

## Understanding Habitats, Ecosystems and Biomes

This week we are learning about habitats, ecosystems and biomes. Do you know what a habitat is? A habitat is the area where a plant or animal naturally lives and grows. Habitats support life by providing the food, water and shelter that its inhabitants need to survive – just like your home. Many different habitats can be found on Earth. Each habitat is home to a variety of plants and animals that are unique to that environment. Habitat is vital to survival. The three basic parts of a habitat are: food, water, and shelter.

*How does your habitat provide these basic needs?*

You could think of habitat as the special place in a community in which a plant or animal lives. An ecosystem is a community of living and non-living things that work together. An ecosystem is basically the neighborhood where animal lives. The habitat is the animal's address in that neighborhood. Some animals can survive in more than one habitat. Other animals are limited to certain habitats. For example, moose habitat is more specific than gray squirrel habit. I bet that some of you see moose where you live, but many of you see gray squirrels in your neighborhood.



Moose have more specific habit needs than gray squirrels.

*Think about your habitat. Where does your food come from? How can you trace your food back to the source?*

A biome is even bigger than an ecosystem. A biome is a large geographical area that contains distinct plant and animal groups which are adapted to live in that environment. There can be many different habitats in a biome. Some major biomes are tundra, taiga, grasslands, deciduous forest, fresh water, desert, alpine, rainforest and ocean.

*What biome would you most like to visit? Why did you choose this biome?*

Dave and I have traveled by canoe, kayak and dogsled all across North America, witnessing many different biomes. Where we are now, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, is on the southern edge of the taiga, or boreal forest, biome. We have talked about the boreal forest quite a bit before, but the word taiga may be new. You see, this biome is kind of like a donut circling the earth at the same northern latitude. Typically in Russia, people call this biome the taiga and in Canada, they call it the boreal forest.



The taiga biome is shown in green on this map.

In the future we will write more about habitats, ecosystems and biomes. I hope this Notes from the Trail has helped you understand what these three things are.

### **Further Exploration and Sources**

<http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks/nwepecosystems.htm>

[http://www.blueplanetbiomes.org/world\\_biomes.htm](http://www.blueplanetbiomes.org/world_biomes.htm)

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/activities/makeitahabitat/biomes.html>

<http://bioexpedition.com/ocean-biome/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**February 28, Notes from the Trail  
Student Response Worksheet (Lower)  
Understanding Habitats, Ecosystems and Biomes**

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is an area where a plant or animal naturally lives or grows.
  
2. The three basic parts of a habitat are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. An ecosystem is a \_\_\_\_\_ of living and non-living things that work together.
  
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a large geographical area that contains distinct \_\_\_\_\_ and animal groups.
  
5. Amy and Dave are currently in the boreal forest, or \_\_\_\_\_, biome.

Bonus: On the back of this sheet do a quick sketch of your favorite habitat. Is it your room, a ball field, the woods, or somewhere else? Below the sketch write 1-2 sentences about why it's your favorite place to be.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ **Answer** \_\_\_\_\_

**February 28, Notes from the Trail**  
**Student Response Worksheet (Lower)**  
**Understanding Habitats, Ecosystems and Biomes**

1. A **\_habitat\_** is an area where a plant or animal naturally lives or grows.
  
2. The three basic parts of a habitat are **\_food\_**, **\_water\_** and **\_shelter\_**.
  
3. An ecosystem is a **\_community\_** of living and non-living things that work together.
  
4. A **\_biome\_** is a large geographical area that contains distinct **\_plant\_** and animal groups.
  
5. Amy and Dave are currently in the boreal forest, or **\_taiga\_**, biome.

Bonus: On the back of this sheet do a quick sketch of your favorite habitat. Is it your room, a ball field, the woods, or somewhere else? Below the sketch write 1-2 sentences about why it's your favorite place to be.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**February 28, Notes from the Trail  
Student Response Worksheet (Upper)  
Understanding Habitats, Ecosystems and Biomes**

1. Define habitat. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. An ecosystem is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are two places that food comes from in your habitat?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a large geographical area that contains  
distinct \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ groups.

5. What are the two different names for the biome in which Amy  
and Dave are currently living? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Bonus: On the back of this sheet do a quick sketch of your favorite habitat. Is it your room, a ball field, the woods, or somewhere else? Below the sketch write 1-2 sentences about why it's your favorite place to be.

Name: Answer

**February 28, Notes from the Trail  
Student Response Worksheet (Upper)  
Understanding Habitats, Ecosystems and Biomes**

6. Define habitat. \_\_\_\_\_ **the area where a plant or animal naturally lives and grows**
7. An ecosystem is: \_\_\_\_\_ **ecosystem is a community of living and non-living things that work together.**
8. What are two places that food comes from in your habitat?  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Answers will vary** \_\_\_\_\_
9. A **\_biome\_** is a large geographical area that contains distinct **\_plant\_** and **\_animal\_** groups.
10. What are the two different names for the biome in which Amy and Dave are currently living? **\_\_taiga or boreal forest\_\_**
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Bonus: On the back of this sheet do a quick sketch of your favorite habitat. Is it your room, a ball field, the woods, or somewhere else? Below the sketch write 1-2 sentences about why it's your favorite place to be.