



## Homes and Habitats

Learners will be introduced to some knowledge of habitats and the risks animals face because of habitat destruction. Learners will read and discuss a poem that compares many different habitats. They will then write their own poem using simile to compare animals' habitats with their own.

### Teaching time

A session

### Learning outcomes

- Understand what a habitat is and how living things are suited to their habitats
- Explore the difference between the first and second person in a poem
- Use a simile to compare an animal or plant's habitat with a human's home or happy place

### Step by step

- Introduce your class to the information about habitats.
- Model reading aloud the poem, and then ask learners to read to their partner.
- Discuss the poem as a class through talk partner questions (see page below).
- Each learner to write a poem including simile (see page below).
- Plenary – how can we preserve the habitats local to us?
- Find more learning resources exploring poetry and nature and watch a video of some primary school children reading their poems about home on the Poetry Society website.

Produced by

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### Green Skills



### Suitable for

Key Stage 2

### Location

Indoors

### Season

Spring  
Summer  
Autumn  
Winter

### What you'll need

- This worksheet
- The poem structure

### Key vocabulary

• **Habitat** – the place which meets all of the environmental conditions an organism needs to survive

• **Simile** – a simile compares two things using the word 'like' or 'as'

• **Adapt** – how an animal changes to suit its habitat

### Support and extension opportunities

• **Support:** Learners can be provided with the examples of animals and their habitats to use. Learners could also bring a photograph in or draw their happy place prior to this exercise in order to stimulate ideas.

• **Extension:** Learners could be extended to use other poetic devices such as rhyme or onomatopoeia in their poems.

• The writing can be shared by way of a showcase or booklet; if the latter, then children could illustrate their poems.

• Learners could draw or construct animal habitats or their 'happy place' to display their poems in.



## Learn about Habitats

A habitat is somewhere a living thing, such as an animal or plant, makes its home. There are lots of different kinds of habitats across the world. For example, some habitats include:

- polar regions (the North and South Pole), where it is cold and there is snow and ice
- tropical regions where you might find rainforests and a hot, humid, climate
- deserts
- bodies of water, like oceans or rivers
- meadows
- woodlands

There are many other examples. A habitat provides the things an animal needs to survive, such as food, light, water and shelter. Living things are adapted to the habitats in which they live. For instance, polar bears live in the Arctic, which is a cold, snowy region. They have thick coats, which keep them warm, and they are white so they can blend in and hunt prey.

Plants are also adapted to their environment. For example, plants growing in the desert often have very thin leaves, or even spiny needles like a cactus. This is because there is not much water in the desert, so the thin leaves reduce water loss by creating a small surface area.

As the climate changes, habitats also change, which makes it harder for the things living in them to survive. For example, when the snow and ice melts in the Arctic, polar bears can no longer camouflage and their prey can see them coming. This makes it harder for them find food.

Everything on Earth, including animals, humans and plants, depends on one another to survive. For example, flowers provide nectar for insects like bees, and those insects help the plants by spreading their pollen. This is why it is important to take care of the environment and make sure lots of different habitats are preserved.

Think about the following living things. How do you think these living things are suited to the habitats they live in? Think about what their homes look like – is it a den, a nest, a hive? If it is an animal, think about the food it eats and how it finds that food. If it is a plant, what does it need to survive?

How are these living things suited to their habitat?

- tiger – lives in a range of habitats, including jungles, swamps and grasslands
- palm tree – lives in tropical forests
- lantern fish (a type of fish that uses bioluminescence to emit light) – lives in the ‘twilight zone’ of the ocean, where it is dark
- beaver – lives in freshwater habitats like rivers and streams
- camel – lives in the desert

Can you think of any more examples of how plants or animals are adapted to their habitats?



## Read a Poem

We're going to read a poem by Amy Wolstenholme. The poem is about what 'home' means to different creatures, including humans. Read the poem as a class or with a partner. Think about the different types of home the poet explores, and how each creature is suited to the place it calls home.

### Inner Peace

I ask the moth how to live and it tells me of the perfect moon  
I ask the worm how to live and it tells me of the perfect root  
I ask the bird how to live and it tells me of the worm  
I ask the trees and they say: child, remain deep  
rooted, I ask the bees and they say: kid, never settle. Dance.

