



Mapping Out Adventures



Raccoon Creek Explorers Activity #6

Supplies:

- Paper
- Notebook
- Markers, Crayons, or Colored Pencils
- A place to draw



Time: 60 minutes

Vocabulary:

Habitat: The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or organism.

Map: A diagrammatic representation of an area of land or sea showing physical features.

Vegetation: Plants considered collectively, especially those found in a particular habitat.

Population: All inhabitants of an area.

Map Key: A visual explanation of symbols used on the map.





Background:

In a previous activity, we learned the importance of using a compass. It is a tool any wilderness explorer keeps with them at all times. If you asked any explorer what other important items they will always have with them, they will tell you that a map is essential. A map is important for so many reasons. It tells you where you are, where you have been, and where you are going. It shows you any obstacles that might get in your way and the safest ways to get somewhere. Maps can be as large or as small as you want them to be. Smaller maps tend to be more detailed because they focus on a smaller area. In this lesson, we will be learning how to create our own maps of our local neighborhood.

People, pets, and wildlife all need water, shelter, and food in the place they call home. The animals or people who live in an area make up that area's population. These places where animals live are called habitats. There are many different types of habitats all over the world. Forests, streams, deserts, and even your house are all habitats. Shelter, water, and food are all the basic components of a habitat. Animals select a place to live based on these basic components. A songbird would select a place with plenty of seeds to eat and water nearby. They want a place with plenty of vegetation to protect them from predators and build a nest.

In this activity, we will be making a map of the area we live in. It will help you learn more about the area you live in. A map will show you the type of habitat you live in and help you guess what might be living in your neighborhood!



Let's get started:

- 1.)** Decide on an area where you want to draw a map. Pick an area large enough for you to walk around in and record details. Do not walk into someone else's property. Make sure your parents know where you are going.
- 2.)** Start walking around the area you selected. Write down any unique features. You can even take photos with a camera or phone! Look for buildings, vegetation, and sources of water.
- 3.)** Make a list of different animals you see while investigating the area.
- 4.)** When you have a good idea of what the area looks like, start drawing the map!
- 5.)** Start by drawing the larger features of the map and make sure you space them out correctly. Large features can be roads, ponds, buildings, or forests.
- 6.)** Once you have drawn the larger features, start adding the smaller ones. This can be anything you saw when you were outside, such as small patches of grass or objects you found.
- 7.)** Finish adding any other details you might have missed.
- 8.)** Add a map key in the corner so people can understand what they are looking at. Draw a small image of trees, roads, or anything else you want inside the map key.
- 9.)** Take your map and some markers with you and go for a walk around the area you drew a map of. Double check to see if everything you drew is correct. You can add things you might have missed while going on the walk.





Reflect:

What are the basic components of a habitat?

Why are maps important?

Does your map show all the basic components of a habitat?

Apply:

How is a compass important when reading a map?

List 3 different types of wildlife habitats.

How is your home a habitat?



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Wrap Up Statement:

You have created your first map. Creating a map will help you learn how to read maps other people have made and will keep you from getting lost. Maps are not always perfect and areas change over time so always be careful when you are out exploring. Making a map helps you become more familiar with the area you live in and help you see small details you might not have noticed before. Every habitat is different and these differences allow different animals to call it home.

Thanks for exploring with us! We would love to see photos of the maps you made while doing this activity. You can send them to us at raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com. Keep on exploring!

