



GENERATION *WILD*

AVA'S DESTINY

Creating lasting and meaningful connections with nature through storytelling and adventure



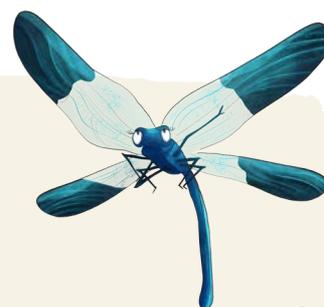
TEACHERS' GUIDE



Introducing Generation Wild: Ava's Destiny

Generation Wild is a project connecting children with nature. It has been developed to benefit schools, children and their families as well as the natural world itself. The project is offered completely free (including free school visit and transport) to eligible schools in disadvantaged areas.* It is aimed at children aged 5-11.

This teachers' guide will talk you through everything you need to know as you work through the project with us.



Contents

Part 1: Rationale and approach	3
Part 2: Introducing Ava	6
Part 3: Preparing for the school visit	10
Part 4: The school visit	12
Part 5: Promoting the website and free family visits	15
Part 6: Following up back at school	16
Part 7: Timetable and checklist	19

*Eligibility determined by the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. This varies by centre and is subject to change. Click [here](#) to check the eligibility criteria for your nearest centre.



WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY

Part 1: Rationale and approach

Why was the project developed?

Evidence shows that connecting with nature makes children feel happier, increases their self-esteem and improves their behaviour as well as their physical and mental health. It also develops their creativity, imagination, teamwork, communication and observational skills. All of this leads to improved learning.

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds have fewer opportunities to connect with nature. Through the project, we will work with schools in disadvantaged communities, with these schools acting as gateways into the wider community.

Just as children need nature, nature needs children too. It is only by experiencing nature that children will come to love it, respect it and take action to protect it. Generation Wild will inspire the next generation of nature lovers.

What do we mean by connecting with nature?

Connecting with nature involves more than simply spending time in natural environments. In order to gain maximum benefit, people need to interact directly with the environment and wildlife around them. Rather than looking at nature from the outside, they need to experience it directly; feel it, hear it, smell it as well as see it. Most importantly, they need to feel part of nature, rather than separate from it.

All of the activities in Generation Wild are designed to connect people with nature through the five pathways identified by the University of Derby: senses, emotion, compassion, meaning and beauty.



Senses



Beauty



Emotion



Compassion



Meaning

[Find out more](#)



Linking with the curriculum



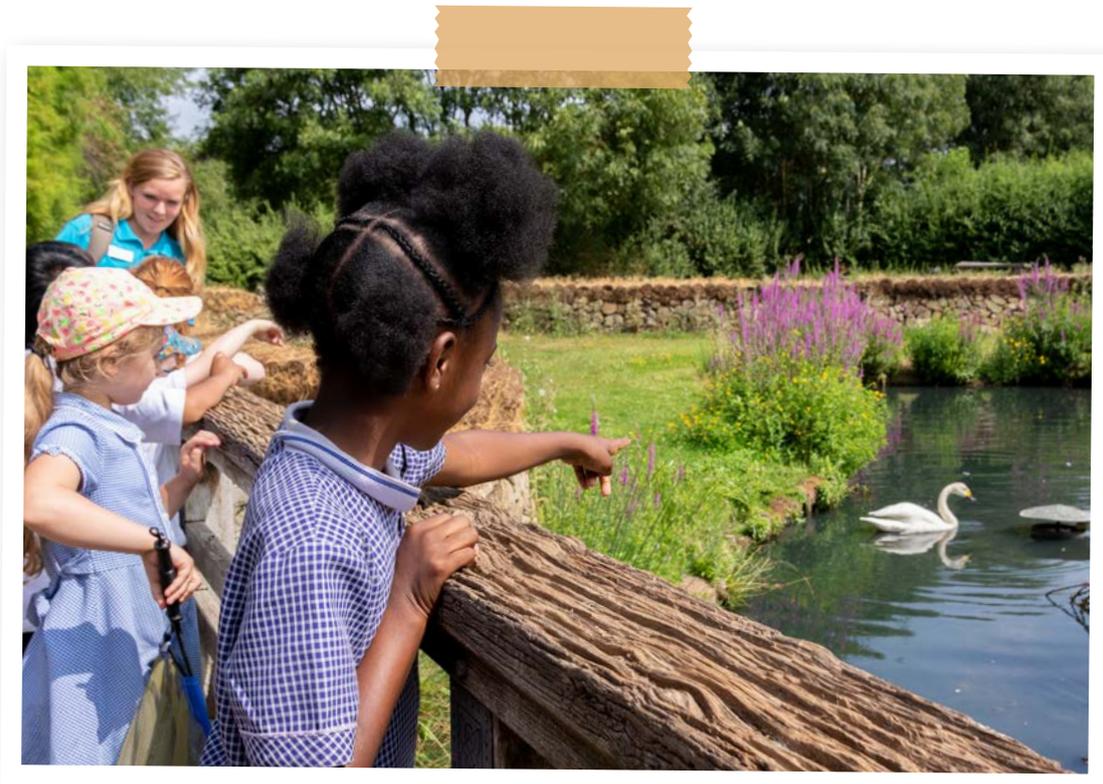
Generation Wild provides great opportunities to link with your curriculum. We have developed in-depth [curriculum-linked resources](#) for geography and science as well as ideas for how elements of the project can link with other curriculum areas.

