



Meadows Play – Key Stage 2

A short class performance that teaches children about the importance of meadows, traditional management methods and why so many of these unique habitats have been lost in recent years

Parts required: Narrators x 5
Meadows x 5
Sheep x 2
Farmer x 1
Banner Carriers x 2
Motorist x 1
Land Girls x 2
Scientist x 1
Surveyor x 1
Meadows Officer x 1
+ Someone to operate power point!

If you have 'spare' children they could be animals that live in the meadows.

The accompanying power point presentation is available, on CD, from the High Weald AONB Unit (01580 879500). Furthermore, if you would like to borrow some props to help support your presentation, please contact us.



☺ Indicates changing the accompanying power point slide

Meadows Play - Script

Narrator 1: Our story starts over a hundred years ago when Queen Victoria ☺ was still on the throne and the High Weald was full of hundreds and hundreds of wildflower meadows, but our story is just about 5 of them.

Enter meadows children x 5 - wearing colourful t-shirt/holding meadows picture etc. These 5 children are present at all times.

Narrator 2: Once upon a time there were 5 wildflower meadows ☺ that lived not so very far from here. They first became friends a long, long, long, long, long, long time ago, when they were created from the wild woods of the Weald. And why were they created? So that the farmers could grow hay to feed their animals in the long, cold winters.

Narrator 3: They were still friends when the ☺ Romans came and the ☺ Saxons, and the ☺ Normans, and the ☺ Tudors, right up to the Victorians ☺ where our story starts.

Narrator 4: These five meadows were very happy together. They had been around for so many years that they were covered in plenty of flowers ☺ and lots of different types of grasses. ☺

Narrator 5: The meadows were very proud of all their grasses and flowers, ☺ **(5 'meadows' children do a twirl)** not only did they look beautiful but they also provided food for lots of creatures big and small. I haven't got time to name them all but at anytime you might see...☺ **click slowly through to dragonfly picture** Frog hoppers, Mayflies, Bumble bees, Hover flies, Butterflies, Moths, Ladybirds, Beetles, Bugs, Flies, Grasshoppers, Crickets, Damsel flies, Dragon flies, Rabbits, Hares, Slugs, Snails, Worms

Narrator 1: And these creatures were dinner for these creatures...☺ **Click twice to frog picture** Bats, Voles, Frogs, Toads, Moles, Song birds, Mice, slow worms, Grass snakes, Adders, Spiders...



Narrator 2: And these creatures were dinner for creatures such as these.... Weasels, Owls, Badgers, Kestrels, Sparrow Hawks at the very top of the food chain 😊 [click x 3 to badger image.](#)

Narrator 3: So the meadows were never alone, as you can see they were home to lots and lots of creatures and plenty more came to visit. They were very happy because they were so important to so many different plants and creatures.

Narrator 4: 😊 [Enter farmer](#) Every year, for hundreds of years, at the end of Summer the meadows would have their hay harvested. It was cut and turned over to dry in the sun. [Farmer uses rake](#) It was then carted to the barn where it was stored ready to feed the animals in Winter. Once it was in the barn, the animals would graze the meadows ([sheep children 'graze' at meadow's feet](#)).

Narrator 5: Meadows didn't like this very much because it tickled and they felt bare and empty afterwards, but they knew it was important if they wanted lots and lots of different types of flowers and grasses to grow the next year.

Sheep: It's good hay this, lots of different flavours, smells good too!
[Farmer & sheep exit](#)

Narrator 1: One day the meadows were enjoying the sunshine when the farmer appeared ([enter farmer](#)), ready to start the annual hay harvest. Suddenly they heard a most peculiar noise which made them all jump.

Narrator 2: Around the corner appeared a man sitting on the strangest looking machine, ([child enters as a motorist/holding steering wheel etc, 'driving' across the stage](#)) which was very noisy and belched out a lot of very smelly smoke, ([meadows hold nose](#)) The farmer stared and stared when all of a sudden the car 😊, for that is what it was, made a funny noise and swerved into the ditch. ([Farmer & meadows point & laugh](#))

Motorist: You can laugh but this machine is the future! This is progress you're looking at. One day you'll be using a machine to harvest your hay.



