.

The example below stems from a time when I found a spot where a badger run passed under a fence. It could be any creature and any piece of evidence.

There are two ways to go with this. It can turn into a fantastic story, where the badger has a magic carpet and ends up on a planet made of chocolate, or you can keep it real.

### Badger Story

Here is a spot that a badger used to squeeze under a fence.

*But what happened before that?*

He came down this path.

*How did he come down the path? How do badgers move? Do they hop? Do they leap?*

He walked.

*How do they walk?*

He walked in a bum shuffly sort of way (**action**).

*Okay he walked in a bum shuffly way. Wwhat was he doing as he walked along?*

He was looking all around (**action**).

*And what else?*

He was sniffing **(action)**

*Did he just sniff once? Was he doing it all the time?*

Okay, so our badger came walking down this path in a bum shuffly sort of way, looking around and looking around, sniff, sniff, sniffing, sniff, sniff, sniffing as he went.

*So where was he before his walk?*

He was at home. Where is a badger's home? What is it called?

*So what was he doing in his set?*

Sleeping

*To go for his walk he had to wake up. When do badgers like to wake up?*

When it's getting dark.

*So the badger wakes up from a deep, deep sleep, just as it's getting dark. What does he do first?*

Has a great big yawn **(action)**

*And what else?*

He has a good scratch **(action)**

*By the way, what's the badger called?*

Benny

Okay, here's the story so far.

*Benny the badger is sleeping in his set, in the woods just up there. He wakes up from a deep, deep sleep, just as it's getting dark.*

*He has a great big yawn **(action)** and a good scratch, scratch, scratch **(action)**.*

*He peers around and has a good big sniff (**action**). Then off he sets down this path.*

*He walks in a bum shuffly sort of way (**action**), looking all around (**action**) and sniff, sniff, sniffing, sniff, sniff, sniffing (**action**) as he goes.*

*And that brings him right to the spot where we are standing now!*

*What happens next? Let's move on and see if we can find anything Benny might have been interested in.*

Now you have created Benny you can take him on the walk with you. You can bring him in at any point, "What would Benny think of this?" to investigate any new discovery.

John Hamilton 2007

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