



## Mapping your Site Planning Tool

This tool will help you to tailor the habitat mapping process to your setting. It will help you to decide on the best way to divide up your site and to divide the activities among classes or groups, so you can create your habitat map.

There are eight habitat categories that you can map on your site. Sites with lots of natural areas may have all eight habitat categories, while others may only have two or three. Depending on your site, you may spread these habitat mapping activities over a couple of sessions, a half term or whole term.

The planning tool below will help you to divide the work and the learning opportunities across the whole school, college, or nursery community, so that as many staff and young people as possible can feel ownership over the information collected.

### What habitat categories do you have on site?

Habitats are grouped into eight categories. For each category there are activities and a flowchart to help you to identify the habitats. The eight categories are:

- Ground without plants
- Grass and wildflowers
- Water
- Flowers and food
- Hedges and bushes
- Vertical features
- Trees
- Microhabitats: homes and help for nature (e.g., bird boxes, log piles and compost bins)

In column A of the planning tool at the end of the document you can tick which of these categories your site has. Most sites will have some ground without plants (e.g., tarmac or asphalt playgrounds and paths) and grass (e.g., a lawn or playing field).

If there is a category that doesn't apply to your site, you simply do not need to cover it.

### How many areas of habitat do you have?

Sometimes you might have more than one area of a habitat category on your site, e.g., two patches of grass at different locations. In this case, you and your learners will need to repeat the activities and the flowchart in each different patch. This is because two patches of grass may not be the same type of grassland habitat – one might be lawn while the other is meadow.

Different patches of the same habitat category can be identified in several ways: they could be physically separate; they could look different in some way (e.g., different paving materials); they could be managed differently (e.g., some areas of grass may be mown regularly, while some are left to grow long).

You can record the number of patches of each habitat category your site has in column D of the planning tool.



## **Which learners can you run each session with?**

Mapping your site has been designed as a collaborative effort that can be carried out across the whole school, or a year group, in a way that works for your setting. Although it is not intended for you to run all eight habitat mapping sessions with the same class, you can do this if you wish.

Different habitats slot into the curriculum at different stages, so year groups could choose habitat types that fit their curriculum needs, e.g., Year 1 may like to explore the grass and wildflowers activities as part of their learning about the structure of plants and Year 2 may be planning to study microhabitats. In column E of the planning tool we have made a recommendation about which Key Stage groups the activities and flowcharts are suitable for.

You may wish to run some of the habitat sessions as a whole class and deliver others through smaller group exercises e.g., a teaching assistant could develop communication skills amongst a small group by running one of the habitat sessions as a breakout activity.

## **How many habitat sessions do you need to run?**

Where you have more than one patch to investigate for a habitat category, you can approach your mapping in one of two ways, depending on the age and abilities of your learners and the size of the area to be mapped:

- A. Keep your learners together in one group, investigating the same patch of habitat at the same time. This may mean you need to allocate one session per habitat patch (see column D of the planning tool).
- B. Where your learners are more able, or the patches of habitat to be investigated are small, and you can see them from one location, you could split the learners into separate groups to investigate a different patch each. This will help you to map your site much more quickly!

If you only have a tiny amount of a particular habitat category, e.g., you have one small bush in a corner, you can choose to map this yourself without involving learners.



## **Top tip: Which habitat category should you do first?**

Column F of the planning tool provides the recommended order for carrying out the habitat mapping sessions. It ensures that the larger areas of habitats are layered on the bottom of your map in the Habitat Mapper tool, and that the smaller areas are on top, so that all your habitat features will be visible. We encourage you to first map ground without plants and grass and wildflowers. These two habitat categories will cover most of your site (all playing fields and lawns, playgrounds, paths, and car parks etc.).

## **How to use the planning tool**

Spend 10 minutes or so having a quick walk around your site (or longer if you have a large site) and complete columns A and D of the planning tool, recording which habitat categories and roughly how many different patches of each you have. Back inside, you can then review the activities and flowcharts for each of the relevant habitat categories to decide which learners you want to be involved in which activities (column E). Using the information in your planning tool and the guidance about the number of sessions needed above, you can then decide on how many sessions are required and schedule this with your colleagues. Remember, you can take several weeks to complete your site map.

## **EYFS**

If you are carrying out the habitat mapping in an Early Years setting, you will find columns A, B and C useful for helping you identify which habitat flowcharts you need to use on your site. You won't need to work through all the activities, but you might find it useful to take a quick look at them if you are unsure about any of the flowchart questions.



<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
<p><b>Tick if you have this habitat category</b></p>	<p><b>Habitat category</b></p>	<p><b>This category includes...</b></p>	<p><b>Roughly how many separate patches of this habitat do you have?</b> <i>(This number equals the number of sessions you need, assuming you do a separate session for each patch)</i></p>	<p><b>Age group or class</b> <i>(Here are our Key Stage recommendations. Circle which Key Stage you would like to do this activity with. There is space in each box to add other details)</i></p>	<p><b>Mapping order</b> <i>(This is the order we recommend you carry out the mapping activities. You can use this to help schedule when each class will do their activity)</i></p>
	<p>Ground without plants</p>	<p>Tarmac, asphalt, gravel, or soil - any area of bare ground (although it may have a small number of plants sprouting up).</p>		<p>Key Stage 2 Key Stage 3 Other:</p>	<p><b>1</b></p>
	<p>Grass and wildflowers</p>	<p>All mown or long grass areas, any meadowy areas, or any areas where you have sown wildflowers into the soil. Also, the 'wild' edges and corners that might be classed as 'weeds' with tall plants including nettles and brambles.</p>		<p>Key stage 1 Key Stage 2 Key Stage 3 Other:</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Tick if you have this habitat category</b>	<b>Habitat category</b>	<b>This category includes...</b>	<b>Roughly how many separate patches of this habitat do you have?</b>	<b>Age group or class</b>	<b>Mapping order</b>
	Water	Any areas of your site that have water in them for at least two months of the year, or when there has been lots of heavy rain, such as ponds, streams, and ditches (both natural and man made).		Key Stage 1 Key Stage 2 Key Stage 3 Key Stage 4 Other:	<b>3</b>
	Flowers and food	Any food growing areas including fruit trees, and any planted flower beds or containers including sensory gardens and rockeries.		Key Stage 2 Key Stage 3 Other:	<b>4</b>
	Hedges and bushes	Any type of hedge, or areas of bushes and short multi-branched shrubs that are shorter than the first floor of a house.		Key Stage 2 Key Stage 3 Other:	<b>5</b>

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Tick if you have this habitat category</b>	<b>Habitat category</b>	<b>This category includes...</b>	<b>Roughly how many separate patches of this habitat do you have?</b>	<b>Age group or class</b>	<b>Mapping order</b>
	Vertical features	These are all your boundary features like fences and walls, but not the main walls of your building unless it has climbing plants. It also includes structures with climbing plants like trellis or pergolas. Green roofs are included in this category.		Key Stage 1 Key Stage 2 Key Stage 3 Other:	<b>6</b>
	Trees	Any tree, any size, including single trees, lines, and clusters.		Key Stage 2 Key Stage 3 Other:	<b>7</b>
	Microhabitats	Features installed to support wildlife or improve sustainability such as bird feeders, compost bins, and log piles.		Key Stage 1 Key Stage 2 Key Stage 3 Other:	<b>8</b>



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