

# Maximus's Forest



Why Habitats Matter

TEACHING & LEARNING RESOURCE



YEARS 1–6

Aligned with the  
Australian Curriculum



# Maximus's Forest

## *Why Habitats Matter*

Teaching & Learning Resource • Years 1–6

### About this resource

This classroom resource has been developed to help students explore habitats, biodiversity and the relationship between people and the natural world through a real local story. It can be used at any time throughout the school year and is aligned with the Australian Curriculum and supports teaching in:

- Science (Biological Sciences)
- HASS (Geography)
- English (Literacy)

The lesson explores a simple but powerful idea:

***“Every living thing needs a place to call home.”***

### A real-world connection

Maximus is a real koala living in Woogaroo Forest, a local habitat in the Springfield, QLD community. This provides students with a meaningful, place-based example to explore:

- what habitats provide (food, water, shelter and space)
- how living things depend on their environment
- what can happen when habitats are changed

*The resource is designed to support inquiry, discussion and reflection, rather than promote a particular viewpoint.*

### What's included



#### **Presentation**

A short, engaging PowerPoint to guide the lesson



#### **Worksheets**

Differentiated student activity sheets for Years 1–6



#### **Teaching Guide**

A structured guide with curriculum links and prompts

The lesson is designed to be delivered in a single session with minimal preparation.


## **Sharing student work (optional)**

We hope to create a compilation of student work that can be shared with community stakeholders, decision-makers and the broader community to showcase how young people understand and value the natural world.

If your class completes the activity, you are welcome to share student work with us as photos/scans.

To support participation, we will be offering a **\$100 book voucher to a school or learning group (including home education groups)** who creates a thoughtful or creative display of their students' work. Submission close Friday, August 28<sup>th</sup> 2026.

By sharing student work consent is considered granted. No identifiable details would be shared. Please get in touch if you have concerns.

 **Submissions can be sent to:**  
**[admin@savewoogarooforest.com.au](mailto:admin@savewoogarooforest.com.au)**

## **Why this matters**

Helping students understand habitats builds:

- scientific knowledge about living things and their environments
- empathy for the natural world and the creatures within it
- awareness of how people and nature share, and depend on, the same spaces

* Every living thing needs a place to call home. *

# TEACHING & LEARNING GUIDE

Maximus's Forest | Why Habitats Matter | Years 1–6

<b>Year Levels</b>	Year 1 through to Year 6
<b>Learning Areas</b>	Science (Biological Sciences)   HASS (Geography)
<b>Lesson Duration</b>	60 minutes (or amend to your needs)
<b>Materials</b>	Maximus's Forest PowerPoint, Maximus's Forest worksheet, pencils or coloured pencils
<b>Student Activity</b>	Drawing Maximus in his habitat + written sentence prompt

## Australian Curriculum Links

Year Level	Learning Area	Content Description	AC Code
Year 1–2	Science – Biological Sciences	Living things have a variety of external features and live in different places where their needs are met.	AC9S1U01
Year 3–4	Science – Biological Sciences	Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things.	AC9S3U01
Year 5–6	Science – Biological Sciences	Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment.	AC9S5U01
Year 1–2	HASS – Geography	The places people live in and belong to, their familiar features and why they are important to people.	AC9HS1K03
Year 3–4	HASS – Geography	The connection between people and environments; similarities and differences between places.	AC9HS3K04
Year 5–6	HASS – Geography	The influence of people on the characteristics of places and the management of spaces within them.	AC9HS5K04

Year 1–6	English – Literacy	Create and present imaginative, informative and persuasive texts using growing knowledge of text structures and language features.	AC9ELY2-6
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## Learning Intentions

By the end of this lesson, students will be learning to:

### All Year Levels

- Understand that animals need specific habitats to survive
- Explain what a habitat provides (food, water, shelter, space)
- Make connections between their own needs and the needs of animals
- Express their thinking through drawing and writing

Year 1–2	Year 3–4	Year 5–6
Identify that living things need food, water, shelter and space (with teacher support).	Explain what a habitat is and describe what Maximus's habitat provides for him.	Analyse how habitat loss affects animals and evaluate how people and nature can share space.

