



SUMMER ADVENTURES
ON THE ROAD

Tell Your Story



DID YOU KNOW?

Human beings have been telling stories as long as we have lived on this planet. Stories can be spoken or written; stories can be pictures or photographs too. People tell stories to explore the world and to explore themselves. Stories can capture experiences, reflect culture, inspire action, and evoke imagination.

Stories also reflect the storyteller. Creating stories that matter to us is a powerful act and an opportunity to share who we are and what we have experienced with others. Listening to the stories of others is an act of empathy and an opportunity to open our minds to the experiences of others.

The storytelling activities that follow will provide you with the opportunity to imagine, reflect, explore, act, and empathize with the planet and its inhabitants, expanding the long-held tradition of storytelling on Earth.

READY TO EXPLORE?



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Alligator Stories

Ages 4-8

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Ten Thousand Islands

Ages 4-8

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What's in a Name?

Ages 4-8

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Like a Mangrove Tree

Ages 9+

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The Land Inside the Circle

Ages 9+

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Empathy for Animals

Ages 9+

Book List



ALLIGATOR STORIES

ACTIVITY | Ages 4-8

TO DO

The [American alligator](#) is a very cool reptile that inhabits [Everglades National Park](#). With their toothy smile, giant size, and glowing eyes, alligators make interesting characters. So why not put these characters right into a story? Using the table provided, can you imagine how some of these fun facts about alligators could be transformed into fascinating stories? Then take your best alligator story idea and tell your story in words, illustrations, photos, or video!

ALLIGATOR STORIES

 <p>Fun fact about alligators</p> <p>Alligator eyes glow in the dark.</p>	<p>Imagine a specific alligator character who comes to mind when you read this fact. Describe your alligator.</p>	 <p>If this alligator were in a story, what would be the main conflict?</p>	<p>Write an action-packed first line to a story that features your alligator character and shows what the conflict may be. Remember the best first lines put us into the story straightaway!</p>
<p>Alligators can climb trees.</p>			
<p>Some alligators appear to use tools to lure their prey.</p>			
<p>Alligators are among the loudest reptiles in the world.</p>			

TEN THOUSAND ISLANDS

ACTIVITY | Ages 4-8

Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge protects a 35,000-acre labyrinth of mangrove islands, freshwater and saltwater marshes, and sandy beaches.

Imagine that living on these islands are entire communities of creatures. What kind of world, real or imagined, exists in the Ten Thousand Islands? Consider the following questions to get your creativity flowing, then tell a unique story of this amazing place using words, illustrations, photos, or video.

- Who lives here?
- What do they need to survive?
- What do they want out of life?
- What are they afraid of?
- What brings them joy?
- How do they celebrate?
- What conflicts do they experience?
- How do communities at Ten Thousand Islands interact with one another?
- What brings them together?
- What divides them?



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

ACTIVITY | Ages 4-8

Indigenous people living in the Everglades called the land Pahayokee, which translates to “grassy waters.” White Europeans called the land Ever-Glades: “Ever” from the word “forever,” and “glades” from an old English word meaning a “grassy open place.” A famous journalist named Marjory Stoneman Douglas called the area “River of Grass” in a book she wrote about the Everglades.

For a long time, people were unsure what to think about the Everglades. Each person who spent time on the land would describe it differently:

- For some, the Everglades was swampy land that must be drained.
- For others, it was sacred land that must be protected.

TO DO

Like the Everglades, each of us goes by many names and descriptions. Depending on whom you're talking to, you may be a student or a leader; a kind friend to one person but a stranger to another. We all have a perspective, and others have perspectives of us. Use the table provided as a guide to brainstorm all the ways others may see you. Then tell a story in words, pictures, photos, or video about yourself from another perspective.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?



	I am known as...	They would describe me as...
To my friend...		
To my family or community...		
To a leader I admire...		
To someone who admires me...		
To a person I've had conflict with...		
To an animal or insect...		
To my neighbors...		
To the land on which I live...		

LIKE A MANGROVE TREE

ACTIVITY | Ages 9+



TO DO

Many plants living in wetlands like the Everglades live in two places at once: below and above the surface of the water. Trees in [red mangrove](#) forests begin growing below the water and continue growing strong enough above the water to protect the coastline from storms and erosion. Like mangroves, people have different kinds of strengths. Consider the following scenarios and reflect on how you respond both “above” and “below” the surface. Then create a story in words or images illustrating the many sides of you!

LIKE A MANGROVE TREE



	How do I respond under the surface or within myself?	How do I respond above the surface or outside myself so others can see?	What examples from my own life come to mind?
I make a mistake that affects other people.			
I experience or witness an injustice.			
I want to protect myself, another person, or something important to me.			
I want to right a wrong, take action, or find a solution.			
I have to make a tough choice.			

THE LAND INSIDE THE CIRCLE

ACTIVITY | Ages 9+

Look closely at [this map](#) of Everglades National Park, then close your eyes. Point to a spot on the map, open your eyes, and draw a mental circle around the spot you picked. Tell a story of that land in words or images. Consider the following to get your ideas flowing:

- How would you describe the geography of the area?
 - This is where your story takes place.
 - How does the land affect your characters, the setting, or the conflict in the story?

- What landmarks exist in the area?
 - Will these landmarks be important to your characters, the setting, or the conflict in the story?

- Who might live on land like this?
 - These are your characters.
 - Will your characters live in the past, now, or in the future?
 - Are your characters people, wildlife, or an imagined species?
 - What is their relationship to the land?

- What surrounds the area?
 - Are there other communities living here?
 - Does the landscape surrounding your setting affect your characters or the conflict?



EMPATHY FOR ANIMALS

ACTIVITY | Ages 9+

Author Craig Pittman wrote a book about the official animal of Florida called *Cat Tale: The Wild, Weird Battle to Save the Florida Panther*. He says, "You could argue that children saved the panther." He is referring to the children of Florida who in 1981 voted to make the panther the state animal and as a result, more attention was given to the animal. When people - especially young people - care about something, they can help other people care about it too.

Research a species in your area that is threatened or endangered, then take one of the following steps to share the species' story with others. If young people could save the Florida panther, why couldn't you be the ones to save a different species?

- Tell a story in words or images from the perspective of the threatened species. What does it feel like to be them? What conflicts do they experience?
- In your research, take time to understand the problems causing the species to be threatened, as well as potential solutions to the problem. Then write a letter to a local lawmaker sharing what you have learned and persuading them to take action toward solutions.
- Design a poster or graphic inspiring others in your community to take action toward solutions to support the species.
- Create a video about the species and how to support it, then share it with others and inspire them to take action toward solutions.



FULL LINKS

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American alligator

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/reptiles/facts/american-alligator>

Everglades National Park

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/nature/article/everglades>

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Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Ten_Thousand_Islands/about.html

mangrove

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/the-mangrove-ecosystem/>

marshes

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/marsh/>

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red mangrove

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/the-mangrove-ecosystem/>

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Everglades map

<https://www.nps.gov/ever/planyourvisit/maps.htm>