Engaging with disadvantaged communities

Many within disadvantaged communities feel that nature is not for them. They worry that they won't fit in, that they don't have all of the right equipment and clothing, that they don't know the names of all of the animals. We believe that nature should be for everyone and aim to break down these barriers.

Why wetlands? Why WWT?

Water seems to be preferred by people, for their mental health. Our wetland centres provide the perfect start for schools and families wanting to explore nature. We have facilities such as restaurants, toilets and play areas as well as wilder areas where you can become immersed in the wetland environment. Guides are on hand to help people spot and enjoy the wildlife on offer. They are the ideal stepping-stone from visitor attraction to nature reserve.



Working together

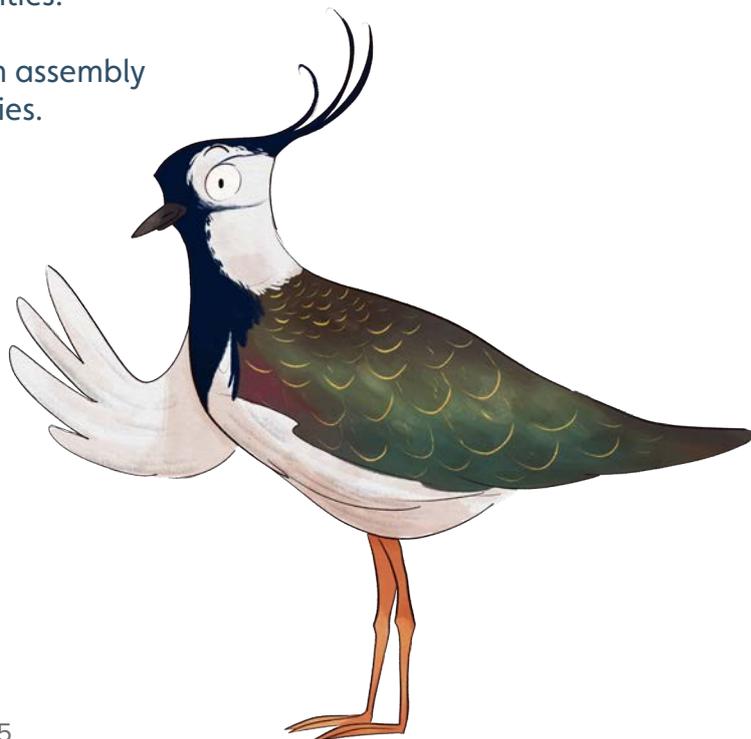
Generation Wild has been designed to connect disadvantaged children and their families with nature. We recognise that we can't do this alone. It is only by working together that we can create a long-lasting emotional connection that will stay with them throughout their lives.

