

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: 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.



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Classroom with Outdoors

Engaging Ecosystem Experience