



# Build like a Beaver

## Fact File: Beaver

Beavers build homes called lodges which are usually surrounded by water to give them somewhere safe to sleep away from predators (other animals that might try to eat them).

They need the water to be at least 0.6 m deep so they have enough room to dive down to the underwater lodge entrance safely.

Imagine if your home was made of sticks and in the middle of a fast flowing river, how easily do you think it would wash away? What could you do if the water was not deep enough? Beaver's solve these problems by building dams. These structures block the river, slow it down and make the water deeper too.

We also benefit from this as it means more wildlife can live in the deep pools and the dams themselves, and the slower water means we have fewer floods.

The beavers build the dams by piling up mud and stones on the river bed to create a firm foundation. Then they lay branches on top and finally add more mud to stick it all together.

Dams can be up to 3m high and 500 m long!

## Beaver challenges

Survey your building site: can you measure 0.6m to see how deep the water needs to be around a lodge? What about measuring 3 m, this is the height of a dam. How long is your garden? Compare this to the length of a dam.

Building work: Can you create a mini dam? Pour water down your container, watch how fast it flows. Now have a go at building a dam across it and pour water down it again.

Did the dam block the water and slow it down? Experiment to see what materials make the best dam.

## What you will need:

Tape measure

A container (a drainpipe is ideal to make a 'river' but if you don't have one you can use a deep baking tray or seed tray instead).

Water

A bucket to catch your water

Sticks

Mud! (If you prefer you can use compost mixed with some water)