WWT will:

- Admit your class to visit the wetland centre for a Generation Wild trip free of charge.
- Pay your transport costs up to a maximum of £9 per pupil.
- Provide a free family visit voucher for every child that comes on a Generation Wild trip, providing free entry on a single day for up to two adults and children from the same family.
- Provide access to the project website to you and your pupils.
- Provide access to curriculum-linked resources to help you to plan Generation Wild work into your wider curriculum work.

We would like you to:

- Read the illustrated story 'Ava's destiny' to the children before your visit.
- Work your way through Ava's audio updates on the website after your visit so that all children get to hear the end of the story.
- Encourage families to visit the project website after your visit to complete and evidence nature connection activities.
- Help to promote the free family visits.
- Give out certificates and pin badges in assembly to any child that completes ten activities.





WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY

Part 2: Introducing Ava

We have taken an exciting, narrative-based approach that we think will really engage children. It is based on the story of Ava the bird girl. Through the project activities, children discover more about her and follow her towards her ultimate destiny.

Prior to their school visit, children are introduced to Ava and her family through a digital illustrated story book. As well as being introduced to Ava's story, they also learn about ospreys and their lives. They witness Ava and her two siblings emerging from the egg, growing up and taking their first flights.



Ava is warned not to fly too close to the wetland centre because past persecution has led to a fear of humans. However, when she sees a giant nest from a distance, the temptation is too great. She lands on the nest and falls into a deep sleep. As she slumbers, an extraordinary transformation occurs as she becomes part bird, part girl. For Ava, nothing will ever be quite the same again...





At the beginning of their school visit, the children stumble upon the giant nest (a 2m wide structure). Ava, in life-size puppet form, introduces herself and explains that she's unsure who she is, where she's from or how she got there.

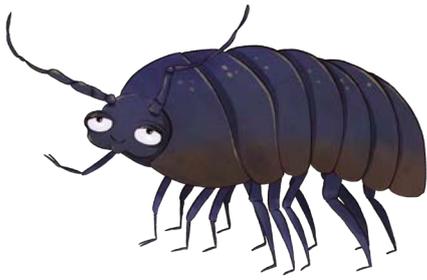
She thinks the animals on site might be able to tell her but they won't talk to her. They're afraid of her because of her part bird, part human form. She thinks they might talk to the children and has made magical 'translatorphones' that allow them to listen in on what the animals are saying (these 'magical' objects have a speaker embedded into them and the sound is triggered at 'listening posts').

The animals are initially distrustful of the children because humans have become disconnected from nature. Therefore, the children carry out nature-connection activities to prove that they are willing to connect with the rest of the natural world. Only then will the creatures reveal their secrets.