## Success Criteria

Students will demonstrate success when they can:

Year 1–2	Year 3–4	Year 5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name at least two things an animal needs to survive</li> <li>• Draw Maximus in his forest habitat</li> <li>• Complete the sentence prompt with a feeling word</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the word 'habitat' in their own words</li> <li>• Describe what Maximus needs and where he finds it</li> <li>• Write a sentence explaining how Maximus would feel without his home, using 'because'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain why habitat loss is a problem for animals and people</li> <li>• Suggest at least one way people and animals can share space</li> <li>• Write 2–3 sentences about Maximus using evidence from the lesson</li> </ul>

## Lesson Structure - 60 Minutes

Phase	Activity
<b>Engage 5 mins</b>	Show Slide 1. Introduce the title and ask students what they think the lesson will be about. Build curiosity before proceeding.
<b>Explore 15 mins</b>	Slides 2–6. Lead whole-class discussion using the prompts in the slide-by-slide guide below. Focus on personal connection before introducing habitat vocabulary.
<b>Explain 15 mins</b>	Slides 7–13. Introduce Maximus and connect his needs back to the habitat concept. Deliver key content on habitat importance.
<b>Elaborate 5 mins</b>	Slide 14. Pose the Big Question. Facilitate a short discussion about how people and animals can share space.
<b>Activity 15 mins</b>	Students complete the drawing and written sentence activity. Circulate and prompt thinking with questions from the slide-by-slide guide.
<b>Share 5 mins</b>	Invite 3–4 students to share their drawings and sentences with the class. Close the lesson with the key message: every living thing needs a home.

## Slide-by-Slide Teaching Guide

Slide 1	Maximus's Forest — Why Habitats Matter
<b>Purpose</b>	Set the scene and generate curiosity. Let the real forest photo do the work.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Look at this place. What do you notice about it?"</li> <li>• "What kinds of animals do you think might live here?"</li> <li>• "Has anyone ever visited a place like this?"</li> <li>• "Can anyone recognise where this place might be?"</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Accept oral responses. Y3–6: Ask students to turn and talk to a partner before sharing.

Slide 2	Think About Your Home...
<b>Purpose</b>	Activate prior knowledge by connecting the concept of home and survival needs to students' own lives.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "What do you need every single day to survive?"</li> <li>• "Where do you get those things from?"</li> <li>• "What would happen if your home suddenly disappeared - where would you go?"</li> </ul>

<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Use concrete items (food, water, bed, family). Y5–6: Extend to 'What would you feel? What would you do?'
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<b>Slide 3</b>	<b>Your Home Disappears!</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Build emotional empathy - students feel the loss of home before connecting it to animals.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Where do you go if your home disappears?"</li> <li>• "How do you think you would feel?"</li> <li>• "Keep that feeling in mind - we're going to meet someone who faces exactly this."</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Draw a facial expression showing how they would feel. Y5–6: Write a sentence before sharing aloud.

<b>Slide 4</b>	<b>Animals Have Homes Too — These Are Called Habitats</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Introduce the key vocabulary word: habitat. Bridge from personal connection to science concept.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Has anyone heard the word 'habitat' before?"</li> <li>• "Just like you have a home, animals have habitats - places where everything they need is found."</li> <li>• "Where do you think different animals might live?"</li> </ul>
<b>Key Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• habitat - the natural place where an animal lives and finds everything it needs to survive</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Repeat the word 'habitat' together. Y3–6: Ask students to add it to a vocabulary journal.

<b>Slide 5</b>	<b>What is a Habitat? Food, Water, Shelter, Space</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Explicitly teach the four components of a habitat. This is the core science content for the lesson.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Point to each card as we say it together: food, water, shelter, space."</li> <li>• "Which of these do YOU also need?" (All four - make the link explicit.)</li> <li>• "Can an animal survive without even one of these? Why not?"</li> </ul>
<b>Key Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shelter - a safe place that protects an animal from weather and predators</li> <li>• predator - an animal that hunts other animals for food</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Match pictures of animals to habitat components. Y5–6: Discuss what happens to an ecosystem when one component disappears.

Slide 6	Not All Habitats Are the Same
<b>Purpose</b>	Broaden students' understanding that habitats come in many forms.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Can you name some different types of habitats?" (Ocean, rainforest, desert, grassland, wetland.)</li> <li>• "Why would a fish's habitat be different from a koala's?"</li> <li>• "What would happen if you put a fish in a desert? Would it survive?"</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Show pictures of different habitats and animals. Y5–6: Discuss the concept of 'specialist' vs 'generalist' animals and their habitat needs.

