EXPLORATION Journal

BEFORE YOU EXPLORE:
Write or draw your ideas for what you might see.

NAME:_____

LOOK & LISTEN FOR NATURE IN A PLACE NEAR YOU!

EXPLORATION #1:
Map Your Space

1. Write five adjectives to describe this space. _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

2. Draw and label a map of this place here:

Put these on your map:

- N, S, E, W for the four cardinal directions
- Trees, shrubs, grass
- Buildings
- Water sources (creeks, ponds, puddles, or a water hose)
- Trash and recycling bins
- Paths, trails, sidewalks
- A map title
- A map key

Think About It

Which areas on your map would you like to explore? Why?

What kinds of living things did you observe in this place?

Weather Report

☐ sunny ☐ rainy ☐ other: _____

☐ cloudy ☐ snowy temperature: _____°____

EXPLORATION #2: Listen

1. Close your eyes. Stay quiet. Listen, and remember the sounds you hear. Mark them here:

YOU

2. Sort the sounds you heard in the chart. For each sound, write its source or a description of the sound.

Natural Sounds	Human-made Sounds	Not Sure

Think About It

What is something you heard today that you want to know more about?

Did you hear more human-made sounds or natural sounds? What does that tell you about the space?

Weather Report

☐ sunny ☐ rainy ☐ other: _____

☐ cloudy ☐ snowy temperature: _____°____

EXPLORATION #3:
Plant Life

Observe the plants in your natural space. Look for different characteristics: color, leaf shape, bark, needles, cones, berries, seeds, flowers, smell, and texture. Record observations here:

Plant (name or draw)	**Number** (or estimate)	**Group** (tree, shrub, grass, flower, other)

Mark any plants new to you with a *

DID YOU KNOW...

Fungi may sometimes look like plants, but they are more closely related to animals! Fungi include mushrooms, yeasts, and molds. Unlike plants, fungi do not get their energy through photosynthesis. Instead they absorb nutrients from the things around them. You can often find fungi in dark, damp places.

Think About It

Which plant is the most interesting to you? Why?

Do you think animals eat the plants you found? Which animals? Which plants?

Where did you find the most plants? The fewest plants?

Write a question you have about this natural space here:

Weather Report

❑ sunny ❑ rainy ❑ other: _____

❑ cloudy ❑ snowy temperature: _____°____

EXPLORATION #4: Vertebrates

Look for birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, or fish—if there is a pond or creek around your natural space. You can also look for evidence, such as tracks, food scraps, or scat. (Hint: Use the "Characteristics" on the next page for help with the Group column.)

Animal, or Evidence (describe or sketch)	**Number** (or estimate)	**Behaviors** Observed	**Group** (bird, mammal, reptile, amphibian, fish)

Characteristics

Amphibians

- Cold-blooded
- Begin their lives in the water. As they grow, most develop lungs and legs and live on land.
- Examples: frogs, toads salamanders

Reptiles

- Cold-blooded
- Covered in scales
- Examples: snakes, lizards, alligators, turtles

Mammals

- Warm-blooded
- Covered in fur
- Give birth to live young
- Examples: bears, cats, humans

Birds

- Have feathers
- Lay eggs
- Warm-blooded
- Examples: ostriches, robins, penguins

Think About It

Some animals hide when people are near. If you were an animal, where would you hide?

Animals live in habitats. The habitat is a place that has what the animal needs to survive. Choose an animal that you observed. Describe how this habitat meets the animal's need for

- Water
- Food
- Shelter
- Space

Weather Report

❑ sunny ❑ rainy ❑ other: _____

❑ cloudy ❑ snowy temperature: _____°____

EXPLORATION #5:
Invertebrates

1. Follow your teacher's instructions to find invertebrates such as insects, spiders, or worms. Make a list of what you observe, and put a tally mark for each one you see.
For example, write "Ant 卌"

Invertebrate Tally

2. Choose two animals you observed. Sketch or describe them here:

Think About It

Compare notes with other students. Who found the most variety of invertebrates? Where?

Choose an animal that you observed. Describe how the habitat here meets the animal's need for

- Water
- Food
- Shelter
- Space

Look back at your observations from Exploration #4. Did you observe more vertebrates on that day, or more invertebrates today? Explain why you think the results were what they were.

Did you find anything surprising? Describe.

Weather Report

☐ sunny ☐ rainy ☐ other: _____

☐ cloudy ☐ snowy temperature: _____°____

THINK ABOUT YOUR EXPLORATIONS

1. Before you started, you thought about what you might observe. Did you see or hear those things? What surprised you?

2. Look at the map from Exploration #1. Label some of your observations on it. Write or draw one sound, plant, vertebrate, and invertebrate where you observed them.

3. Did you see anything unnatural in this natural space, such as litter? Also mark it on the map.

4. Look at the weather report data from each exploration. Did the weather change? Or was it the same each day? Describe.

5. Describe the future of this natural space. Do you expect it to stay natural?

BIODIVERSITY...

Biodiversity is the variety of living things found in an ecosystem. Ecosystems with many species can handle environmental changes better than ecosystems with few species.

6. Based on your observations, how would you describe the biodiversity of your space?

7. How could this space provide more habitat to plants and animals? List your ideas.