



Habitat heroes

Be a habitat hero! This activity will build learners' familiarity with different habitats, what they may look like and what wildlife might live there – before discovering what places for wildlife they already have in their own outdoor space. Learners will explore illustrative habitat scenes, looking for the wildlife hidden within them and considering what kind of spaces they might be, and then upload their own discoveries to an online map.

Together, we can create a collaborative picture of the diversity of our education settings! Habitat Heroes is a great introductory activity to get comfortable with the concept of habitats and identification, before you [map your site](#) in more detail.

Teaching time

30 minutes - 1 hour

Learning outcomes

- Make close observations of nature noticing similarities and differences between types of habitats
- Identify a range of micro-habitats and habitats in the school grounds from pictures
- Understand that different types of living things live in different habitats according to their needs

Use the QR code on the Habitat Heroes activity page to access the app. Habitat Heroes uses your location from your device, so make sure that you enable this or zoom in and add your point to the map manually. If delivering this activity offline, you can add your records to the map when back inside by visiting the [Habitat Heroes map](#) on a browser and clicking 'Add record'.

Step by step: Part 1

The first section of this activity can take place in the classroom before exploring the outdoors – or take place totally outdoors. Begin by introducing the concept of a habitat.

- **EYFS-KS1:** For younger learners, you could begin with a story. Take a look at our [nature library catalogue](#) for suggestions on suitable picture books that introduce the theme of habitats. Follow on from this reading by asking, 'What makes somewhere a good home for wildlife?' (For example, food, shelter, safety, water, space) - you could also ask the opposite, and why certain areas might not be a good home.
- **KS2+:** For learners who may have already been introduced to the word, ask them *how they would define a habitat? What is a habitat? Can they name any habitats and what they provide for the organisms that live there?* Feel free to make adjustments for older age groups to introduce the activity.

Habitat Heroes illustrations by Lizzie Lomax for the National Education Nature Park

Green Skills



Suitable for

Early Years
Key Stage 1
Key Stage 2
Key Stage 3
Key Stage 4

Location

Outdoors

Season

Spring
Summer

What you'll need

Habitat Heroes illustrations, printed as handouts or displayed digitally
Smartphones or tablets with internet connection
Optional: Habitat Heroes prompt sheets, clipboards and pencils

Key vocabulary

Habitat
Names of different habitat types
Names of wildlife and plants

Support and extension opportunities

After getting familiar with the habitat types and what you might already have, you're ready to [map your site on the Nature Park map](#) using the habitat flowcharts and mapper app. Use our [What habitats do we have? worksheet](#) to help learners plan which habitats you might have on your site.

Encourage learners to think about how wildlife might experience your outdoor space, with [Points of view](#).

[Create models](#) of the different habitats on your site - learners could split into groups and model a different habitat area, before combining them to create your whole site!



Step by step (continued)

Invite learners to explore the **Habitat Heroes illustrations**. This could be with small groups each looking at a different habitat, or as a class together – depending on where you deliver this activity, these could be displayed on a screen or printed and handed out.

Ask learners to look closely at the different scenes.

- *Can you find all of the living things (plants and animals) in this scene? Do you know what they are? (Learners could circle them, and write their names if they know them)*

- *What kind of place / habitat do you think this is? What would you call it?*

- *What are the similarities and differences between these scenes? (e.g. the features and types of living things)*

- *Have you seen a place like this before? Have you seen any of these living things or plants before?*

Part 2

It's now time to be a habitat hero! Exploring your outdoor space, ask learners to think about the habitats they have just seen, and whether they have any spaces like this around their site. Learners may want to take the images around with them as a reminder.

Using the **Habitat Heroes survey** on a smartphone or tablet, or the **printable prompt sheets**, learners will be prompted to find 'a place that is good for': *bumblebees and butterflies, birds, worms, spiders, frogs, hedgehogs, or slugs and snails.*

You may ask learners to explore in groups, with each group looking for a different type of place – or try and find as many as possible! Remind learners that it's okay if they can't find the living thing itself – we are looking for places the wildlife might enjoy!

Once learners have discovered a place for one of the living things, they'll be asked to take a photo of it on their device. (Remind learners not to include any people in their photos, as these won't be able to be added to the map)

Some prompts to help learners take a photograph:

- Focus – if using a tablet, tap on the screen where you'd like to focus
- Keep your camera steady to avoid blurry photographs
- Exposure – is the light good enough to take a good picture? Is it too bright? Is it too dark? What can you do to improve the light?
- Distance - Are you close enough to get the details? Are you so close that you can't focus? Are you far enough away to capture the whole thing? Are you so far away that the details are very small in the frame?

If using the prompt sheets, learners may wish to draw a picture of the space they have found on the reverse, or on a plain sheet of paper.

For Key Stage 2 and above, learners will be prompted to answer some additional questions about the space:

- *What makes this place good for this living thing?*
- *What other wildlife might this place be good for?*
- *Take a look around you – what words would you use to describe this place?*



Step by step (continued)

The KS2 prompt sheet includes an example sheet with pre-filled answers to help, if learners are struggling with how to answer the questions. For younger groups, you may wish to discuss these questions as a class instead.

If you are using the prompt sheets instead of digital devices, you can add your records to the map when back inside by visiting the [Habitat Heroes map](#) on a browser and clicking 'Add record'.

Reflection

After completing the activity, these discussion prompts can help you to reflect on what you found together, and how you could use this information to help you in your Nature Park journey:

- *Did you see the living things in these places? If you didn't, why might that be?*
- *Did you see any other living things that were different from those on the list?*
- *Were there any places for wildlife you couldn't find?*
- *What could we do to improve these places for wildlife?*
- *What would you do in this place? Is it a place you'd want to spend time in?*

In your next session, remember to explore the Habitat Heroes map to see your contributions, and take a look at what others have discovered around the country!

Note: All photographs taken as part of Habitat Heroes are reviewed before inclusion in our map, so please be patient as your contributions may not be visible immediately! If any photographs contain recognisable people or faces they will be hidden from the online map.

Once you've completed the challenge, download and print our [Habitat Heroes certificates](#) to recognise learners' findings, and [social media posts](#) to share your participation!



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