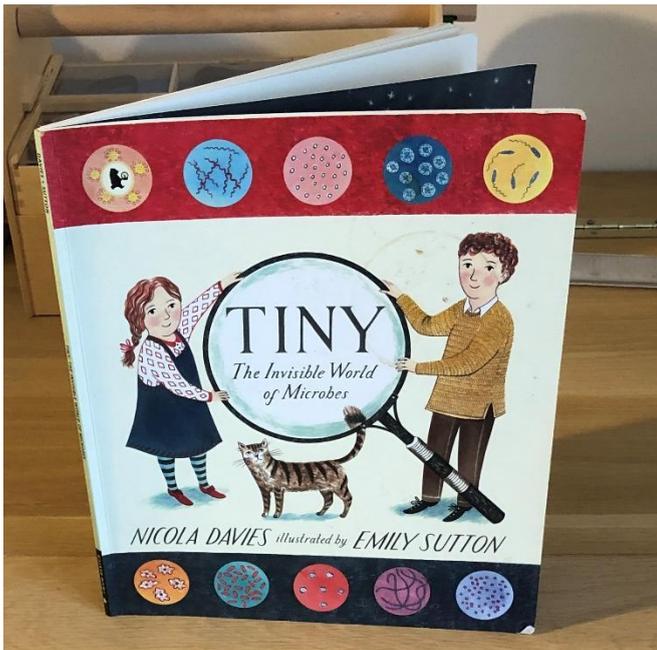


Read the Story



Today's topical tale is *Tiny: The Invisible World of Microbes* by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Emily Sutton. This book is a good introduction to microbes for young children which talks about beneficial organisms as well as those that cause disease.

You can share the text and listen to the book being read by following this link to YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqxrh-0uVss>

Get out and about

Go on a walk to your local park or nearest open space. Can you see evidence of microbes in action e.g. decaying logs, your neighbour's compost heap, animal poo covered in fluffy mould (definitely don't touch this one!)?

While you are out and about, you could collect a teaspoon of soil in a bag. When you get home, spread it out thinly on a piece of paper or a plate (wash the plate thoroughly

afterwards) and marvel at how many invisible creatures it holds. Remember to wash your hands after handling soil.

Crafty things to make and do at home

Look at the pictures in *Tiny: The Invisible World of Microbes* on the YouTube video and use these as inspiration to make a model microbe. There are some suggestions below but use your imagination and whatever you have at home to make your model.

Blow-paint germs

If you have some water-based paint at home that will be perfect for this activity but don't panic if not, you can use strong instant coffee if you don't have any paints (let it cool down first). Add water to your paint until it is very runny then use a paintbrush or teaspoon to drip it over a sheet of paper. Make sure you put lots of newspaper under the paper to catch any drops of runny paint that don't quite make it on to the paper.



Before your drips of paint dry, find a drinking straw and use it to blow the drips of runny paint into weird and wonderful shapes.



Now let the paint shapes dry before adding eyes, mouths, tails etc.



Basic play dough recipe

Ingredients:

- 3 cups plain flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- at least 1 cup of warm water (you may need to add a bit more if your dough doesn't hold together)
- natural colouring (see below for ideas)
- few drops glycerine (optional: if you have some at home then it adds shine to your dough)

Method:

- Mix the flour and salt in a large mixing bowl.
- Add the oil.
- Now add the water stirring continuously until the ingredients combine to make a sticky dough (you may need to add a little more water)
- Add glycerine if using
- Take the dough out of the bowl and knead it vigorously for a few minutes until it is no longer sticky. This is the most important part of the process, so keep kneading until it feels right.
- Add colouring at the kneading stage.
- If it remains a little sticky then add a touch more flour until just right.

Some of our favourite colouring options:

Pretty in pink: boil one large or two to three small beetroot until soft, then puree using a stick blender (a potato masher also works if the beetroot is soft enough). Add a little water to loosen the puree before adding it to your dough. The more puree you add to your dough, the deeper the pink colour.

Deliciously scented chocolate brown: mix a tablespoon of cocoa into a rough paste with a little more water. This one smells really good so make sure that your little one doesn't eat it!

Mellow yellow: mix a tablespoon of turmeric into a paste with some water (wear old clothes and an apron for this one, turmeric can stain clothes. Don't panic, when the turmeric paste is mixed into the dough it doesn't stain but maybe best not to get it on the sofa or carpet and wear an apron just in case!)