

HOUSE ANALOGY CHEAT SHEET

	Houses	Ecosystems
<p>Overall Similarities</p> <p>Eco = House Comparing our houses to the environment allows us to see some fundamental similarities and to break the environment into components that we can relate to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apartment, house, mansion, tent, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park, lake, mountain area, wetland, habitat, niche, etc.
	<p>POINT: You can define a house or ecosystem at different scales depending on how you look at it.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exist within neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exist with neighbouring habitats
	<p>POINT: Nothing exists in isolation. Neighbours and neighbouring habitats have an influence on each other.</p>	
	<p>POINT: Both ecosystems and houses are open systems. Regardless of what fences you build or boundaries you establish (i.e. park or municipal) there will be movement into and out of the boundaries.</p>	
<p>Components and Processes</p> <p>Logical = Knowledge We build houses with blueprints. We understand fundamentally what belongs in a house to protect ecological integrity we need to know more about nature's blueprint.</p>	<p>Physical Elements</p> <p>Walls, furniture, toys, lights, appliances, etc.</p>	<p>Abiotic Components</p> <p>Rocks, water, sand, soil, etc.</p>
	<p>Living Organisms</p> <p>Humans, pets, dust mites, house plants, etc.</p>	<p>Biotic Components</p> <p>Humans, animals, plants, insects, etc.</p>
	<p>Systems</p> <p>Heating, plumbing, electrical, sewage, etc.</p>	<p>Ecosystem Processes</p> <p>Nutrient cycles, fire, wind, water cycles, decomposition, etc.</p>
<p>Dynamics (place, time and proportion)</p> <p>Integrity = Wholeness</p> <p>The wholeness of a system refers to having biota and biota in their proper place, and at proportions that allow the system to work (i.e.: predator/prey ratios). It also refers to having the timing of ecological processes as nature intended.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need the right kinds of furniture in the right rooms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need the right plants and animals in the right environment (i.e. native vs. non-native species).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems need to be functioning properly (i.e. plumbing) in order to maintain comfortable living conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecological processes need to correspond with the environment and need to be functioning (i.e. wind and pollination disperse seeds).

So what does ecological integrity mean?

Regardless of how an ecosystem is defined, there are living and non-living elements and ecological processes present. These elements and processes are optimized in both space and time for the area they exist in naturally. Changes to this natural order have the potential to adversely affect ecological integrity.