

Who is brave enough to scale the craggy peak of this Play Mountain? What mountain wildlife or folklore creatures shelter inside its cave or on its ledges? Take storytelling to new heights with this versatile mountain, as children retell and invent their own small world alpine adventures.

## Peak play

Offer the Play Mountain as part of small world play to inspire children's imagination and enhance their language development:

### Alpine animals

Put together an ideal habitat for mountain-dwelling wildlife:

- Place the Play Mountain on top of a tray filled with pebbles to form uneven lower slopes, or take the play outside with mud or real grass at the base of the mountain.
- Add natural features to the landscape using green fabric, moss, twigs or tree figures. You could also create nests or dens using small twigs and add these to the ledges or cave.
- Animal figures that might call this landscape home include eagles, vultures, bears, wolves, deer, rabbits, alpacas and goats – such as the figures from the Billy Goats Gruff wooden character set.
- You might like to include human figures as scientists or wildlife photographers to track, study and film these elusive creatures.



### Marvellous mountaineers

Intrepid play figures will love finding their way up this challenging climb:

- Offer play figures to explore the slopes – you might like to use figures with moveable limbs or simple generic figures such as the Little People Like Me.
- Climbing gear could include pieces of felt for warm clothes, twine for ropes, mini flags, felt pouches for sleeping bags, and tents made from pieces of fabric and small sticks.



### Snowy slopes

Create an icy landscape for animals to explore:

- At the base of the mountain, offer artificial snow, real crushed ice (use a robust blender), flour sprinkled over a metal tray, cotton wool or cloud dough (made by combining eight parts flour to one part oil or lotion).
- Other natural features could include twigs for trees (pushed into a white corrugated card base or white playdough), stones or the Polar Play Scenery Stones.



- These animal figures would be at home in the frozen landscape: mountain goats, bighorn sheep, mountain hares, caribou, wolves, reindeer, snowy owls and snow leopards (such as from the Endangered Animal Families Wooden Characters). Several of these animals also feature in the Polar Little Lands set.
- For a fairytale element, a snow king and queen could ride the icy ridges in their sleigh. You could use generic figures from a set such as Little People Like Me, and add acorn cup hats, twine scarves and buttons, as well as a sleigh pulled by a reindeer.



### Upland lake

Add a watery element to the small world mountain:

- For a mountain emerging from a clear lake, place a mirror in the bottom of a tray with the Play Mountain on top, then add a shallow layer of water, perhaps with blue food dye. You might like to add a figure in a boat, using one of the Rustic Pourers.
- For a frozen lake, use a layer of tin foil folded around a piece of card cut to the shape of a lake.
- Add to the watery landscape with pebbles and real or artificial plants.

### Mountain myths

Tap into the wealth of folklore stories set in the mountains:

- Creatures that are the stuff of mountain legends might include giants, dragons, trolls, ogres, dwarves and a mountain king. You could offer figures from the Little Lands Fantasy Figures set.
- You might like to use a sensory material as the base, such as small pebbles, grass, artificial snow or a layer of playdough.
- Add to the fantasy landscape with elements such as artificial plants, colourful stones, glass beads and floaty fabric for mountain mist.

### Summit to behold

Extend the learning into other areas as you discuss and discover more about mountains:

- Have any of the children ever visited a mountain? What might it be like to climb up a mountain or to stand on the very top?
- What might you see in the mountains? Which animals live there? Talk about mountain streams, waterfalls, snow and ice.



- Research mountain habitats and the animals that call them home.
- Find out more about mountain legends from around the world.
- Learn about what life is like for people who live in mountainous regions. What do they eat, what are their houses like and how do they travel?
- As the children enjoy the Play Mountain, take the opportunity to encourage prepositional language – is the dragon inside the cave, on the ledge or flying above the mountain?



## Books about mountains

*Snow Leopard: Grey Ghost of the Mountain* by Justin Anderson

*Let's Explore the Mountain* by Laura Garnerburt

*The Impossible Mountain* by David Soman

*Secrets of the Mountain* by Libby Walden

## Songs about mountains

The Bear Went Over the Mountain

I Love the Mountains

She'll be Coming Round the Mountain

### *Get talking – useful words*

Inside, on top of, under, beside, above, tall, high, peak, summit, cliff, ledge, cave, rocky, lake