



1. What is biodiversity? Mind map or collage

Time: 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Resources: Paper, coloured pens or pencils. If collage option is chosen - glue, collage materials, scissors.

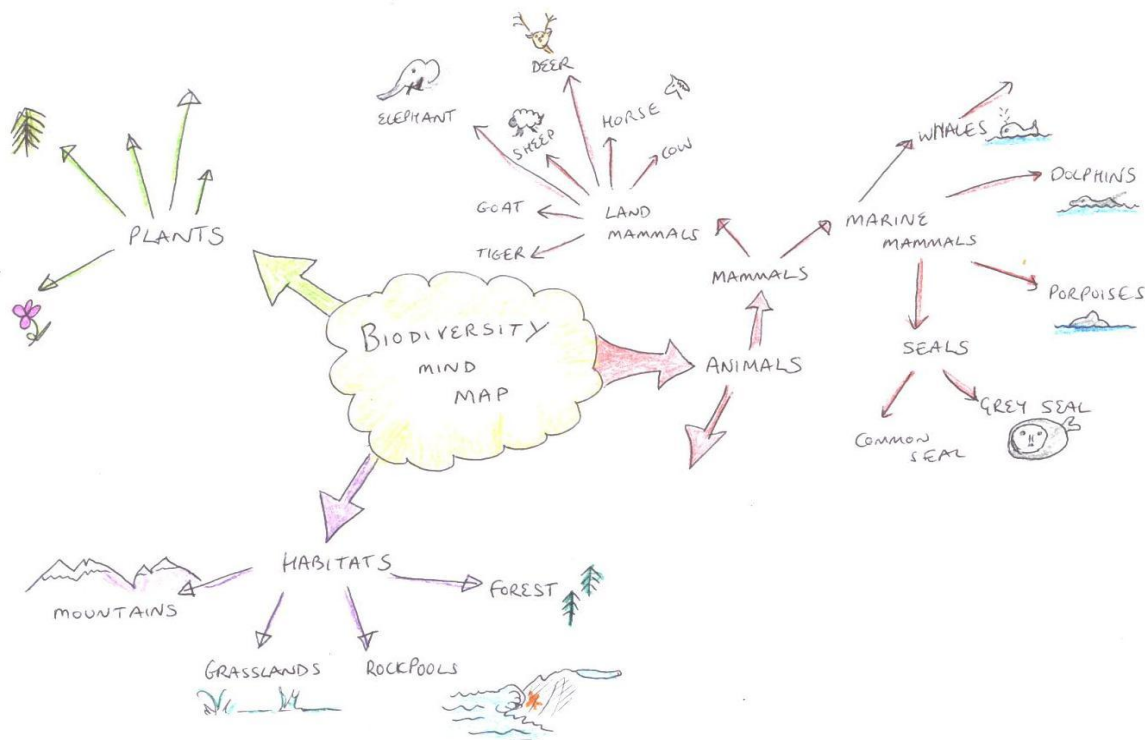
Aims: Raise awareness and develop understanding of the term biodiversity, develop creativity and classification skills.

Suggested method: The level of discussion and the challenge of the activity presented will vary with age groups and ability.

Initiate a discussion on the word 'biodiversity'. Explain that the word biodiversity is short for biological diversity. Has anyone heard of biology? What does biology mean? Or diversity? Write a brief definition on the board which will be easily understood by all. For example, 'Biodiversity means all the plants and animals in the world and where they live'. Then start a discussion with your students which will engage them and enthuse them about thinking about animals, plants and habitats. Has anyone got a favourite animal? Plant? What do they like about it? At this stage for older students it would be appropriate to set a challenge to list as many animals and plants in three minutes. Then count how many they have and compare. Then they can combine to work in pairs and share lists and add to theirs from the other person's ideas. Again re-count and see how many different plants and animals the pairs have thought of. Then pairs could join together to make fours and follow the same process of sharing and adding to each person's list. Give a time limit to increase the challenge and necessitate focus.

Once students have lots of ideas of plants and animals, they are ready to begin the next stage in this activity. This is to present their ideas on paper as either a biodiversity mind map with drawings and colour or as a biodiversity collage. Older students or more able students should be challenged to classify their lists carefully before beginning. For example, animals could be classified into mammals and then marine mammals and also land mammals before listing the species such as seals and cows. Each stage of the classification should be shown using branches coming from the centre of the diagram (see example below).

The youngest students may just draw or collage pictures which show biodiversity onto the paper without any organisation of the images. A level in between would be to group the pictures into animals and plants.



In addition habitats can be added to the diagrams to show a fuller understanding of biodiversity. Again ideas for habitats can be listed and individuals challenged set to see how many habitats anyone can think of in three minutes and then in pairs and small groups. For younger pupils you could ask for their opinions on where they would rather live or visit and they need to show you by standing in a designated area. For example, point to one part of the room and say 'desert' and another 'rainforest' and another 'mountain top'. And students then choose one of these places to stand to show their opinion. This will help them think of different habitats and what these habitats are like. You could also see if students can name animals that live in each habitat and then get each student to pretend they are one of the animals living in the habitat. For example, act like a mountain hare high in the mountains or a snake slithering through the rainforest.

All these variations will engage students to think about what the term biodiversity means. At the end review the main ideas about biodiversity. The term means all the animals and plants in the world and also their habitats. It's about the variety of life in earth.