



**Elaborate: Take a Note**  
“Surviving in my Home Sweet Home”  
*Habitats Module*

This inquiry-based activity provides students with the opportunity to further expand process skills while emphasizing the importance of collaboration and communication.

**This offline skills activity can be completed after participation in the online Take a Note Elaborate.**

**Teacher objective:** Students will demonstrate understanding of the living and nonliving needs of animals in their habitat, or home sweet home, by creating a habitat mural which includes the appropriate animals, plants, and features of the habitat, as well as plant and animal adaptations for survival.

**Student objective:** Upon completion of this activity, students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the characteristics and necessary components of different habitats, including identification of which are living, which are nonliving, and specific adaptations of plants and animals in the habitat.

**Estimated time for activity:** 25 minutes

**Materials:**

- Roll of Mural Paper, cut for each team of students (length should accommodate the number of students per team)
- Pencils
- Crayons
- Sentence strip, card stock or index cards with habitat names preprinted by the teacher
- Basket for the habitat names
- Key vocabulary for each respective habitat for students labeling the mural (Optional: teachers can provide some of the labels or assist with writing them while students are coloring the mural.)
- Optional: Photos and/or illustrations of the different animals, plants, and nonliving components of different habitats for reference
- Tape, magnets, clips or string to hang up completed mural during team presentation

**Procedure:**

1. **Do:** Provide students with the opportunity to work with their peers.
  - a. Review and summarize the names, characteristics, and components of different habitats you have been discussing. Be sure to note both living and nonliving things.
  - b. Tell teams they will be choosing the name of a habitat from a basket of prepared labels.
  - c. Ask students to brainstorm what they would include in a drawing of their habitat, both living and nonliving things.
  - d. The teacher should be moving about the room facilitating this to assure each team has adequate and appropriate components. (If teacher is providing labels of animals'; and plants' names, they should be given to students after they identify them as part of their habitat.



- e. Have team members decide who will be illustrating which objects or organisms on the mural. Each student can label their illustration with 1) names of animals and plants, 2) living or nonliving things. Students could place a color-coded check mark instead of writing living and nonliving. (Red= nonliving, Green= Living) Students should reference the key vocabulary list for correct spelling.
  - f. Teams should identify the adaptations of the plants and animals living in their habitat which they included in their illustration. They can mark each one they will be discussing by circling it or drawing a little star or dot next to the plant or animal.
  - g. Teacher should be monitoring students during their illustrating, walking among the teams, to reinforce all members' participation.
  - h. Once all teams have finished illustrating, coloring and labeling their murals, teams can share with the class.
  - i. These murals can be displayed and used for further activities discussing adaptations, camouflage, effects of changes in the habit.
2. **Discuss:** Encourage students to exchange ideas while within their groups.
- a. What living things live in this habitat?
  - b. What do the plants and animals living here require for food, water shelter?
  - c. What nonliving things are part of this habitat?
  - d. How are the living and nonliving things connected in your habitat?
  - e. What adaptations are specific to the plants and animals in this habitat?
3. **Communicate:** Help students to record their observations and findings through illustration(s).
- a. What colors did you choose for the animals and plants in this habitat?
  - b. How are the colors of the living things important in this habitat?
  - c. What is similar about the colors of the nonliving things and some of the animals in this habitat?
  - d. What might happen to an animal or plant in your habitat if it suddenly changed color?
  - e. What is an adaptation the animals need to survive in this habitat?
  - f. What adaptations do the plants in this habitat need to survive?
4. **Collaborate:** Provide students with the opportunity to summarize their experiences and to draw conclusions through a closing activity or discussion.  
Discussion can be guided and recorded by the teacher by asking the following:
- a. What claim(s) can we make about habitats and the living and nonliving parts of the habitats?
  - b. What is your evidence to support this claim?
  - c. Summarize, in your own words, the ways habitats support the animals and plants in a habitat so it can survive. (This could be done as a class statement with students dictating to the teacher.)
  - d. Summarize, in your own words, the things which all living things need to survive. (This could be done as a class statement with students dictating to the teacher.)

### **Review:**

At the conclusion of the lesson, remember to review the following key points:  
Read the process skill to your students and have them compare what they did to what professional scientists do.



- Scientists learn through observation.  
Direct observation and comparison of habitats will support understanding of the concept.
- Scientists compare and contrast what they observe.  
Conducting follow-up with all students provides a valuable extension of the observation activity as students will learn from peer findings and reflections as well as their own. Ask, "What did you learn from class results?"
- Illustrating observations helps illustrate concept understanding.

### **Accommodations:**

If students have difficulty completing the activity, a variety of accommodations can be employed.

- Teacher can model how to make a simple illustration to represent the plants, animals, and nonliving features of the habitats.
- Photographs from nature magazines or nature calendars can be added to the background illustrated by the students.
- The activity can be completed with a science buddy from an older grade.
- The activity can be completed as a class with students suggesting the components of each habitat with the teacher's guidance.

### **Math Extension:**

Use this extension option to incorporate second grade math skills into this activity.

- *Addition and Subtraction Mental Strategies* Use the completed student murals to help students become fluent adding and subtracting within 20. Ask questions such as 'How many nonliving things are in the mural? How many living things are there? What is the total number of living and nonliving things?'
- *Odd and Even Numbers* Have students identify which groups of objects have odd or even numbers. They may use strategies such as pairing or counting by twos. If students find two groups with even numbers, have students write an equation to express an even number as the sum of two even addends.