

Home sweet home

Setting the context

East Enderling Environmental Committee has decided that the town's latest shopping centre needs a big, new car park. So they've decided to build one on a local field. "It's big, it's ugly and no one is using it," they said in a recent announcement to the Press. However, Errol isn't very happy about their decision. "This field might not

look very attractive because it looks messy, wild and overgrown to us," he said in reply, "but it's an important habitat for plants and animals. To them it's home."

The problem

How can you find out if the local area provides an important habitat for plants and animals?



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Background information

In the past, scientists used Greek or Latin as a common language. That's why **habitat** comes from a Latin word meaning 'it inhabits'. When environmentalists talk about habitats they mean the physical environments in which flora (plant) and fauna (animal) species live. The types of habitat available - whether wet, dry, hot or cold - affect what species are present. (The Eden Project domes are really huge, artificial habitats, known as 'biomes'.) Pollution and habitat destruction can cause wide-scale and sudden extinctions because plants and animals tend to adapt to live in certain areas.

You will need

Measuring equipment; magnifying glasses; sample bags/jars; note/sketch books; tracing paper; crayons; digital cameras; photocopiable page 41.

Safety Ensure that children consult you before handling any plants and that they wash their hands thoroughly after the field trip.

Objectives

- To consider the ways in which living things and the environment need our protection.
- To identify and group local plants and animals.
- To know that different plants and animals are found in different habitats.
- To use maps and keys to share information.