Slide 7	Meet Maximus
<b>Purpose</b>	Introduce the koala character who will anchor the rest of the lesson and the student activity.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "This is Maximus. He is a real koala who lives in a forest near us."</li> <li>• "What do you already know about koalas?"</li> <li>• "Look at where he is - what can you see around him?"</li> </ul>
<b>Note</b>	Maximus is a real koala. This is a genuine local story. The forest in the presentation is a real forest in your area. Feel free to mention he lives in Woogaroo Forest, Springfield, with his other animal friends.
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Ask 'How does Maximus make you feel?' Y5–6: Ask 'Why might it be important that Maximus lives near us, not far away?'

Slide 8	What Does Maximus Need to Survive?
<b>Purpose</b>	Apply the four habitat components to Maximus specifically - connect abstract concept to a real animal.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Let's go back to our four habitat needs - food, water, shelter, space."</li> <li>• "What does Maximus eat?" (Eucalyptus leaves - he is a specialist.)</li> <li>• "Where does he sleep? What protects him?"</li> <li>• "How much space does a koala need?"</li> </ul>
<b>Key Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eucalyptus - the type of tree whose leaves koalas eat; they cannot survive without it</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Provide a simple four-box worksheet matching Maximus's needs to their source. Y5–6: Research activity on koala habitat requirements.

Slide 9	Describe What Maximus's Habitat Would Look Like
<b>Purpose</b>	Build descriptive language skills and deepen understanding of habitat features.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Close your eyes. Imagine you are walking through Maximus's forest. What do you see? Hear? Smell?"</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "What types of trees would you find?"</li> <li>• "What else might live there alongside Maximus?"</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Oral description - say two things they imagine. Y3–4: Write 2–3 descriptive words. Y5–6: Write a descriptive paragraph.

<b>Slide 10</b>	<b>What Happens if Habitats Change?</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Introduce the concept of habitat loss and its consequences - the turning point in the lesson's narrative.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "What might cause a habitat to change?" (Fire, drought, development, land clearing.)</li> <li>• "If trees are removed, what does Maximus lose?" (Food, shelter, home.)</li> <li>• "What do you think Maximus would do if his forest disappeared?"</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Provide a simple before/after picture discussion. Y5–6: Introduce the term 'habitat fragmentation' and discuss wildlife corridors as a solution.

<b>Slide 11</b>	<b>What Are Some Ways People Also Need Land?</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Introduce the human-nature tension respectfully - acknowledge that people have needs too, and that this creates a shared challenge.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We need houses, schools, roads and shops - all of these use land."</li> <li>• "Is it wrong for people to use land?" (No - but we need to think carefully about how.)</li> <li>• "Is there a way we can meet people's needs AND protect animal habitats?"</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Focus on the idea of sharing. Y5–6: Introduce urban planning concepts - green spaces, wildlife corridors, buffer zones.

<b>Slide 12</b>	<b>The BIG Question</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Bring the human-nature tension to a head and invite students into solution-focused thinking.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "People, animals and plants all need space to live. How can we make sure everyone gets a home?"</li> <li>• "If you were in charge of planning a new neighbourhood, what would you do to make sure animals still had space?"</li> <li>• "Can you think of places where people have made room for nature?"</li> </ul>
<b>Discussion Note</b>	This is the key discussion slide. Allow 3–5 minutes for genuine student conversation. Accept all ideas - the goal is critical and creative thinking, not a single correct answer.
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: 'If you were in charge, what one rule would you make to protect animals?' Y5–6: 'Research: what is a wildlife corridor and how does it help?'

Slide 13	Why Natural Habitats Are Important
<b>Purpose</b>	Consolidate the lesson's key science content and explicitly connect habitat health to human wellbeing.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Let's read each dot point together."</li> <li>• "Which one surprises you the most? Why?"</li> <li>• "Healthy habitats clean our air and water - what does that mean for us?"</li> </ul>
<b>Key Points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals need habitat to find food, water and shelter</li> <li>• Without it, they cannot survive or raise their young</li> <li>• Healthy habitats clean our air and water, benefiting people too</li> <li>• When we protect nature, people and animals thrive together</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Focus on the first two points only. Y5–6: Ask students to rank the four points in order of importance and justify their ranking.

