

# Build THE Change

## ACTIVITY

## DEN BUILDING



### You Will Need

#### For a miniature den:

- Art materials, such as paper, wooden sticks, pipe cleaners or clay
- LEGO or DUPLO bricks

#### For a lifesize den:

- Blankets and pillows
- Large sticks
- Logs and bricks

Just like we live in homes of all different shapes and sizes, so do animals! Animals build or find homes that suit all of their unique needs and often come up with imaginative ways to make their homes exactly what they need. In this activity, create a den suitable for an animal of your choice, and learn more about its way of life!

### What to do:

**STEP 1** Choose an animal to create a den for. It could be your favourite animal, one you see a lot or one of the examples we have given. Take a look at some of the examples below for inspiration. You can design a den for one of these amazing animals, or do some research on your favourite species and create something brand new!

#### Beavers

Beavers are some of the most creative creatures when it comes to designing dens! Groups of beavers will gather twigs and logs, and even fell (or chop down) trees to build dams. These dams stop the flow of rivers and create ponds that offer a great food supply and protect them from predators.

#### Little Grebe

Little Grebes are birds that build their nests from aquatic plants and twigs, creating a home that floats on the surface of the water. They will camouflage the nest from predators by building it in shallow waters surrounded by tall plants, and building an anchor that stops the nest from floating away. Being on the water means they have food nearby. Little Grebes cover their eggs with more plants to keep the temperature just right!





## Leaf Cutter Bees

These buzzing bees brilliantly build their habitats out of small sections of leaves. The female bees cut these sections with their mouths, and then chew them up to make pulp, a material that is a bit like paper mache! They use this pulp to create small cells, tiny nest-like structures with lids, in which they lay their eggs. They build these cells in spaces, such as hollow stems of plants, rotting wood or holes in bricks and window frames.



**STEP 2** Think about what your den will need to include. If you're unsure where to start, you could sketch out your ideas on some paper before you begin designing, thinking about the different aspects you want to include. Some examples might be -

- What does your animal need to live?
- What does their den need to be made of?
- Does their den need to keep them warm or cool?
- Where will the den be located?
- Does their den need any other specific qualities, like being dry or waterproof?
- What materials will you need?

**STEP 3** Decide if you will build a miniature model or a lifesize den. Your materials and the location that you build your den might vary if you are creating a big or small home.

**STEP 4** Begin building! This is the fun part - be as creative as possible and use any materials you might have. Think about all of the details that might make life easier for your animal.

**STEP 5** Once you have built your den, think about how you could improve it - could you add extra support, or use different materials to make it more suitable? You could also think about how the den might need to be adapted as the effects of climate change get worse. Will the den be ok if there are changes in temperature or rainfall? Will the den need to be moved to a different location?