

# DESIGNING YOUR OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACE

Having a designated outdoor learning space will make the transition to outdoor learning smoother for both you and your students. Guidelines about outdoor learning can be set in this space so that students are aware of expectations each time they enter the outdoor learning space.

There are certainly some very fancy outdoor learning spaces in schools. Just have a look at some of the images below:



Outdoor learning spaces can be undercover (image source [here](#))



Outdoor learning spaces can have tables and chairs



Outdoor learning spaces can take place on existing infrastructure, under some trees or on the lawn

Typical outdoor classroom designs tend to incorporate seating and teaching platforms and a well-planned outdoor classroom will likely become an important part of your school and can be used for every subject and in every season. And while an outdoor learning space like one of those above may be something that your school already has or would like to explore more in the future, it is not necessary for a successful outdoor learning experience.

# DESIGNING YOUR OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACE

There is no standard design for an outdoor classroom; the key is to develop the classroom that will work best for your school grounds and the needs of your school.

But if designing and constructing a formal outdoor learning space is beyond your abilities in terms of time or funds, there is no need to miss out on great outdoor learning experiences.

Basic features of an outdoor learning space can include:

- **Seating** – You could choose to incorporate tables and chairs into your outdoor learning space so that students can simply transfer their indoor experience to the outdoors. Alternatively, you could ask students to sit on existing benches or on the ground.
- **Nature** – Your outdoor learning space doesn't need to be deep in the bush, surrounded by wild animals and waterfalls. It is simply enough to be outside, experiencing the sun, wind, smells and sounds of nature. Visual access to vegetation is also preferable but it doesn't need to be amazing.
- **Shade/Shelter** – If it's a fine day then sitting under a tree is fine. If it's rainy then sitting under some shelter is preferable. Other tips for managing hot and cold weather include:
  - Having a store of warm clothes (such as hats and scarves)
  - Having a store of sun hats
  - Access to sunscreen
  - Encouraging appropriate clothing and footwear
- **Equipment** – Depending on the lesson, usual lesson equipment is all you will need. All the lessons in the Outdoor Learning units are designed to be taken outside easily, with students either working in their workbooks or on tablets (some lessons do require additional resources but nothing specific for the outdoor components).

