



Biomes: Map your Habitat!

Activity Snapshot:

A **habitat** is a place where animals live - and all animals need food, water, shelter and space to survive and thrive in their habitats - even humans!

A **biome** is a larger natural space where many habitats can be found. If a habitat is like your house, the biome is your neighborhood or town! A collection of homes or habitats.

Some examples of Biomes include forests, tundras, and deserts! What sort of biome do you live in?

Goal:

Getting to know your biome can help you understand the plants and animals you might find in your home or habitat! So let's use our senses to make an adventurer's map of our own backyard biome!

Time Recommended:

30 minutes

Materials:

Paper (or you can use the template maps we have provided below)

Writing utensils (pens, colored pencils, markers, etc.)

Your 5 Senses!

Other optional craft supplies like tape, glue, etc.

Instructions:

This sensory activity is best done outside, but can be done inside if needed. Expand your circle of awareness and put your senses to the test to create a layered sensory "map" of what's around you.

Choose a spot to record your observations - ideally, somewhere in your backyard where you have a good view of everything around you.

Begin by making a SIGHT MAP:

1. Our paper has a person in the center (That's you! And some compass points (north, south, east, and west)
 - a. Do you know which way is north?
 - b. Where does the sun rise in the morning? That is EAST - if you are facing the sunrise, North will be to the left!
 - c. Where does the sun set in the evening? That is WEST - if you are facing the sunset, North is to your right!
2. Start by looking to the North - What do you see? Perhaps a tree? Or a building? Evidence of an animal? A source of water? You can write or draw anything that seems interesting to you in this direction - a little Northern landmark.
3. Turn slowly in a circle, looking in all directions and recording what you see. Make sure you are writing or drawing what you see in the right place on your paper!
 - a. If I see something far away to the north, I will draw in in the north section, farther away from the center of the paper.
 - b. If I see something close to me in the east, I will draw it in the east section, closer to the center picture.
4. When you are finished, take a moment to appreciate your new map! You made something really cool - feel free to color it in or decorate it as you like!

NEXT make a SOUND MAP:

1. After a short break, return to your spot with a blank map - we are going to do a similar thing... but without using our eyes!
2. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to calm and center yourself.
3. Open your ears and listen to the world around you. It might seem silly or boring at first, because we aren't used to listening to the world - but as you focus, you will discover there are a lot of sounds around us all the time!

4. When you hear a sound, make a little mark on your map where you think the sound was coming from.
 - a. What do you hear? A bird calling? A person talking? The breeze blowing? You might be amazed by how much MORE is out there than what you first put down based on sight alone.
5. After 5 or 10 minutes listening and recording sounds, take a break and compare your sound map and your sight map. If you like, you can draw pictures of the sounds you heard, and add them to your first map!

NEXT make a TOUCH MAP:

1. Think about the different textures of what's around you.
 - a. What do you feel on your feet, hands or skin? The soft cool grass under your feet? A coarse sun-warmed rock? The condensation of moisture on a window?
2. Make little stars on your paper for each texture or sensation you feel.
 - a. You can draw pictures or write words to describe each texture
3. When you are finished, add it to your first map!

FINALLY make a SMELLY MAP:

1. Just like before, return to your original spot, and this time consider the smells of what is around you.
2. This may require a little exploration - feel free to 'sniff' around!
3. If you want to improve your sense of smell, you can get your nose wet - a wet nose attracts water in the air, and water in the air can have lots of scent particles stuck to it - so you can smell things better with a wet nose or on a wet or humid day! (This is why a pet dog or cat has a wet nose - they don't have the sniffles, they have a super-sniffer!)
4. Make little dots on your paper for each scent you pick up on. Draw or write any interesting aromas you detect. What do you smell? The fragrance of blooming flowers? Dark, damp soil? Food cooking?

5. Add these final senses to your first map. This is your home, your habitat, a little slice of your Biome! How incredible!

FINISHING TOUCHES:

1. All animals need FOOD, WATER, SHELTER, and SPACE to survive in their habitat. Look at your map.
 - a. Is there anything on here where you might find food? If not, add it!
 - b. Is there anything on here where you might get water? If not, add it!
 - c. Is there anywhere on here where you might shelter? If not, add it!
2. Based on what you discovered in your backyard map, and what you learned in your Chewonki lesson, what biome do you think you might live in? A desert biome? A Jungle biome? A forest biome? A tundra biome?

