LESSON 4: WHERE DOES YOUR WOOD AND PAPER COME FROM?

Equipment needed:
- Examples or images of wood and paper products
- Resource sheet 4 (overleaf)
- Internet access to explore research links

What to do:
Ask pupils to look at examples of forest products and consider the species composition and the possible country of origin.

Brainstorm:
Consider whether the product is a hardwood or a softwood? Is there a reason why a particular wood has been used for the product? Can you identify the species of wood? Is more than one species of wood used? If so, why? Are the paper products made of virgin fibre or do they contain recycled material? How can you tell? Are there any other materials that can be sourced from forests?

Is the product made with wood from a well managed forest? How do you know? Do you know of any symbols or logos that identify products from forests that are managed responsibly?

Activity:
Ask pupils to design a wood product and identify the timber species that will be used, explaining their choice of timber. Suggest that they consider using timber sourced from well-managed FSC-certified forests.

The FSC databases (https://www.fsc-uk.org/en-uk/fsc-database) can be used to identify possible sources of wood. Pupils could draw a diagram showing the different aspects of the supply chain and use the database to create an example chain of suppliers from the forest source.

Plenary:
Invite pupils to present their findings. Were any timber species difficult to source and, if so, was it possible to identify alternatives? Discuss whether using only FSC certified timber created any difficulties. How might a manufacturer benefit from gaining FSC certification and labelling the product with the FSC logo?

National Curriculum Links
Design & Technology - Designing and making; cultural understanding and critical evaluation
Geography - Environmental interaction and sustainable development.

Purpose:
Investigate the supply chain for wood and paper products
The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international organisation dedicated to promoting the responsible management of the world’s forests. It was founded in 1993 in response to growing concern about global deforestation.

FSC has developed a system of forest certification that allows consumers to identify wood and wood-based products from well-managed forests. These forests must be managed with consideration for the environment, the wildlife and the people who live and work in them.

In addition to forest certification, the FSC system includes a certified chain of custody that tracks the timber through every stage of the supply chain. A supply chain is the journey of the product from its source (e.g. the forest) to the end product (e.g. a chair or a book etc). A product can only carry an FSC label if each company in the supply chain (from the sawmill to the wholesaler) as well as the forest hold FSC certification and is therefore checked by an auditor and listed on FSC’s international database: info.fsc.org/

Lesser Known Species
The demand for tropical timber in the UK and Europe is very high, with most of it focusing on a few well-known species. Some are so popular that high quality timber in these species can be difficult to find. In natural tropical forests certified to FSC standards a wide variety of timber species is harvested, all in lower volumes. The species composition of the forest would be adversely affected if only the popular species were harvested. Increasingly, architects and manufacturers are considering using lesser known species in place of the more common woods.

Useful links
www.lesserknownntimberspecies.com