Slide 14	All Living Things Need a Home
<b>Purpose</b>	A powerful, simple closing statement that unifies the lesson and sets up the student activity.
<b>Teaching Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "All living things need a home. That includes Maximus. That includes you. That includes every plant and animal on Earth."</li> <li>• "Now it's your turn. Draw Maximus in his forest home, and write a sentence about how he would feel if it was taken away."</li> <li>• "Your words and pictures matter - they tell Maximus's story."</li> </ul>
<b>Differentiation</b>	Y1–2: Teacher scribes or students dictate their sentence. Y3–4: Write one sentence using the prompt. Y5–6: Write 2–3 sentences with a 'because' and a solution.

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## Student Activity Guide

### The Activity

Three differentiated worksheets are provided - one for each year level band. Each worksheet asks students to draw Maximus in his habitat (or another animal from his forest), then respond to written prompts.

*Distribute the appropriate worksheet based on student year level:*

Year 1–2	Year 3–4	Year 5–6
Design a home for Maximus. Draw and colour him in his habitat. Write: My home is special because...	Design a home for Maximus or another animal from his forest. Draw your habitat and write: The home I designed is important because... / This habitat provides... / If this habitat was removed, the impacts would be...	Think like an ecologist! Draw Maximus or another forest animal in their habitat. Label key features. Write: Describe your habitat / How do living things depend on each other? / If this habitat was removed or changed, what impacts would this have? (Consider short and long-term effects.)

## Prompting Students During the Activity

### Year 1–2:

- "What animals live in forests? Can you draw one in your picture?"
- "What does Maximus need to survive? Can you show food, water, or shelter in your drawing?"
- "Why is your home special to you? How do you think Maximus feels about his home?"

### Year 3–4:

- "What has the habitat you designed provided for Maximus? What would he eat, drink, and where would he shelter?"
- "Why is the home you designed important? What makes it a good habitat?"
- "What do you think would happen to Maximus if this habitat was removed or changed?"

### Year 5–6:

- "Think like an ecologist - what relationships exist between living things in your habitat? Give some examples."
- "What are the short-term impacts if this habitat disappears? What about the long-term effects?"
- "How do living things in your habitat depend on each other? Think about food chains, shelter, and pollination."
- "What could people do differently to protect habitats like Maximus's forest?"

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## Extension Activities & Further Inquiry

### For All Year Levels

- Research another Australian animal and describe its habitat needs - what does it eat, where does it shelter, how much space does it need?
- Create a poster or mini-book: 'A Day in the Life of Maximus'
- Explore a local park or garden: what animals live there? What habitat features can you spot?

### Year 1–2 Extensions

- Sort animals into their habitats using picture cards (ocean, forest, desert, grassland)
- Draw 'before and after' pictures: Maximus's forest with trees, and without
- Role play: 'If I were Maximus, I would need...'

## Year 3–4 Extensions

- Create a habitat diagram for Maximus showing food, water, shelter and space sources
- Compare two different animals and their habitat needs - how are they similar and different?
- Write a short persuasive text: 'Why we should protect forests for koalas'

## Year 5–6 Extensions

- Investigate: What is a wildlife corridor? How does it help animals like Maximus?
- Research: What are the biggest threats to koala habitats in Australia today?
- Debate: 'Housing development should always come before habitat protection' - argue for and against
- Design a 'wildlife-friendly neighbourhood' - create a plan that includes homes for people AND animals
- Write a letter to a local councillor or politician explaining why habitat protection matters

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## Areas of Further Inquiry

### Big Questions Worth Exploring

- What happens to an ecosystem when one species loses its habitat?
- How do forests affect the quality of air and water for humans?
- What laws or rules exist in Australia to protect animal habitats?
- How does climate change affect animal habitats?
- What is biodiversity and why does it matter?
- How do First Nations peoples understand and care for Country - and what can we learn from that?

### Cross-Curriculum Connections

**Science:** Food chains, ecosystems, biodiversity, adaptation

**HASS:** Land use, urban planning, environmental management, local geography

**English:** Persuasive writing, imaginative writing, descriptive language, sentence structure

**Mathematics:** Data collection on local wildlife, graphing habitat loss statistics

**The Arts:** Illustrating habitats, creating wildlife artwork for environmental advocacy

**Technologies:** Designing wildlife-friendly spaces, exploring environmental solutions

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This teaching guide was developed to accompany the Maximus's Forest classroom presentation. It is intended as a flexible resource - teachers are encouraged to adapt prompts and activities to suit their students' needs and year level context. 🌿