BONUS #1:

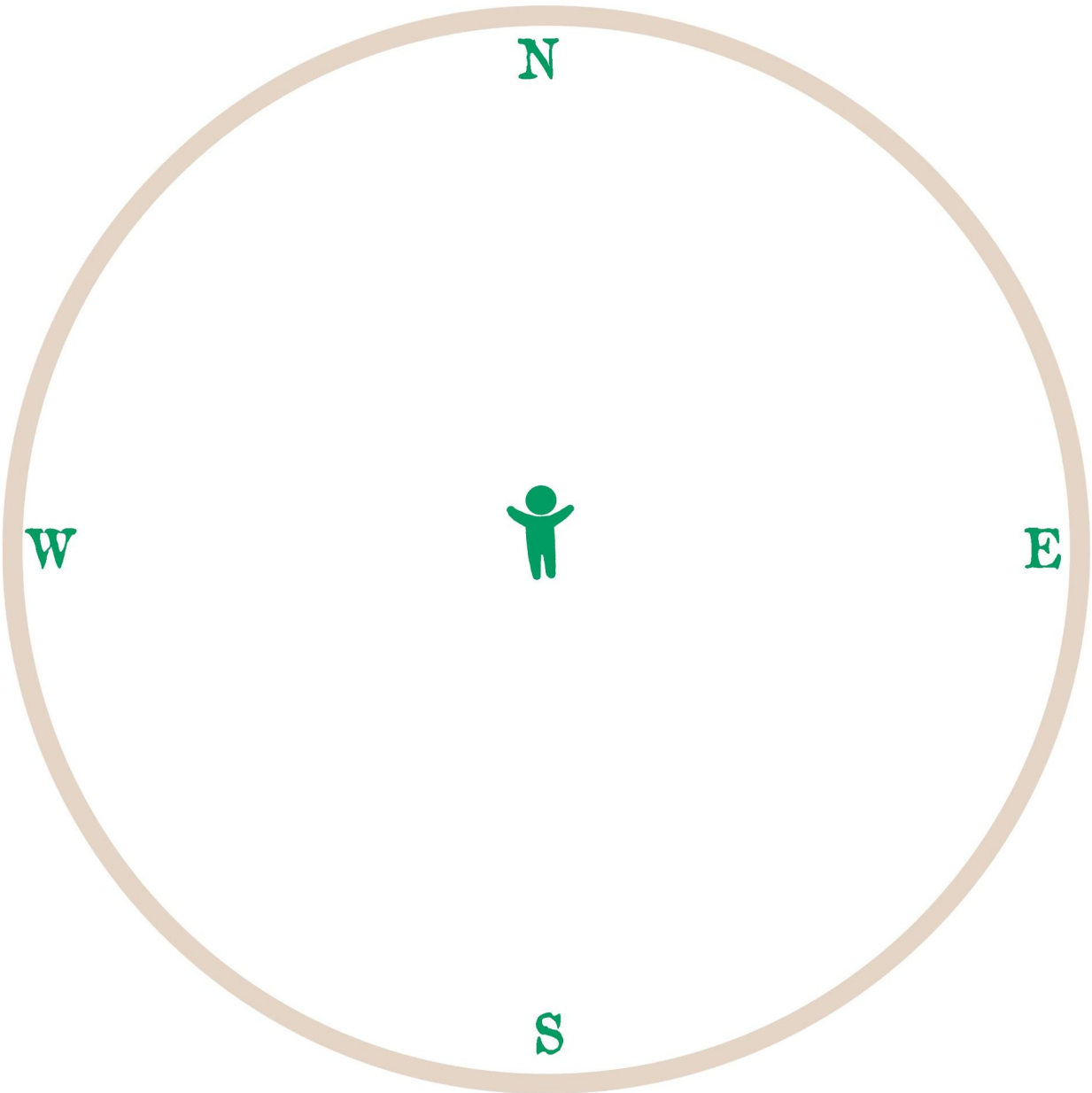
If you want to go a step further, recreate your sensory explorations at a different time in the day. Maybe at sunrise or sunset, for example. The increased moisture in the air may increase smells, the sounds you hear could be very different. What else do you notice that you didn't the first time?

BONUS #2:

If you want to go a step further, carefully observe an animal that you find in the natural environment around your home. What does it look like? What does it eat? Where does it spend its time? Does it make any sound? Does it interact with other living things? After observing the animal, imagine what it would be like to be that animal, live its life, walk around in its habitat map. Think about the map you made for you, and create one for this animal. How is it the same? How is it unique?



BACKYARD BIOMES
SENSORY MAP





BACKYARD BIOMES SENSORY MAP

