



## The Nature of Your Neighborhood

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Share a child's curiosity about nature to foster their sense of wonder and appreciation for the spectacular variety of life around them.

**C**hildren love to explore. Take advantage of their natural curiosity and foster their appreciation of the place they live by using the survey on the back of this sheet.

### Tips for Educators/Parents

1. Use the questions as a way to focus attention while on a walk through a residential or natural area. The questions work well for children of varying ages, and can be modified easily based on the interest of your child/group.
2. Teachers and youth leaders may also want to use the survey as a take home assignment. The questions are designed to help children take notice of the nature around them and fit well with Earth Science and general nature studies curricula. Younger children should explore with a parent, while middle school-aged children might prefer to explore with a friend.
3. Expand the survey by making simple sketches of some of the things children discover in the neighborhood or natural area. Leaves, seeds, acorns, mushrooms, birds, mammals, and insects make good subjects. You might also collect a few things to bring home for later study and sketching.
4. Don't worry about what you don't know! Among the many great aspects of nature study is that there is always more to learn. If you can't answer a question that a child poses, simply say "That's a great question, let's find out when we get home/back to class/etc." You may want to write the question on an index card and post it in the classroom or at home. Be sure to follow up — use your library, internet, or local resource people to find the answer.



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Have fun finding the answers to these questions by exploring your neighborhood.

1. Name at least 10 birds that live in your neighborhood. What ones spend the winter here? What ones only live here in spring and summer? What's the difference—why don't they all stay all year? Bonus: Find a nest.
2. Name at least six mammals that live in your neighborhood. Which ones come out only at night? Where do they live during the day? Bonus: Find a mammal hideout.
3. Name 6 bugs that live in your neighborhood and find at least three while exploring. What good are bugs anyway?
4. Point in the direction that the sun rises in your neighborhood. Where does it set?
5. What did the moon look like last night? When will it be full? Is it waxing (turning into a full moon) or waning (turning into a new moon)? Bonus: How can you tell if the moon is waxing or waning just by looking at it?
6. What is one of the first trees to have leaves in spring in your neighborhood? Find one...or two...or three of them.
7. Find the biggest tree on your street. Can you figure out what kind of tree it is (maple, oak, beech, pine, spruce, etc.). Bonus: What would be best tree on your street for climbing? For a swing?
8. When it rains, where does all the water go? (Hint: only some of it soaks into the ground. Where does the rest go?) Bonus: Find some evidence that all the rainwater doesn't go into the ground.
9. When you turn on the sink or shower or bath or hose at home, where does the water come from? (Hmm...you may have to do some exploring beyond your neighborhood to find out!)
10. What's your favorite: tree, bird, bug, hideout, flower, garden, animal, color in spring/summer/fall/winter? Bonus: Take a walk and show a friend or family member some of your favorites or sketch one below.