

Outdoor Science! Week 1

Day 1: Flora & Fauna All Around Me!

Teacher/Parent Background:

- In this activity, students will observe examples of flora (plants) and fauna (animals) in which they share a habitat with! Through “tours” of the outdoors, students will actively engage with the main flora and fauna of their area to determine what factors are necessary for supporting life in their habitat.

Related Standards:

- Develop and use models to explain that plants and animals (including humans) have internal and external structures that serve various functions that aid in growth, survival, behavior, and reproduction.

Key Terms:

Flora: the plants of a specific habitat

Fauna: the animals of a specific habitat

Habitat: an environment or home to native flora and fauna

Materials List:

- Internet access
- *Example Habitat Pictures* - included in the *Activity Description* section
- Parental/adult supervision
- Safe, outdoor areas
 - Frontyard, backyard, neighborhood sidewalks, nearby field or park, etc.
- Journal
- Pen/pencil
- Colored pencils/crayons
- Computer/phone with audio - optional for *Extensions* section

Activity Description:

- Ask students to consider what makes a home a space that helps us live and carry out necessary life functions. Discuss the following key factors:
 - Shelter/protection from the elements
 - Access to food
 - Access to water
 - Space to move around
- Just like us, animals and plants need a “home” that supports their needs too! But, where do plants and animals live; where are their “homes”?
- Show students the *Example Habitat Pictures* below. Ask students to discuss what kinds of plants and animals would live in the particular “homes”.
Examples are as follows:

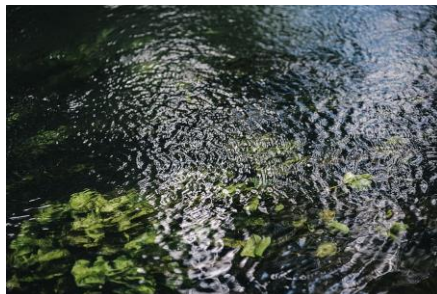
- **Deserts** - cacti, coyotes, etc.



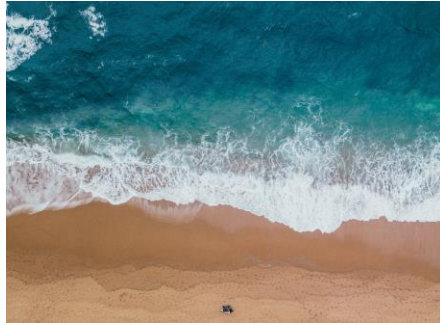
- **Forests** - oak trees, deer, etc.



- **Freshwater** - mosses, fish, etc.



- **Oceans** - seaweed, sharks, etc.



- - **Grasslands** - grasses, elephants, etc.



- - **Tropical rainforests** - orchids, parrots, etc.



- - **Polar** - shrubs, polar bears, etc.



- It seems like there are a lot of "homes" in which different types of plants and animals live! In the science community, we use the term *habitat* to describe the different types of homes/environments in which certain plants and animals live! Each kind of habitat meets the needs of different animals and plants. For example, a forest habitat meets the needs of oak trees, deer and bears while an ocean habitat meets the needs of seaweed, fish and sharks.

- We also use the terms *flora*, meaning plants and *fauna*, meaning animals, to describe the types of living things that you would find in different habitats!
- Let's now just think about the flora and fauna that live outdoors, in our very own neighborhood; a city/urban/desert habitat! What kind of flora and fauna live outside in our neighborhood? Where have they made their "homes"??
 - With adult/parental supervision, take a "tour" of the safe, easily accessible outdoor areas of your neighborhood. This may include: your front and backyard, sidewalks around your neighborhood, a nearby field or park, etc.
 - During the tour, ask students to record their observations through the use of drawings with labeled words/phrases. Main details should include:
 - Location - outdoor areas
 - front and backyard, sidewalks around your neighborhood, a nearby field or park, etc.
 - Location features - what things are in the area?
 - fences, dirt/concrete paths, lawn furniture, etc.
 - Flora descriptions - what does it look like?
 - grasses, shrubs, trees, plants, flowers, etc.
 - Fauna descriptions - what does it look like? what is it doing?
 - dogs, cats, birds, insects, squirrels, rabbits, etc.

Closure:

- Return home to discuss the results of the tour. Engage students in a discussion of questions:
 - What locations (outdoor areas) did you observe in our urban/desert habitat?
 - What were the main features (things in the outdoor areas) of the locations you observed?
 - What kinds of flora and fauna did you observe in the locations? What did they look/act like?
 - Based on what you observed, do you think the flora and fauna live in a good habitat? Why or why not? If not, what might happen to the flora and fauna?
 - Make connections to key factors of a habitat that support the needs of living things:
 - Shelter/protection from the elements

- Access to food
 - **Note:** Either through the process of consuming other organisms or by producing their own food using sunlight
- Access to water
- Space to move around

Extensions:

- Watch & Play!
 - BrainPOP jr. - [Habitats](#)
 - Request **free** access during the school closure period using this [link](#).
- Read!
 - National Geographic Kids - [Habitats](#)