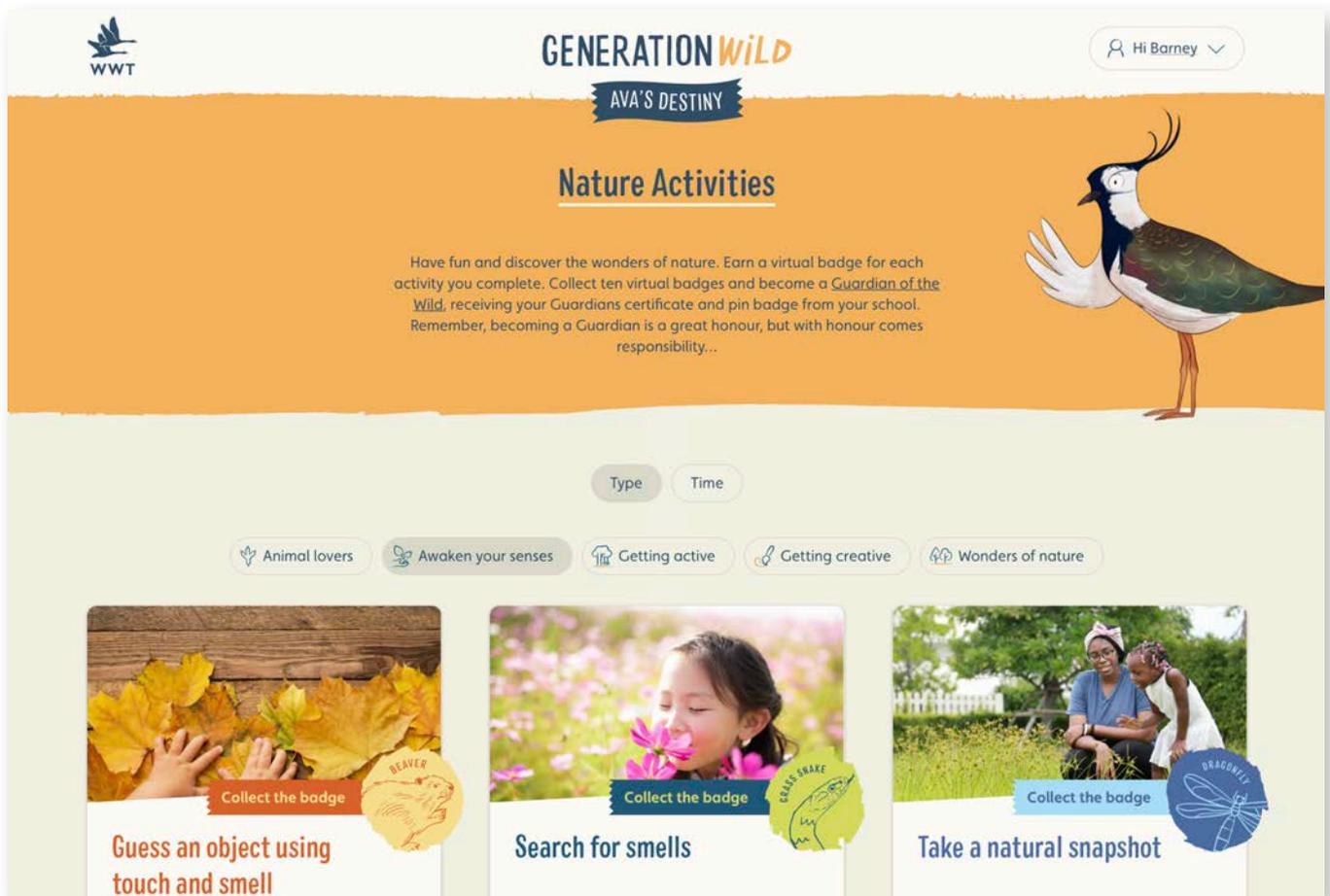
The creatures reveal how they saw Ava transform into her current form when she landed on the nest. She needs to migrate to West Africa if she is to be re-united with her family. When she reaches The Gambia, she must present to the Guardians of the Wild, a great council of animals that look after the earth. She must persuade them that the children she has met are different from many other humans; they are determined to re-connect with nature and to care for it. Any child that is able to prove this will themselves become a Guardian of the Wild - an honour never before bestowed on humans.



The visit ends with Ava disappearing into the distance on her quest to find her family and the Guardians of the Wild.



Back at home and at school, children will log into a website where they will track Ava's migration, the story continuing through a series of audio 'blog posts'. They will witness her completing her journey, being re-united with her family and presenting to the Guardians of the Wild who reveal that Ava's coming was foretold in an ancient fable. The legend said that when humankind's destruction of the natural world reached a critical point, a magic nest would appear. It would hold a strange power that would repel most living creatures, except one, who would be drawn to it. When the chosen bird landed in the nest, an extraordinary transformation would occur. In part-human form, this bird would bridge the divide between humans and other animals, re-ignite humans' love and respect of nature and ultimately set a course of events in motion that would change the world.



WWT

GENERATION **WILD**

AVA'S DESTINY

Hi Barney

Nature Activities

Have fun and discover the wonders of nature. Earn a virtual badge for each activity you complete. Collect ten virtual badges and become a *Guardian of the Wild*, receiving your Guardians certificate and pin badge from your school. Remember, becoming a Guardian is a great honour, but with honour comes responsibility...