Farmer: I don't think so; hay has been harvested the same way in this meadow for hundreds and hundreds of years. Why would we need to change anything? Everything is perfect the way it is.

Motorist: It'll change, you'll see. This is progress and you can't stand in the way of progress. **Two children carry a banner saying 'Progress' across the stage**

Narrator 3: And with that he drove off **(Driver exits, everyone shrugs, farmer exits)**

Narrator 4: The meadows didn't think any more of it and life carried on the same. The sound of a car approaching slowly down the lane no longer made everything jump and the farmer continued to use his horse to harvest the hay.

Narrator 5: About fifty years passed, not long in the life of meadow, when two women came up to the first meadow **(enter 2 'land girls' overalls, head scarves etc, imitating talking to each other, pointing at Meadow 1)** they walked around it talking. The first meadow started to get worried because they kept mentioning the word dig and plough and oats

Meadow 1: What are you doing here and where's my farmer?

Land girl 1: Don't you know there was a war on! Your farmer's in France, doing his bit, fighting Hitler 😊.

Land girl 2: We're doing our bit here, but instead of fighting for victory we're digging, and we're going to start right here with you.

Land girl 1: We're going to plough you up and plant some oats.

Meadow 1: But I don't want to be ploughed up, what about all my lovely flowers and the animals that live here?

Land girl 2: Don't be so selfish. There's a war on and we all have to make sacrifices.



Land girl 1: The country is surrounded by submarines, ships can't get through with the food.

Land girl 2: We've got to grow it all ourselves.

Narrator 1: And so the first meadow was ploughed up and sown with oats
☺ **1st meadow takes off t-shirt/meadow outfit and sits down, holding a bag of oats.**

All: And then there were four wild flower meadows left

Narrator 2: Time moved on, about ten years, a mere minute to a meadow when the farmer and a man came to see the second meadow. **(enter farmer & scientist)** The second meadow was very pleased because he thought the farmer had brought the man, a scientist, to admire his beautiful flowers and grasses. **(Meadow 2 looks smug)** The man and the farmer walked around the meadow but instead of admiring them the man took out a trowel and started to dig.

Meadow 2: What are you doing? The war's over you don't need to dig me up!

Scientist: **(Pretends to pick up some soil)** This is no good, no good at all. Your soil is dreadful, no wonder all you can grow is this straggly grass and a load of weeds. Your soil needs improving if you want to grow a decent crop of grass.

Farmer: Well the animals have always liked it.

Scientist: All you need is some of this wonderful new stuff **(picks up bag of fertiliser)** and you'll soon have a decent crop of grass.

Farmer: I guess so but...

Scientist: Just picture it, a lovely field full of emerald green grass ☺ . Just think of how many more cows you'll be able to feed from this one meadow. And more cows, means more milk, more meat and more money.



Farmer: I'm not sure

Scientist: Come on now there's nothing to gain in being sentimental. This is progress and you can't stand in the way of progress. **Two children carry the banner across the stage. Farmer applies fertiliser.**

Meadow 2: Oh I'm so green! Look how shiny the fertiliser has made all the grass! Oh but wait...er...I seem to be losing some animals... but at least I look GREAT! **Meadow 2 takes off meadow outfit/t shirt, sits down covering knees with bright green cloth/plastic grass etc.**

All: And then there were **three** wildflower meadows left

Narrator 3: One day the three meadows were enjoying the sunshine when a man with a hard hat, a tape-measure, a map and lots of other things, came to see the third meadow **(enter child dressed as surveyor)** The third meadow was very pleased because he thought he had come to admire his beautiful flowers and grasses.

Narrator 4: The man walked around the meadow but instead of admiring the flowers he took out a tape measure and started to measure the field. At first the meadow liked the attention and asked the man what he was doing. The man was very excited.

Surveyor: We're going to build a lovely new road and it's going to go straight through here. Aren't you lucky?

Narrator 5: But the meadow didn't feel lucky at all and started to cry.

Meadow 5: But what about my flowers and grasses not to mention all the creatures that live here?

Surveyor: Oh stop moaning. People don't want you, you're in the way. People need to get to work, to school, to the shops, to the towns; they need to get there and to get there fast! They need to drive. They need a new road. ☺ This is progress and you can't stand in the way of progress. **Two children carry the banner across the stage**



Narrator 1: And so the poor meadow disappeared completely under a layer of tarmac 😊. **Meadow 3 takes off meadow outfit/t-shirt, sits down holding road sign.**

All: And then there were **two** meadows left

Narrator 2: The animals did not like the new road and quickly moved to the other two meadows, but things began to get crowded so sometimes they had to make the dangerous journey, across the busy road, between the two meadows.

Narrator 3: Time moved on and, one day the two meadows were enjoying the sunshine. Along came someone with a clipboard and walked around the fourth meadow. The fourth meadow had seen what had happened to his friend and was instantly worried.

Meadow 4: You're not going to build a road through me are you?

Surveyor: Oh no, we're not going to build a road

Narrator 4: The meadow breathed a huge sigh of relief.

Surveyor: No, no, you've been chosen for a new housing estate, we're going to call it 'The Meadows' 😊

Meadow: But I don't want to be a housing estate!

Surveyor: Sorry, it's in my plan. This is progress and you can't stand in the way of progress. **Two children carry the banner across the stage. Meadow 4 takes off meadow outfit/t-shirt holds house sign.**

Narrator 5: A few flowers remained in the sides of the road and at the very bottoms of people's gardens so a few animals found somewhere to live but most moved to the very last meadow on the other side of the road. But this meadow was now very crowded and there wasn't enough food for all of them, so some of the creatures had to leave.



Narrator 1: Time moved on and one day, the other day in fact, and the remaining meadow was NOT enjoying the sunshine. The meadow wasn't enjoying it because someone was walking around her with a clipboard (**Enter child with clipboard, a meadow officer**). They were measuring her and looking at her soil and getting very excited.

Narrator 2: The meadow started to shake with fear (**Meadow 5 shakes**). But the person with the clipboard was a meadow officer. It was their job to look after meadows and they asked the meadow what was the matter.

Meadow Officer: What's the matter? Why are you so scared?

Narrator 3: But the meadow was so upset it couldn't speak,

Meadow officer to children: Can anyone tell me why this meadow is so scared and sad? **Gets answers from the audience**

Meadow Officer: (**Laughing, and speaking to meadow 5**) Oh you've got it all wrong. I like your flowers. I'm here to help you. Do you realise how rare you are now and how important you are?

Meadow 5: But, I'm just a scruffy little meadow, even my soil isn't very good.

Meadow Officer: Rubbish who have you been listening to? Your soil is perfect for all these wonderful flowers and different grasses. If you improved your soil with fertiliser they couldn't grow. Now listen to me! **You are special and you are important.**

Narrator 4: But the meadow still wasn't happy.

Meadow Officer: What's wrong now?

Meadow 5: I'm lonely. In the old days the High Weald was full of meadows 😊 like me but all my friends who lived near me have gone and there just aren't so many creatures around.



Meadow Officer: Well let's try and change that

Meadow 5: I don't like change!

Meadow Officer: Oh I think you'll like this. It'll take time though so don't expect anything to happen soon and you've got to help.

Meadow 5: How can I help?

Meadow Officer: We need your seeds. If we get seeds from meadows a long way away, the creatures around here, like the bees and the butterflies won't like them and if they don't come back, the creatures that eat them won't come back either. I've got a special machine. A seed harvester that I'll run over you and it will brush some of your seeds off.

Meadow 5: Ok, just make sure you leave some seeds for me.

Narrator 5: It took time but over the years more and more flowers came back to the first meadow and with them more and more creatures. **Pin some flowers onto Meadow 1, Meadow 1 stands up.** It didn't have quite as many as the fifth meadow as that hadn't been changed for hundreds of years and was very special. The first meadow was happy again and was proud that his seeds were being used to create more and more wildflower meadows.

ALL: Now that's progress!