



## WOW Program Lesson Plan Backyard Habitat

**Program Duration:**

20 minutes

**Recommended Grade****Levels:**

K-5<sup>th</sup> grade

**Materials Needed:**

- Paper and pencil
- Hard surface to write on
- Your backyard

**Learning Objectives**

1. Students will be able to identify different types of habitats.
2. Students will learn what kind of animals live in their habitat/backyard.

**Preparation**

- Discuss with your child what a habitat is
- Talk about different habitats (see page 5), find photos online, and discuss what habitat we live in
- Ask them what a habitat needs for animals to survive
- Ask them why they think the animals (i.e. squirrels) like to live where they live

**Background**

Humans and other animals – including pets, farm animals, and wildlife – have some of the same basic needs. Every animal needs a home. Home, for many animals includes the outdoors (not just a house). An animal's home is their habitat. An animal's habitat includes food, water, shelter or cover, and space. Without these, animals cannot survive. Most animals' requirements for food, shelter, and nesting and breeding sites are often tailored to their ecosystems. Different kinds of animals respond differently to environmental variables. Few animals fit neatly into a single ecosystem. Some animals reside in certain ecosystems year-round, while others migrate to different altitudes or latitudes seasonally.

An animal's shelter might be underground, in a bush, in the bark of a tree, or in some rocks. Animals need a place to find food and water. They also need enough space in which to live and to find the food, water, and shelter they need. Think of a home/ecosystem for an animal as more of a neighborhood that has everything in it that is needed for survival.

**Introduction**

When we are out walking through the woods, we often hear many different animal sounds. We hear birds flying and chirping, chipmunks running across the ground, and squirrels climbing up trees. Sometimes we even hear nuts and acorns falling to the forest floor! These are the sounds that animals make in their habitats; the question is, why do they live here versus somewhere else?

### **Activity**

1. After explaining to your child what a habitat is, go out into your backyard and have them observe! (If you do not have a backyard, visiting a local park would work too)
2. First have them write down everything their habitat provides - think about shelter, food, water, and space. Note how much they think they have of each term. Is there a lot of water available or just a little? Why might that be?
3. Then after filling out the worksheet of the kind of habitat there is, have them sit outside for at least 5 minutes and write down what animals they see and hear.
4. Once they are finished, sit with them and discuss why they think these animals live in their backyard!

### **Questions**

1. What do you need in a habitat?
2. What kind of habitats are there?
3. What animals live in your habitat?
4. How are habitats different from each other? Why do you think that is?
5. What animals have habitats that are similar to yours? What animals require habitats that are different from yours?

### **Summary**

Every animal, including us, needs a habitat to survive. They provide shelter, food, water and space. Without one of these four things the habitat would not be functional. There are many different types of habitats! For instance, we have wetlands, grasslands, tropical rainforest, desert, coniferous forest, deciduous forest, tundra, polar ice, savanna and mountains. In our region (the Midwest) we are most likely to have deciduous forest, temperate grassland, wetland, or mountain. Habitats can teach us about the needs that different animals have. Their living spaces, temperature needs, and diets can look very different from one another, and they can look very different from yours!

**Habitat Matching Activity**

Draw a line to connect the correct animals (A-D photos) with their habitat (1-4 photos)



A



1



B



2



C



3


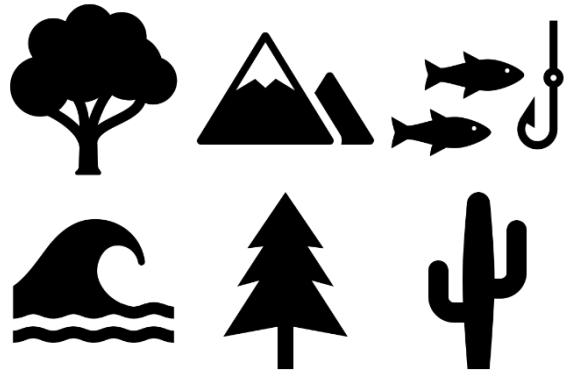


D



4

**Habitat Worksheet**

<p><u><i>What kind of animals do you see?</i></u></p> 	
<p><u><i>What was your favorite animal that you saw today?</i></u></p>	
<p><u><i>What type of habitat would you name your backyard?</i></u></p> 	



## HABITATS

<b>GRASSLAND/OPEN AREAS/ SHRUBLAND</b>	Flat, open areas covered with wild grasses and few trees. Some grasslands—called tropical savannahs—are warm all year, while others—called temperate savannahs—experience hot summers and cold winters.	
<b>DESERT/DRY/DRY AND ROCKY</b>	A large area of land that receives less than ten inches (25 cm) of precipitation each year. Some deserts, like the Sahara, are hot all year, while others, like the Gobi, are cool.	
<b>TROPICAL FOREST/ RAIN FOREST</b>	Habitats near Earth's Equator that receive at least 160 inches (406 cm) of rainfall each year.	
<b>TEMPERATE FOREST/ WOODLAND</b>	Forests that experience four seasons, and are characterized by tall trees with broad leaves.	
<b>CONIFEROUS FOREST/ WOODLAND</b>	Forests with pine-producing trees, such as fir and pine, that experience long, cold winters and short, moist summers.	
<b>MOUNTAINS/HIGHLANDS/ SLOPES/TEMPERATE AND TROPICAL</b>	Masses of rock pushed upward. Climate in these rocky regions becomes cooler as the elevation increases.	
<b>POLAR REGIONS/ARCTIC/ TUNDRA AND ANTARCTIC</b>	Vast, treeless regions where temperatures can dip below 32°F (0°C) for ten months a year. These regions are characterized by permafrost, a layer of soil that is frozen all year.	
<b>FRESHWATER/FLOWING/ RIVERS AND STREAMS/ LAKES/RIVERS AND WETLANDS</b>	Bodies of water flowing continuously in one direction. These areas may vary in oxygen content, level of dissolved nutrients, and clarity.	
<b>FRESHWATER/STILL/ WETLANDS/BOGS/ SWAMPS/PONDS/LAKES</b>	Bodies of standing water that are home to many aquatic plants and have very low salt concentration.	
<b>OCEANS/INSHORE AREAS AND OPEN SEA</b>	Bodies of water that cover 75 percent of Earth's surface. The presence of sunlight in this habitat is great near the surface, but decreases with depth.	
<b>COASTAL AREAS INCLUDES MANGROVE SWAMPS</b>	Areas along the shoreline that are characterized by saltwater, and may be subject to strong winds and waves.	
<b>CORAL REEFS</b>	Rainbow-colored structures that line the ocean floor. Coral reefs are made of limestone that is deposited by animals called polyps.	
<b>URBAN AREAS/CITIES/ INDOOR PARKS/GARDENS</b>	Areas in which the food supply and environmental conditions are largely controlled or influenced by humans.	
<b>OUTDOOR/FARMLAND/ RURAL AREAS</b>	Land where agricultural products such as food and livestock are raised. These places have less human development and are more open than urban areas.	

***Optional Backyard Scavenger Hunt***

Use your senses to look, listen, smell, and feel nature in your backyard!

## Backyard Scavenger Hunt

### ☐ Look for...



- Insects
- Odd-shaped rocks
- Sticks on the ground
- Acorns
- Animal footprints

### ☐ Listen for...



- Birds chirping
- Winds whirling
- Rain falling
- Water trickling

### ☐ Smell for...



- Flowers
- Fresh air
- Soil and dirt
- Wet grass
- Pinecones

### ☐ Feel for...



- The sun on your skin
- Crunchy leaves under your shoes
- Fresh grass
- Tree bark
- Wind in your hair