Type Time

Animal lovers Awaken your senses Getting active Getting creative Wonders of nature

Collect the badge **Guess an object using touch and smell** BEAVER

Collect the badge **Search for smells** GRASS SNAKE

Collect the badge **Take a natural snapshot** DRAGONFLY

The website will host a range of nature-connection activities that can be completed in school grounds, gardens and local greenspaces. Any child that completes 10 activities, whether in school or with their families, will be accepted as Guardians of the Wild and will receive a Guardians badge and certificate.



WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY

Themes within Ava's Destiny

The narrative of Ava's Destiny covers a few different themes that might be worth discussing with your pupils.

Being different

Ava is not like other birds. She has wings and bird legs but much of her is human. This might be an opportunity to discuss what it might be like to feel different from those around you.

Being alone/isolated/separated from parents

Ava's parents have migrated to West Africa whilst she remains in the UK. It is worth bearing in mind emotions this might raise among children who don't live with their parents.

Migratory Journey

The website focusses on Ava's migratory journey as she travels to West Africa. Some children may have experienced migration, perhaps even to escape challenging situations abroad (eg refugee and asylum seeking children). This is a great opportunity for you to explore with your class how Ava might be feeling on this journey.



WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY

Part 3: Preparing for the school visit

The following sections talk through the project activities themselves. This is all summarised in a checklist for teachers at the end of this guide.

Teacher briefing session

Before your visit, we would like to invite you to attend one of our teacher briefing sessions where we will be able to introduce the project in more detail and answer any questions you may have.

Introducing Ava's story

We ask that before you come on the visit, you don't mention anything that will happen on the visit or the remainder of the project. This is to keep the element of wonder and surprise when pupils stumble upon the nest and meet Ava for the first time (see school visit section). All we ask you do before the visit is read the illustrated story '[Ava's Destiny](#)' to the children without reference to WWT or the project (as though it was just a normal story like any other you might use in the classroom). As you go through the story, you can click on the info buttons to reveal factual information linked to that part of the narrative.

Linking with your curriculum

Prior to your visit, you might also like to look at some of the [curriculum-linked resources](#) to see where these could fit into your existing plans.

Setting up the website

Once signed up to the project, you will receive a log-in for the [Generation Wild website](#). When you log-in for the first time, you will be invited to set up log-ins for each of your pupils. This means they will be able to start to enjoy the website with their families as soon as you have visited. Please also check that your class details are correct. You can then start to familiarise yourself with the website and how everything works.

The screenshot shows the login page for the Generation Wild website. At the top left is the WWT logo. In the center, it says 'GENERATION WILD' and 'AVA'S DESTINY'. On the top right, there is a 'Log in' button. Below this, there is a large orange banner with the text 'Log in' in white. Underneath the banner, there are two buttons: 'I'm a pupil' (teal) and 'I'm a teacher' (dark blue). Below these buttons, there is a message: 'No need to remember a password, get a magic link sent to your email that will sign you in with one click.' Below this message is an 'Email address' input field. At the bottom, there are two buttons: 'Send magic link' (teal) and 'Use a password' (white with a grey border), separated by the word 'or'.



Transport

We are able to cover the cost of your transport up to a maximum of £9 per pupil. Any underspend can be used to open up this opportunity to more schools and children so please bear this in mind. Please ask your bursar / business manager to fill in our [online form](#) so that we are able to pay for your transport. **Please note: They only need to fill in fields marked with an asterisk. They can leave all other fields blank.** They will then be able to submit an invoice for the cost of transport following the visit. This invoice must come from your school. **We are unable to pay coach companies directly.**

Clothing and footwear

Children and accompanying adults will be spending the whole day outdoors so please come dressed and prepared for the weather. Because the activities promote direct contact with nature, both children and adults may get dirty so please bear this in mind when suggesting to parents what the children should wear.

Accessibility and inclusivity

All of the Generation Wild trails are wheelchair accessible. However, if there has been heavy rain, parts of the trail may be a bit muddy. Generation Wild is delivered through a mix of audio and visual activities. Please let us know if any pupils need adaptations on the day.

