



Mapping grassland habitats

Grass is likely to be one of the main natural habitats on your site. But there is more than one kind of grassland, from lawns and playing fields to wildflower meadows, and some are better for nature than others.

Mapping grass and wildflower habitats is part of the Mapping your Site activities, enabling you to explore and map the habitats your site currently offers for nature. Understanding your starting point is really important and will allow you to measure any nature gains you achieve when you start making enhancements to your site. Mapping grass and wildflowers is one of eight habitat mapping sessions in this unit of learning.

Before mapping any grassland habitats, these introductory activities have been designed to support learners in identifying types of grassland, allowing them to answer the questions in the [Grass and wildflowers habitat flowchart](#) accurately. These activities can also be used as standalone activities, promoting a positive connection with nature.

Teaching time

60 Minutes

Learning outcomes

- To identify the difference between grass and other plants.
- To record and interpret data about the number of different plants in a sample area.
- To use their data to classify different types of grassland.
- To understand their role and contribution to mapping the habitats on their site as part of the Education Nature Park.

Step by step

1. Ask learners to work in small groups (three works well) and find areas of grass or wildflowers.
2. Using the *grass and wildflowers activity sheets* ask learners to examine grasses and observe their distinctive characteristics of hollow stems and narrow leaves that wrap the stem. Ask learners if they can find any grass flowers or seedheads.
3. Pick a random location in the grass or wildflowers and ask learners to mark out a 1m x 1m area using metre sticks or a quadrat – this is their ‘example area’. For younger children, you could sit them in groups of four, with teddy bear legs out and feet touching, or use a hula hoop.
4. Ask the learners to search for as many different leaf shapes as they can find in their example area. Ask them to get close to the ground and part the grass with their hands to spot any tiny plants growing below.
5. Ask the learners to decide whether the sample area is mostly grass, mostly other plants, or a mixture, using the diagrams provided.
6. Ask the learners to record a tally of how many different leaf shapes they find in their example area. You could also ask them to draw each leaf shape.

Green Skills



Suitable for

Key Stage 1
Key Stage 2
Key Stage 3

Location

Outdoors

Season

Spring
Summer
Autumn

What you'll need

A printed map of your site

A tablet, laptop or desktop PC to access the Habitat Mapper tool online

Grass and wildflowers activity sheets

Clipboards

Drawing materials

Measuring sticks or 1m x 1m quadrat

Optional: examples of grass flowers or seedheads

Key vocabulary

Observation
Identification
Seed / seedhead
Flower / flowerhead



Step by step (continued)

7. After completing these activities, learners should use the *Grass and wildflowers habitat flowchart* to decide which habitat type they have.

8. Educators can work with learners to draw each area on the printed map, or (if you have internet connectivity outdoors) directly onto the online map using the Habitat Mapper tool.

9. Repeat this for each separate area of grass on your site, as they may be different types of grassland. Continue until you have mapped all grassland habitats.

10. Back indoors as a whole class activity, transfer the habitat areas from your paper map onto the online Nature Park map using the Habitat Mapper tool. If you already did this outdoors, check and review your map with the class.

Reflection

Encourage learners to think about the distinct types of wildlife living in short grass, long grass, or wildflower areas. Consider how interventions, such as allowing portions of grass to grow long or planting wildflowers that attract wildlife, may alter the types of animals and plants present. You could also discuss potential enhancements to the grassland areas on your site, focusing on improvements for both people and nature.



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