

## Activity 1: Finding Home: A Mapping Activity

### Teacher Information:

Everyone has a different perception of the place where they live and how they choose to interact with their natural environment. It is our experience with place that binds us to geography. We come to view our special places with a different set of values. Mapping helps to bring awareness to these differences and enables students to express an individual relationship with the place where they live and play.

This is the kind of activity that students learn from most when it is appropriately framed to give purpose to the task. A good way to introduce the activity is to have the teacher share his or her own Home Map. Note that too much structure can inhibit creativity but too little gets poor results.

Taken from “**Stories in the Land: A Place Based Environmental Education Anthology**”, by the Orion Society, Great Barrington, MA, 1998.

### ACTIVITY 1

**Suggested Timeline:**

*15 minutes to discuss the activity. The map is taken home as homework and should take 30 minutes to an hour.*

*30 minutes to share maps in the classroom.*

*30 minutes to discuss maps.*

**Materials Required:**

*Pencil, markers, crayons. One large piece of paper for each student. A blank wall on which to display finished maps, so encourage the students to make them beautiful.*

*Teacher made home map as an example.*

**Setting:**

*Indoors*

**Summary:**

*Students map their homes including any places of significance. It offers students the chance to identify with the special places that have been an important part of their childhood experiences.*



**Activity 1: Finding Home: A Mapping Activity**

**Student Activity:**

Construct your own Home Map. Include places or geographic features, near or far, that are of particular relevance to your personal experience. Some may include areas far away up to a hundred kilometers away, while others can fill up an entire page with their backyard.

Have students share their maps revealing their special places to the rest of the group, which is great fuel for a group discussion.

Teachers can facilitate the conversation by asking questions:

- Why is a specific place more important than others?
- How has that place contributed to who you are?
- Do your special places tend to be natural or human made?
- What is it that makes your special place special?
- Who do you share your special place with?
- How do you take care of your special place now and so that you can visit it in the future?
- Write in a separate essay or discuss with the class how you would feel if your special place was in some way threatened.



## Activity 2: Aerial Adaptation Artistry

### Teacher Information:

What is a bird?

- Definition (Oxford): a feathered vertebrate with a beak, two wings, and two feet, egg laying and can usually fly.
- Birds are covered with feathers for warmth, keep them dry and allow them to fly. It is thought that feathers are modified reptile scales.
- All have two wings, although some birds cannot fly
- Their legs and feet are covered by small scales
- A bird generally have very long legs – so what looks like its knees are really its ankles.
- Most have four toes on their feet and some are webbed.
- All birds have beaks designed for eating different foods.
- They lay eggs.
- Bird bones contain many air spaces making the bones light for flying.
- Birds vary in colour to aid camouflage and to attract mates.

There are about 9000 species of birds worldwide, each one with their own unique characteristics. 1,400 birds are native to North America.

484 species of birds are known to have occurred in BC – of those 310 are known to breed in BC.

### Student Activity:

Students have some fun while designing and creating an imaginary bird for the ecosystem explored based on the specific characteristics that exist there. e.g. grassland (not many trees), wetland (lots of water and insects), forest (flying through trees, various shrubs and tree species), old-growth forest (lots of standing dead snags).

Write a brief report describing the fictitious birds' adaptations to the ecosystem.

### ACTIVITY 2

**Suggested Timeline:**

1 period.

**Materials Required:**

Art supplies, pens, paper.

**Setting:**

Indoors

**Summary:**

Students identify and describe the advantage of specific bird adaptations. Students recognize some of the ways birds are physically adapted to the various ecosystems where they live.



### **Activity 3: Eco-Experts in the Field**

#### **Teacher Information:**

Adopt a species from the field trip. Students research the subject and do a report on it. If time permits, have them make an oral presentation to the entire class. Subjects could include: Soil, Fungus and Bacteria in Nature, Lichen, Flowers, Trees, Birds, Amphibians, Reptiles, Mammals, Insects, and Invertebrates.

After completing the research, adopt your subject. How will you protect it so that it is there next year, 10 years and 100 years from now? Develop a management strategy for the ecosystem visited to protect your species.

### **Activity 4: Eco-Role Playing**

#### **Teacher Information:**

The Teacher pretends to be an amusement park developer who wants to buy the ecosystem that the students just explored. The class role-plays the people who live near by what to do with the land. This is a chance for the students to show what they learned, to express their feelings about the place and to rehearse the kinds of decisions they would make as adults.

Have some of the children role-play creatures and plants from the ecosystem visited. How would a bird, amphibian, flower, tree, earthworm, beetle, moose, bear feel about losing their home?

### **Activity 5: Discovery Packs for the Classroom**

#### **Teacher Information:**

Fundraise, approach the PAC or simply scrounge the items amongst the staff/parents to find the resources to develop a class nature pack for students to borrow. Contents would include: A pack (could be second hand or from the thrift store), magnifying glass, binoculars (optional), plant field guide, animal track guide, bird book, a sketch pad with pencil and pencil crayons, a journal, camera (optional) and photo list sheet. Students throughout the remainder of the school year would be aware of the fact that the Naturalist Pack exists and that they can or must sign it out for a night or a weekend. Each student would be instructed that they must do three things to take the pack:

1. Add a new sketch to the illustrations based on an observation in the field.
2. Contribute something to the nature journal about your thoughts or feelings of the place.
3. Take ONE picture of their favourite spot and describe why it is in the photo list.