Health and safety

You can find a copy of our risk assessment on the [resources for schools page of the website](#). If you require any further information to help you ensure a safe visit, please get in touch with the relevant learning team who will be more than willing to help you.





WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY

Part 4: The school visit

When you first arrive on your school visit, no mention will be made of the activities to come. You will 'accidentally' stumble across the giant nest and meet Ava. Through a five minute puppet show, Ava will introduce the story so far.

You will then split into groups for an activity trail. Ideally you will split into six groups, each with an adult from your group. There are three activity trails; red, green and blue. Two groups can complete each trail as the activities can be completed in any order.

Each trail consists of three listening posts, each with an associated nature-connection activity. The group leader will be provided with a guide containing a map showing the location of each post. Upon arrival at each post, the adult should read the activity instructions displayed on the post. The children will then complete the activity.

It is important that the activity is completed before the audio from the translatorphone is triggered otherwise the audio won't make sense. It also contradicts the narrative where children are showing they're prepared to connect with nature before the animals are willing to talk to them.





WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY



Unless stated, children can complete these activities as individuals, pairs or larger groups – whichever they prefer. The adult should play a supporting role, ensuring the children know what to do but should leave the children to work independently as far as possible. The adult also has an important role as timekeeper ensuring that all three posts are able to be visited in the time allowed. It doesn't matter if the children don't get to finish every activity so long as they get a feel for each. These same activities are included on the website so any the children really enjoy can be repeated back at home / school. The adult should keep the group moving and avoid stopping on the journey between posts. There will be time in the day to have a good look around.

Once the activity has been completed (or time run out), one member of the group will place the listening device on the post. This will trigger the audio and the animal will reveal its secrets. There are some questions on the map for groups to answer and each creature will reveal the answer to one or more of these questions. It is best that they listen to the audio all the way through before trying to answer the questions, otherwise they tend to miss some of the audio as they're discussing and writing. Depending on the age and ability of the children, the adult may want to jot down the answers.

When they get back to the nest, they will be asked to tell a WWT member of staff or volunteer what they found out and they will then relay this to Ava in advance of the puppet finale.

The experience ends with a further five minute puppet performance where Ava will thank the children for finding out who she is and what she needs to do. The children will help Ava learn to fly and the experience ends with Ava disappearing into the distance as she begins her quest to find her family and the Guardians of the Wild.

We know that some of the children won't have visited the wetlands before. During the time when you are not involved in the above experience, do feel free to explore the wetland centre at your leisure. There's lots to see and do. Please visit our website and select the relevant centre for further details.



WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY



Repeat visits

Generation Wild is a three year project. We encourage repeat year-on-year visits so long as you bring a different group of children each year.

Following your visit

After your visit, we request that you complete our [short feedback survey](#). You can also send the invoice for the cost of your transport (we will pay the actual cost you incurred up to a maximum of £9 per pupil) to Purchaseledger@wwt.org.uk.

Please use the subject header: Generation Wild school transport invoice.

Unfortunately we will be unable to pay your invoice unless it includes the following details:

- * Cost centre: EXR001
- * The name of the Learning Manager at the centre you visited

**This invoice must come from your school.
We are unable to pay coach companies directly.**





WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY

Part 5: Promoting the website and free family visits

During your visit, you will be provided with the following items (all one per pupil):

1. Envelopes containing a free family visit ticket and some information promoting the Generation Wild website.



Please write on each child's name and their website password (see 'setting up website' section above) and hand these out as soon as possible following the visit.

2. Guardians of the Wild certificates and pin badges.

Please don't give these out straight away. These are to be awarded to each child once they have completed ten nature activities and become a Guardian of the Wild. You will receive an email notification each time a child completes their tenth activity. It would be great if you could then award them their badge and certificate in assembly.



Because encouraging on-going engagement at home is such an important part of the project, it would be great if you could promote the website and free visits to families through any digital channels, newsletters etc.