Where should I be then, and how should I go? I ask.

I ask the snail that has made a home in my shoe  
I ask the skyscraper that houses people like snails  
I ask the black eye of the storm, chase my tail,  
talk back to the wind, I walk the length of the pier  
until I am worn and the pier unchanged, as the sea dances  
and remains in place.

One day you will stumble upon the stillness  
of the woods after rain, upon that vast and gentle  
conversation, sky to earth, and you will forget to ask.  
One day you will hold the curve of your own face  
with the same reverence you hold for stars, close your eyes,  
say spontaneously, silently:       *Here.*

A dancing light.

A locked room.

Amy Wolstenholme

This poem was the winner of Finding Peace, a writing challenge on The Poetry Society's Young Poets Network in 2022, created in partnership with Japan Institute of Portland Japanese Garden.



### Think about the poem

Think about the poem you have read and answer the following questions.

- In the poem, the speaker asks different creatures how to live. The moth speaks about the moon and the bird speaks about the worm. What does each creature's response tell us about the things they need to survive and thrive?
- The snail has made a home in the speaker's shoe. The speaker then compares people to snails, saying 'the skyscraper houses people like snails'. How do you think a skyscraper is like a snail's shell?
- The trees' advice to the speaker is to 'remain deep-rooted'. In what way do you think humans can be deep-rooted?
- The bees' advice is to 'never settle. Dance'. How do bees dance?
- There is lots of movement in the poem, which you can see through verbs (action words), like 'dance', 'walk', 'chase', 'talk'. But there is also a sense of stillness and the poem's title is 'Inner Peace'. How do you think the idea of peace relates to the idea of home?
- The poem starts off in the first person, which means it uses the 'I' voice ('I ask', 'I walk'). Later, it switches to the second person, the 'you' voice ('you will stumble', 'you hold'). Why do you think this switch happens? What is the effect of including the second-person voice?

### Write your own poem

1. We're going to write our own poems about homes and habitats. Here are your instructions:
2. In a group of 3 - 4 people, make a list of ten animals or plants.
3. For each animal or plant, write down the habitat it lives in. For example, if you choose a camel, write down the desert.
4. Once you have your list, think about how each living thing survives within its habitat e.g. the camel stores water in its hump because the desert is so dry.
5. Now think about what humans need in order to be happy and healthy. This could be something physical like water or exercise, or it could be emotional like friends. What similarities can you spot between what humans need and what the living things on your list need?
6. Choose 4 - 6 of the animals or plants on your list – aim for some variety!



7. For each living thing you have chosen, write a line of your poem like this and fill in the gaps:

I ask the \_\_\_\_\_ how to live and it tells me \_\_\_\_\_

9. For example:

I ask the camel how to live and it tells me to store water for hot days

11. Now think about your own happy place – this could be your home or the home of a friend or relative, it could be school, a park, your favourite café, anywhere you feel comfortable. How does that place provide the things that make you happy? For example, does it give you access to greenery, delicious food, a space to play in?

12. Using a simile (where you compare one thing to another using ‘like’ or ‘as’), compare your happy place to an animal’s habitat. For example, ‘My happy place is warm like a nest lined with wool’.

13. Finally, close your poem with two images that sum up your happy place e.g. ‘In my happy place there are photos of my friends smiling.’

### Your Poem Structure

I ask the \_\_\_\_\_ how to live and it tells me \_\_\_\_\_

I ask the \_\_\_\_\_ how to live and it tells me \_\_\_\_\_

I ask the \_\_\_\_\_ how to live and it tells me \_\_\_\_\_

I ask the \_\_\_\_\_ how to live and it tells me \_\_\_\_\_

My happy place is \_\_\_\_\_ like a \_\_\_\_\_

In my happy place there is \_\_\_\_\_

In my happy place there is \_\_\_\_\_

### Final

### Thoughts

Today we have learned about what a habitat is and how each living thing is adapted to its habitat. We have thought about how the loss of habitat can affect all the animals and plants living there. We have thought about how humans, too, have adapted to different habitats.

Now think about the future. With a partner, spend a few minutes discussing what changes you would make to preserve the habitats near you and to make them as safe and nurturing as possible for all living things.



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