

Create a Habitat

Classroom-ready printable pack · Grades 3–8

Pack contents

Two identical sets of habitat pieces and four reusable habitat mats. Two student sets are included.

Teacher directions

1. Select the same habitat mat for both partners and divide the matching piece sets.
2. The Describer secretly creates a habitat that includes an organism's food, water, shelter, and space.
3. Using relative-position and ecosystem vocabulary, the Describer guides the Builder.
4. Compare scenes. Partners identify one way the arrangement meets an organism's needs and one scientifically unsuitable piece.

Before class

- Print at 100% on US Letter paper. Use cardstock or laminate for reuse.
- Cut on the thick solid borders. Keep Set A and Set B separate.
- Give challenge/model cards only to the Describer.
- Use a folder, book, or tabletop barrier so partners cannot see each other's work.

Accessibility and accommodations

Use one habitat and six pieces at first; offer the word bank; allow yes/no questions. Habitat mats and pieces use names, silhouettes, and patterns, not color alone.

Storage-envelope labels

Create a Habitat

Set A — Describer

Count pieces before storing.

Create a Habitat

Set B — Builder

Count pieces before storing.

Create a Habitat

Challenge / model cards

Count pieces before storing.

Create a Habitat

Teacher reference

Count pieces before storing.

Student language supports

Position: above · below · beside · between · near · far · left · right · clockwise**Clarify:** “Please repeat...” · “Is ___ beside ___?” · “What should I place next?”**Compare:** same · different · rotate · move · replace · sequence

Movable pieces

Set A

Cut on the solid borders. This set is identical to the partner set.



Movable pieces

Set B

Cut on the solid borders. This set is identical to the partner set.



Habitat mats

Desert

dunes • dry wash • rocks

near · middle · far

Forest

canopy • understory • stream

near · middle · far

Pond

This is a template for a piece of lined paper. It features ten horizontal ruling lines spaced evenly down the page. A dashed line runs vertically along the left side, creating a margin. At the bottom center, the text "near · middle · far" is printed, indicating the relative positions of the lines. The entire page is enclosed in a dashed rectangular border.

This is a template for a piece of lined paper. It features ten horizontal ruling lines spaced evenly down the page. A dashed line runs along the left edge, suggesting where the paper can be torn out. The bottom center of the page contains the text "near · middle · far".

near · middle · far

Create a Habitat reference

Teacher reference

Desert: cactus, desert grass, lizard, roadrunner; scarce water; rock/burrow shelter.

Forest: oak, fern, deer, squirrel; stream; tree/log shelter.

Pond: cattail, algae, frog, fish; pond water; reeds/mud shelter.

Grassland: grasses, wildflower, bison, prairie dog; water hole; burrow/tall-grass shelter.

Organisms need food, water, shelter, and adequate space. Some pieces may fit more than one habitat; accept evidence-based reasoning.

Quality check after a round

- Can each student identify pieces by shape or label without relying on color?
- Do both models match in pieces, order, orientation, and relative position?
- Which direction was most precise? Which should be revised?