Part 6: Following up back at school

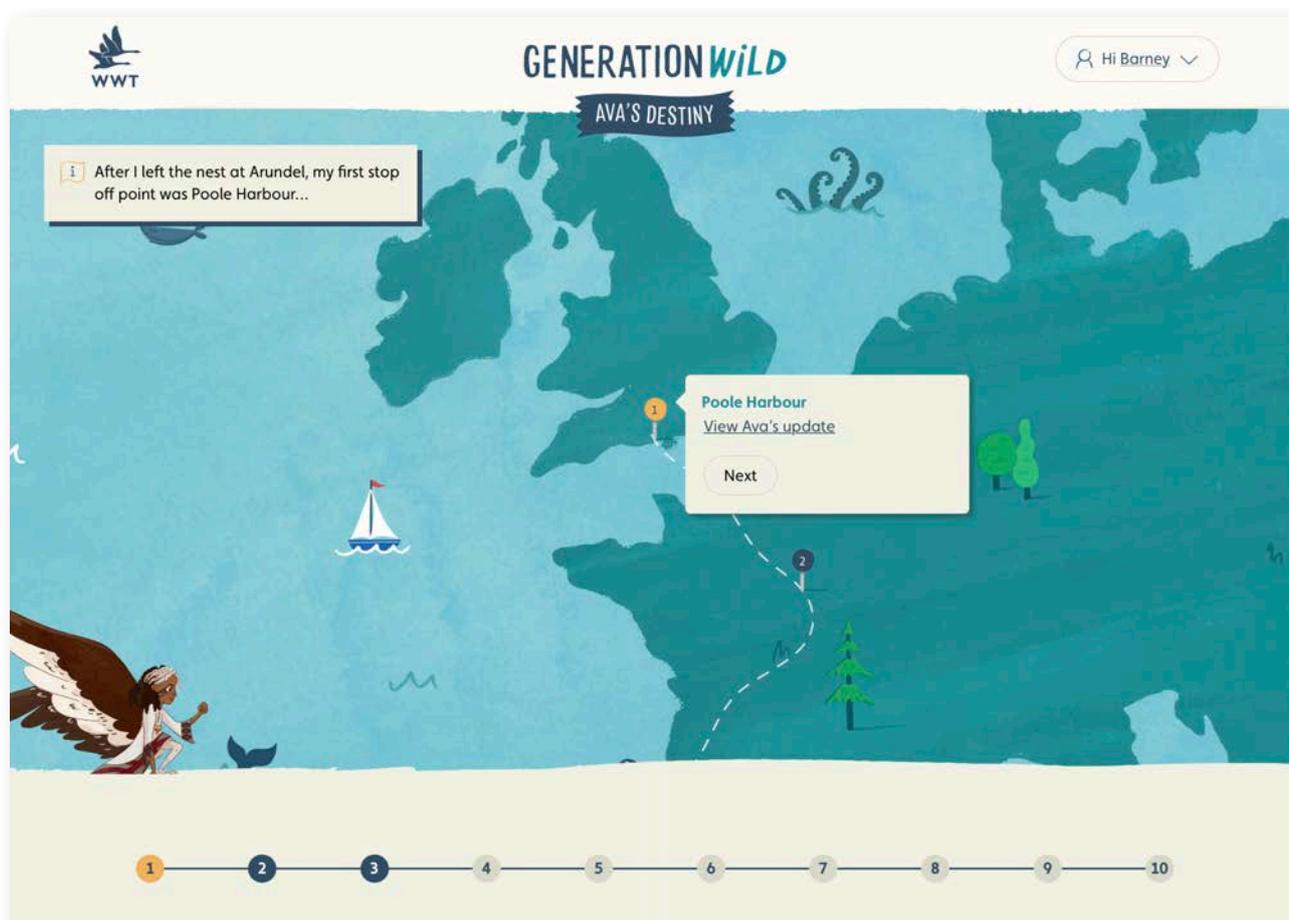
The project website

Follow-up activity is managed through the project website at www.generationwild.org.uk. It has two main elements, which are open to you as a teacher and to each family:

1 Tracking Ava's progress

On the website you can track Ava's progress as she continues her journey. There is an interactive map and at each stopping-off point you can hear an audio update from Ava herself, continuing her story. You can work your way through these updates at your own pace.

