



## Mapping grass and wildflowers

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.

This session will guide learners through a series of activities and investigations, supporting them to identify types of grassland before using a flowchart to identify the exact habitat, which will form an important piece of your overall Nature Park map.

### Teaching time

up to 60 minutes

### Learning outcomes

- recognise the differences between grasses and other plants
- use a branching key to classify different types of grassland

### Step by step

Ask learners to work in small groups (three works well) and find areas of grass or wildflowers. Depending on how much support learners need, if you have multiple areas of grassland you may wish to ask each group to investigate a different area – this will help you to map multiple areas in one session.

Using the Grass and wildflowers worksheet, the first activity encourages learners to get to know grasses and notice their distinctive characteristics – hollow stems and narrow leaves that wrap the stem. Can they find any grass flowers or seedheads?

For the second activity, ask learners to mark out a 1m x 1m area in the grass or wildflowers 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.

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. Do they think the example area is A) all grass, B) mostly grass, with some other plants, or C) mostly other plants (using the diagrams provided)?

For the third activity, ask 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.

After completing these activities, each group can use the Grass and wildflowers habitat flowchart, answering each question to reach a decision on which habitat they have. Repeat this for each separate area of grass or wildflowers on your site, as they may be different types of grassland. Continue until you have identified them all.

If using a printed map of your site: ask learners to draw and label the habitat they have just identified on the map. If using the Habitat Mapper tool on a mobile device: educators and learners can work together to accurately draw the habitat on the map.

### Green Skills



### Suitable for

Key Stage 1  
Key Stage 2  
Key Stage 3

### Location

Outdoors

### Season

Spring  
Summer  
Autumn

### What you'll need

Printed flowcharts and worksheets

Clipboards

Drawing materials

Tablet, laptop, or computer to access the online Habitat Mapper tool

Printed map of your site, if you do not intend to use the Habitat Mapper outdoors

Optional: examples of grass flowers or seedheads

### Key vocabulary

Observation  
Identify

Seed / seedhead

Flower / flowerhead



### **Step by step (continued)**

If you used a printed map, remember to add the habitats identified to the Nature Park map using the Habitat Mapper tool when you are back in the classroom. This is a really important step to ensure your site and your observations contribute to real-world, groundbreaking research by the Natural History Museum into nature recovery.

### **Reflection**

Encourage learners to think about the distinct types of wildlife inhabiting short grass, long grass, or wildflower areas. Consider how actions, 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 improvements to the grassland areas on your site, focusing on improvements for both people and nature.



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