

Activity: Map Your Home

Here's a chance to apply the concepts from *House Lessons* to your own home. You can use this exercise as a prompt for your imagination, a conversation starter for a book club, or a head start toward a discussion with an architect or real estate agent—the possibilities are endless. And don't worry; this doesn't have to look professional—just have fun and see what happens.

- Draw a simple map of your home with enough space to write in each room—see the example that follows. Don't forget any outside “rooms” (porch, deck, garden area, etc.).
- Note the main architectural features in each room of your house (think fireplace, eating nook, window seat, built-ins, greenhouse, porch swing, etc.).
- Mark the location of windows. If possible, mark N/S/E/W in relation to your home. What does this mean for light in each room?
- Note how the rooms connect to one another, particularly inside/outside, kitchen/dining room, and public/private areas.
- Mark the rooms you love, or where you spend the most amount of time, with a symbol of your choice (heart, plus sign, you name it). What adjectives would you associate with these rooms? (Comfortable? Bright? Energizing? Peaceful?) What architectural details inspire these feelings? Circle those details.
- Mark the rooms you like the least, or where you spend the least amount of time, with a different symbol (minus sign, frowning face). What adjectives would you associate with these spaces? Circle the architectural details that reinforce these feelings. How do you wish the rooms made you feel?

- How would you like to change your life? (Go outside more? Be more creative? Spend more time with family? Sleep better? Host more dinners?)
- What changes could you make to your home to invite these behaviors? Remember: You don't have to do a full renovation. A lamp can add light if a window is not possible. A designated chair can become your writing space. Double French doors are an invitation to go outside, but a hammock or chair placed outdoors can be a great excuse as well. The trick is to remember your emotional goal—I want this to be a room where people want to linger. Or I want to cook more—and then look at your rooms with that intent in mind.

Example:

