

## FIND YOUR OWN SIT SPOT

A **sit spot** is a special place outside that you choose. It's a place you can return to everyday, where you can settle in, be comfortable and use your senses to observe the world around you.

You can visit at the same time every day or at different times of day. The longer you spend in one place, the more you'll observe.

1. Choose your spot.
2. Start by spending 3 minutes making observations from your sit spot. Does that feel like a short or long time?
3. After 3 minutes, use a nature journal to write or draw what you remember observing.
4. Challenge yourself to add more 1 minute every day.

Over time, you will form a relationship with your spot. You might even be surprised by what you observe!

## HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR SIT SPOT

Take your time selecting the right spot. Your spot should be close to where you live so that you can visit regularly, maybe even every day. You might try out a few spots before you choose one you want to come back to. This is your special place. What do you need to feel comfortable here? Here are some questions to consider:

- Is your spot sunny or shady? Does this change throughout the day?
- What kind of animal habitats are close to your spot? What living things do you think you might observe?
- How can you respect the things that live at your sit spot, or that visit it like you do? Think about how to respect the plants, animals, and other small living things.
- Do you have an outdoor chair or blanket to sit on?
- You could mark your spot with a chair, a sign, a rope, a hula hoop, or something else you choose to define your area.
- Are there different kinds of plants growing near your spot?
- Learn how to identify poison ivy and make sure to avoid it!
- You can always choose a new spot or have more than one spot.

### What is OBSERVATION?

**Observation** is a way to use your senses to take in and notice information. You might make **observations** using your sense of touch, hearing, sight, or smell. From where you are right now, what can you **observe**? What can you see, hear, smell or feel? What other senses do you have? If you have food nearby, you can **observe** using your sense of taste.

### What is RESPECT?

**Respect** is thinking and acting in a positive way about all the things in our environment, including living and nonliving things.

### What is a HABITAT?

A **habitat** provides everything a living organism needs to survive. This includes shelter, water, food, and space.

## WAKE UP YOUR SENSES

Once you have found your spot, review your senses to practice all of the ways you can observe.

### LOOK!

- Make the shape of an O with each hand and then put your O's together, as if your hands are binoculars. Use your hand binoculars to look in all directions: look up at the sky, down at the ground, in front of you, to the left and the right.
- Do you see shadows or patches of sunlight on the ground?
- Can you name all the colors you can see?
- Can you see any movement around you?

### LISTEN!

- Close your eyes for 10 seconds. What do you hear?
- Cup your hands around your ears to see if it changes what you can hear.
- Count the different sounds you hear. How many sounds are coming from humans?
- Can you hear the sound of movement?

### SMELL!

- Can you observe any smells from your sit spot?
- Do you detect different smells if you turn your head in different directions?
- What happens if you smell something up close?
- Does a leaf smell different if you rub it between your fingers before you smell it?

### FEEL!

- How does the temperature feel?
- Are there different textures on the ground?
- Imagine how something might feel before you touch it. Then, touch it. Does it feel the way you imagined it would?

## WHAT YOU MIGHT OBSERVE FROM YOUR SIT SPOT

Living things are everywhere! We share our habitat with many other living things, including plants, other animals, bacteria, fungi and more. You can see some of these organisms with your eyes and some are so small that you need special tools, like a magnifying glass or a microscope, to see them. You might see animals from your sit spot or you might see evidence of animals. What are some clues that an animal has been there?

Many animals have relationships with certain plants, so the plants growing near your spot can be a clue to the kind of animals that might be present. For example, Black Swallowtail butterflies only lay their eggs on plants in the parsley family, so you might find these butterflies near plants in this family.



Be still and watch for movement—when we are moving, it can be hard to detect the movement of other organisms. Predators often keep their bodies still while they watching for the movement of their prey, and prey sometimes use stillness to hide from their predators. When you keep your body as still and quiet as possible, the more you might notice in the world around you.

What non-living things do you observe?

### What is a predator?

A **predator** is an animal that eats other animals.

### What is prey?

**Prey** is an animal caught and eaten by a predator.

## DIFFERENT CHALLENGES FOR YOUR SIT SPOT

- Try camouflaging yourself! Living things might not notice you if you blend into your surroundings.
- Grow your plant awareness. How many different plants you can see from your sit spot? How can you tell one type of plant from another?
- Choose one plant and identify its different plant parts. Can you find the stem, leaves, flowers or seeds? Does it have bark? Can you see the roots?
- Come back to your spot at different times of day: in the morning, afternoon and evening. What changes throughout the day?
- Can you observe every color of the rainbow from your sit spot? Did you know only 10% of all flowers are blue?
- How do you keep track of time passing? What are different ways to notice that time is passing?