LA COUNTY LIBRARY

DIY Library Program

Nature Memory Mapping

Recommended for all ages

An activity you can do to feel a connection to the outside world is to go into the backyard, onto the balcony, or even just to look out of your window. Those views may not seem like the ideal ones to observe nature, but nature is, in fact, all around you! While there, keep your senses open and make a mental note of the things you notice: Bird calls, the shape of trees, the way leaves move in the wind. This can include human activity, too: the smell of exhaust and grass clippings from a lawnmower, the buzz of high-voltage power lines, or the sensation of heat rising off the asphalt. All of these are part of the environment.

Now, think about all these cataloged sensations. Close your eyes and revisit the places you have seen. While doing this, ask yourself a series of questions, allowing plenty of time between the questions to pause and reflect.

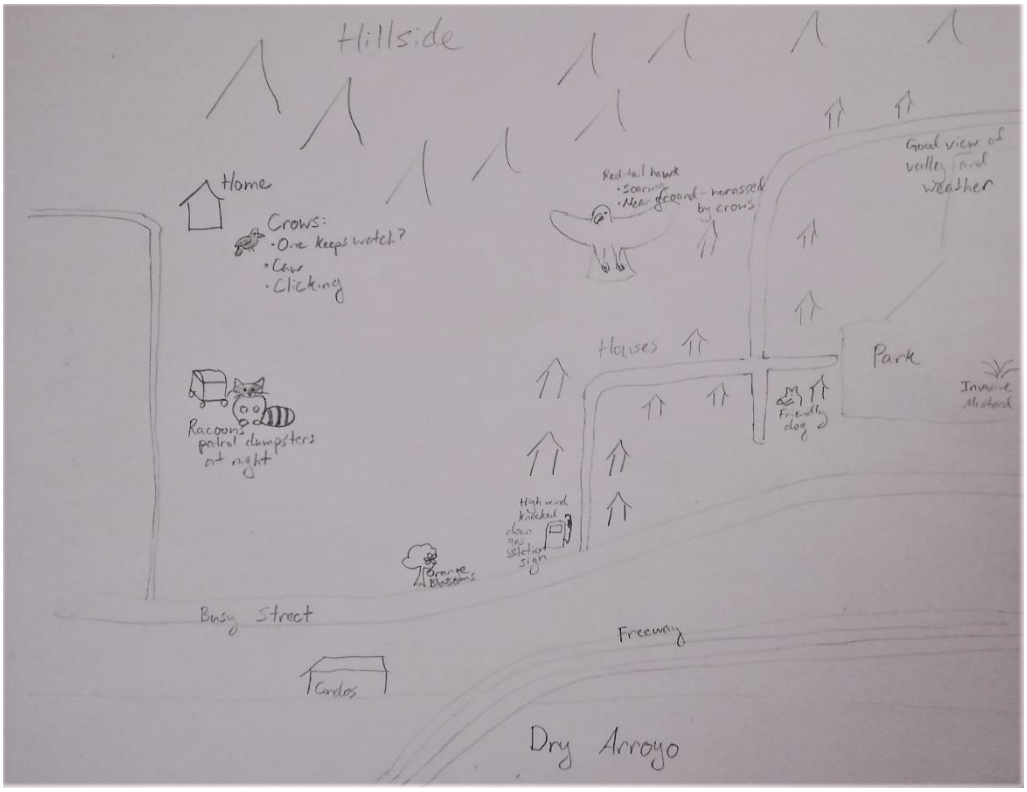
Ask yourself:

- What did you see? Feel? Smell? Hear?
- What living things did you encounter?
- What non-living things did you notice?
- What did you do?

If taking notes helps you remember, take notes. You can even sketch what you saw—be descriptive, and don't judge yourself too harshly on the quality of your work.

When you have your thoughts together, start drawing your nature memory map. Again, artistic perfection isn't necessary. Stick figures and line drawings are totally fine! Make brief, descriptive notes on your map about actions, or qualities you observed with your other senses.

Memory Map Example:



Connect

When you're done, share! Let us know what you've found by connecting with LA County Library on social media (@LACountyLibrary), and let others know about the nature you've discovered in your exploration!

Additional Resources

KCRW: 'Memory maps' help reveal LA's hidden nature - https://tinyurl.com/w7kzmyq

Play Memory Maps: Facebook Community Page - https://tinyurl.com/wfaaqhg

Source

This activity was adapted from one by Lila Higgins, Citizen Science Senior Manager at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County - https://tinyurl.com/yxxy75fy
NHM encourages people to share their memory maps online: @natureinLA #natureinla