

# DEAR NATURE LETTER TEACHER GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, students make observations about nature and write a letter in response. Students are guided using a short video made by ECO educators and an activity sheet including thought-provoking questions and prompts.

## MATERIALS

- [Dear Nature instructional video](#)
- Dear Nature activity sheet
- Dear Nature template or blank piece of paper
- Pens, pencils, crayons, markers, etc.

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Using my senses, what do I notice about the natural world around me?
2. Why is nature important to me?
3. What would I say to nature in a letter?

## NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

**K-ESS3-3 Earth and Human Activity** Communicate solutions that will reduce the impact of humans on the land, water, air, and/or other living things in the local environment.

**5-LS2-1 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics** Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment.

**HS-LS2-6 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics** Evaluate the claims, evidence, and reasoning that the complex interactions in ecosystems maintain relatively consistent numbers and types of organisms in stable conditions, but changing conditions may result in a new ecosystem.

## SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS: GEOGRAPHY

5.11 Describe how physical, human and political features influence events, movements, and adaptation to the environment.

5.12 Describe how technological developments, societal decisions, and personal practices affect sustainability in the United States.

5.13 Describe how natural and human-made events in one place affect people in other places.

6.16 Explain how technological developments, societal decisions, and personal practices influence sustainability

## LESSON PROCEDURE

### 1. Watch the video

Send the [Dear Nature instructional video](#) for students to watch in preparation for the activity. In this video, ECO educators will help students get started with tips and tricks to making nature observations wherever they are.

### 2. Make observations

Ask students to find a place to **observe**, or notice, nature. Students should bring their Dear Nature template or piece of paper, something to write on, and something to write with. They may use a yard, neighborhood park, a quiet spot on the sidewalk, or observe through a window. Encourage students to use their senses: what do they see, smell, touch, and hear? Have students take note of how they feel while making their observations.

**While students should spend at least ten minutes making observations, encourage them to sit and observe for up to an hour. This allows for their minds to slow down, their thoughts to quiet, and the nature around them to reveal its processes.**

### PROMPTS FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

- How are the different elements of nature - water, sunlight, plants, animals - interacting?
- What do you wonder or want to learn more about?
- Where is your favorite place outdoors? Why?
- How does nature make you feel?

For middle and high school students, instruct students to write a letter in response to both their observations of nature as well as an article detailing **human impact** on nature (changes to the physical environment, ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural resources).

A selection of articles for middle and high school students:

[Sustainability success story: Costa Rica](#)

[1000th California Condor released into the wild](#)

[Plastic clean up on Oregon's beaches](#)

### PROMPTS FOR MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

- How did the article you read make you feel?
- What scientific evidence does the author use?
- What unanswered questions do you have?
- How have recent changes in human behavior impacted the environment?

### 3. Write a Dear Nature letter

Instruct students to coalesce their observations into a Dear Nature letter. The letter can contain one, or all, of their observations and should be written addressing nature directly. It should include the following features of a formal letter: the **date**, a **greeting**, **body**, and **signature**.

### 4. Share

Invite students to share their Dear Nature letter with the class on the platform of your choice. If students or your classroom use social media, be sure to tag @ecology4kids and use the hashtag #exploringwitheco!