

Guesthouse

Designing a Sustainable Guesthouse for Tourists

Keywords:

sustainability, hospitality, tourism, urban planning, green building

Target group:

primary school pupils (ages 6-11)

Objectives:

This activity introduces pupils to the concept of sustainable hospitality by exploring how guesthouses can offer both comfort and environmental responsibility. Pupils will learn about eco-friendly building materials, energy-saving features, and the importance of guest experience.

Through collaboration and model-making, they will creatively design a guesthouse that meets the needs of travellers while reducing environmental impact. By the end of the activity, pupils will understand the basic principles of sustainable tourism, be able to identify features that make accommodations more environmentally friendly, and work as a team to design and present their own unique guesthouse model.



General Guideline on Time Allocation:

The duration needed to carry out this activity may vary depending on the specific group of children. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the implementation according to the needs, interests, and dynamics of the group.

In the preparatory phase, teachers may use a variety of activities to introduce and contextualize the chosen topic. These can include discussions, videos, drawings, storytelling, or even a field trip, depending on the age and background knowledge of the children.

The main construction phase, during which children plan and build their urban element using LEGO bricks, should typically not exceed 45 to 60 minutes. However, this phase often stimulates further curiosity and questions among the children, potentially leading to extended engagement or follow-up activities. For more detailed instructions and pedagogical support on how to implement activities of INNO-kids project, please download the Teacher's Methodological Guide.



Materials and Resources Needed:

- Large sheets of paper or cardboard (for sketching layouts and constructing walls or base structures)
- Markers, crayons, or coloured pencils (for drawing and labelling features)
- Cardboard boxes of various sizes (to build walls, roofs, and rooms)
- Fabric scraps (to create beds, curtains, or soft furnishings)
- Recycled materials such as bottle caps, plastic bottles, egg cartons (to build furniture, solar panels, wind turbines, or other amenities)
- LEGO bricks or building blocks
- Natural materials like twigs, leaves, or stones (to create gardens or outdoor spaces)
- Pictures of sustainable building features (e.g. green roofs, solar panels, natural lighting)
- Toy furniture or miniature plants (optional)

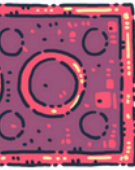
Note: Encourage pupils to repurpose materials creatively and adapt their designs based on available resources. If LEGO bricks are not available, pupils can fully realise their concepts using drawings, crafts, and simple construction materials.

Introduction:

Begin by asking pupils what they think a guesthouse is and when people might stay in one. Explain that guesthouses are places where visitors stay during holidays or business trips, often smaller and more personal than hotels. Then introduce the idea that guesthouses, like all buildings, use energy and materials — and that they can be designed in ways that are better for the environment. Show pictures of sustainable guesthouses that use solar panels, natural materials, or recycling systems. Encourage pupils to think about what makes a place welcoming and comfortable for guests, while also being respectful to nature.

Procedure:

Preparation:



Divide pupils into small groups of three to four. Begin with a brainstorming session about what guests might need when staying somewhere overnight — such as a bed, food, light, warmth, and comfort. Then discuss how these needs can be met in environmentally friendly ways. Introduce basic sustainable design concepts like using natural light, solar energy, recycled materials, and green roofs. Show visual examples of guesthouses that blend into their environment and care for the planet. Encourage pupils to think about how tourism can support local communities without harming nature.

Construction:

Provide each group with a mix of materials—paper, cardboard, fabric scraps, and recycled items. Invite them to design and build a model of a sustainable guesthouse. Their designs may include:

- Green roofs made from recycled or natural materials
- Solar panels created from cardboard or shiny paper
- Rainwater collection systems using bottle parts
- Comfortable sleeping areas made from soft or reused materials
- Shared spaces such as miniature kitchens, reading corners, or gardens
- Outdoor areas that reflect local nature and culture

Details:

As groups work, ask them guiding questions: What makes your guesthouse special for visitors? How do you reduce waste and save energy? How do you make guests feel at home? Support them in adding small but meaningful details—like signs explaining sustainable features, little plant decorations, or cultural symbols. Encourage them to think about how their guesthouse fits into the local community and landscape, and what kind of experiences visitors might have there.

Stories:

Invite pupils to imagine a visitor arriving at their sustainable guesthouse. Who are they? Why are they visiting? Ask each group to create a short story about a guest's stay—what they see, what they do, and how they feel about the eco-friendly design. The story might include moments like enjoying breakfast made from local food, learning about solar panels on the roof, or relaxing in a garden filled with native plants.

Presentation:

- Invite each group to present their guesthouse model to the class, along with the story they created. Pupils should explain the sustainable features they included.
- Encourage them to describe how guests experience comfort, relaxation, and eco-friendly living during their stay.





Tips:

- Spark imagination by encouraging pupils to think creatively about what makes a guesthouse feel special — comfort, design, nature, and cultural touches.
- Remind pupils that a successful guesthouse cares not only about the planet, but also about how guests feel.
- Use open-ended questions to help pupils think critically about their choices, such as “How would your design make a visitor feel relaxed?”

Additional Considerations:

Differentiation:

Provide additional support or simplified instructions for pupils who may require extra assistance. For advanced pupils, offer extension tasks such as researching further sustainable practices or designing more complex models.

Assessment:

Assess pupils based on their participation and engagement during discussions and hands-on activities. Evaluate the creativity, effort, collaboration, depth of understanding demonstrated in their models, critical thinking, ability to provide constructive feedback and presentation skills.

Extension Activities:

Encourage pupils to explore different types of accommodation and how they relate to local culture and environment. Invite a local guesthouse owner, architect, or tourism professional to talk about real-life hospitality and sustainability. Plan a class project to design a school “eco corner” for guests, visitors, or parents.

Curriculum

Connections:

This activity integrates:

Science (*materials, energy, ecosystems, recycling*)

Social Studies (*geography, culture, tourism, economics*)

Art (*design, creativity, construction*)

Language (*oral communication, storytelling, and listening skills*)

SDG Connections:

- **SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth – Pupils explore how sustainable tourism supports local jobs and services.
- **SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities – The activity promotes eco-friendly building and community-sensitive tourism.
- **SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production – Pupils design with recycled materials and reflect on sustainable choices.
- **SDG 13:** Climate Action – Through energy-efficient design, the activity encourages climate-conscious hospitality solutions.



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