NOTE: Through the teacher controls, you can control the rate at which children can progress through the updates with their families. This is to ensure that everyone works through the story together and doesn't jump ahead.





WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY

2 Nature connection activities

The website contains approximately 50 different nature connection activities. These activities have been developed with a range of children in mind and are divided into five different categories:

Animal lovers: These activities involve direct contact with, or observation of, wildlife. They promote empathy and kindness towards other animals.

Awaken your senses: These activities involve experiencing nature through the full range of senses. Through these activities, children become completely immersed in the natural world.

Getting creative: These activities involve making things, creating art with natural materials and exploring the environment through language and drama. They encourage creativity and imagination.

Getting active: These activities encourage enjoyment of nature through natural play. They are great for active learners who prefer a hands-on approach.

Wonders of nature: These activities encourage children to take a closer look and take time to appreciate the beauty and wonder of nature. Many are quiet, contemplative activities that have an element of mindfulness.

Each activity has an associated virtual animal badge awarded to each child once the activity is completed. Pupils are automatically awarded the badge when they complete and evidence an activity at home. You can also award badges to children through the pupil tracker if they complete them in school or are unable to evidence them at home.

Once children have completed ten activities they become a Guardian of the Wild. You will receive an email alert to let you know and we ask that you arrange for them to be awarded their badge and certificate in assembly.

Classes whose children complete the greatest number of activities will be entered into a prize draw to win the creation of a wetland in your school grounds (alternative prize available where this isn't possible).



WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY

Follow-up activity in school

It's up to you how long your continued engagement lasts. We are suggesting 4-6 weeks but this will obviously depend on where your visit fits into the school calendar. We do ask that you work your way through all of the updates so that all children are able to conclude the story.

As a minimum, we ask that you log in once a week to:

- **Hear Ava's latest update(s)**
- **Review how many nature connection activities each child has completed**, offering praise and encouragement

We also ask that you arrange for children to receive their Guardians of the Wild certificates and pin badges in assembly. You will receive an email alert each time a pupil completes their tenth activity.

If you are able to spare more time, it would be fantastic if you could:

- **Complete a nature connection activity each week with your class.** Most of these take less than 15 minutes and require no preparation or equipment. You can then award the relevant badge to pupils.
- **Set one of the nature connection activities each week for homework.** You don't have to set a specific activity, you could just ask that they complete an activity of their choice or you could ask them to complete a certain type of activity (e.g. one week a 'getting creative' activity, the next week a 'getting active' activity and so on).





WWT

GENERATION
WILD

AVA'S DESTINY

Part 7: Timetable / checklist for teachers

Once your booking is confirmed

- Receive your log-in for the [Generation Wild website](#).
- Set up website log-ins for each of your pupils (via the class settings page).
- Familiarise yourself with the project website.
- Take a look at the [curriculum-linked resources](#) to see if any elements of the project can tie in with your existing curriculum work.
- Ask your bursar / business manager to complete this [online form](#) so that we can set up the finance systems to enable us to pay the cost of your transport for the school visit.

Preparing for your visit

- Read the [Ava's Destiny story](#) with your class. Explore their thoughts on what might happen next.
- Familiarise yourself with the risk assessment on the resources for schools page.

Immediately following the school visit

- Complete our [short feedback survey](#).
- Write each child's name and their website password on the take-home envelope and send these home with the children.
- Promote the website and family visits to parents.
- Send your invoice, along with any receipts or invoices as evidence of spend to Purchaseledger@wwt.org.uk quoting cost centre: **EXR001** and the name of the Learning Manager at the centre you visited.

Following up in school

- Work through Ava's updates on the 'Ava's Journey' page of the website.
- Go into the pupil tracker once or twice a week to see how many activities children have completed - offer praise and encouragement.
- Award certificates and pin badges in assembly to children that have completed ten nature activities and become a Guardian of the Wild (you will receive an email notification).
- Set nature activities for homework.
- Complete some of the nature activities in school.