

## DIRECTOR'S LESSON PACKAGE OVERVIEW

### My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf

K–2 Literacy Package — Informed by 4-H STEM Reading Connections 2025

Created by Helix Education in partnership with Beyond School Bells

#### FOR

Program directors, site coordinators, and lead educators

#### USE

Background knowledge, standards alignment, materials planning, and reporting data to implement this 3-lesson unit

#### FRONTLINE EDUCATORS

Should use the Grab & Go Lesson Package

## Unit Overview

This three-lesson unit uses ***My Forest is Green*** by Darren Lebeuf as the anchor text for an integrated K–2 literacy and STEAM experience. The book follows a child who celebrates their forest with wonder—describing its colors, sounds, textures, and living creatures through the seasons. This theme of **curiosity, wonder, and observation** runs through every lesson.

## Lesson-at-a-Glance

| # | Lesson Focus                                                      | Lesson Overview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | SOR Skill                                                      | STEAM Activity                                                                                                                                       |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Introducing the Forest &amp; Phonological Awareness</b>        | Students are introduced to the book and a child's love for their forest. They explore what makes different habitats unique. The lesson builds foundational literacy through phonological awareness using forest and nature words from the book.                                    | Phonemic Awareness (rhyming, segmenting, phoneme substitution) | Students build a model of a local habitat (forest, wetland, park, farm) using recycled materials and the Engineering Design Process.                 |
| 2 | <b>Shared Reading &amp; Vocabulary Exploration</b>                | Students use the 4-Step Vocabulary Routine to explore five key words (habitat, observe, texture, vibrant, dormant). They participate in a shared reading with vocabulary stops, then use mystery bags of natural objects to practice observation and scientific prediction skills. | Vocabulary in context (4-step vocabulary routine)              | Students reach into mystery bags to feel and identify hidden natural objects, recording predictions and comparing results in a class tally.          |
| 3 | <b>Author's Craft &amp; "My ____ is ____" Writing Celebration</b> | Students study the mentor text structure of <i>My Forest is Green</i> and write their own "My ____ is ____" story pages describing a personal outdoor place. They go on a nature walk, collect materials, and create nature art. Pages are assembled into a class book.            | Writing: mentor text structure, sensory detail, illustration   | Students write and illustrate "My ____ is ____" story pages; go on a nature walk; create nature art from collected materials; assemble a class book. |

## Nebraska ELA Standards Alignment

| Grade      | Literary Text (Reading)                                                                    | Science of Reading Focus                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>K</b>   | <b>LA.K.RP</b> With adult help, retell stories with details and identify the main message. | <b>LA.K.F.2.c</b> Count, make, and segment words into syllables. (L1)<br><b>LA.K.W.1</b> With adult help, write using drawing, dictating, and writing. (L3)                        |
| <b>1st</b> | <b>LA.1.RP.1</b> Retell a story using important details.                                   | <b>LA.1.F.2.a</b> Segment and blend phonemes in words. (L1)<br><b>LA.1.W.1</b> Write opinions, informative pieces, and narratives. (L3)                                            |
| <b>2nd</b> | <b>LA.2.RP.1</b> Retell stories and explain the important lessons within them.             | <b>LA.2.F.2.a</b> Manipulate phonemes (substitution) to build new words. (L1)<br><b>LA.2.W.1</b> Write for different purposes and audiences, using what I know about writing. (L3) |

## Lesson Structure

Each lesson is designed for **60 minutes** in an out-of-school time (OST) setting. The timing below is flexible and can be adjusted based on your group's needs. The full lesson includes welcome and closing time, which can be removed if already included in your programming. For programs that prefer to divide lessons into literacy and project days, see the recommended split structure on the right.

| Standard 60-Minute Lesson      | Time          |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Welcome & Check-In             | <b>5 min</b>  |
| Activate Prior Knowledge       | <b>5 min</b>  |
| Science of Reading Mini Lesson | <b>10 min</b> |
| Read Aloud or Shared Reading   | <b>15 min</b> |
| STEAM Activity                 | <b>20 min</b> |
| Closing & Celebration          | <b>5 min</b>  |

### Divided Lesson Structure

#### Day 1 – Literacy Focus

| Lesson Component               | Time           |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Welcome & Check-In             | <b>5 min</b>   |
| Activate Prior Knowledge       | <b>5 min</b>   |
| Science of Reading Mini Lesson | <b>10+ min</b> |
| Read Aloud or Shared Reading   | <b>15 min</b>  |

#### Day 2 – STEAM Project

| Lesson Component         | Time           |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Welcome & Check-In       | <b>5 min</b>   |
| Activate Prior Knowledge | <b>5 min</b>   |
| STEAM Activity           | <b>30+ min</b> |
| Closing & Celebration    | <b>5 min</b>   |

## Lesson Modifications

Each lesson contains modifications throughout for grade-level specific modifications (Kindergarten, First, and Second), along with modifications for Emerging and Advanced students.

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Emerging</b> | <b>Emerging Learner</b><br>An emerging learner is just beginning to develop foundational literacy or numeracy skills and relies heavily on hands-on manipulatives, visual cues, and direct adult support.                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Advanced</b> | <b>Advanced Learner</b><br>An advanced learner quickly grasps new concepts and can independently apply them to different tasks or creative projects without needing step-by-step instructions. They often show curiosity beyond the basic lesson, using more descriptive language or complex logic to solve problems and explain their thinking. |

## Literacy Background & Staff Preparation Guide

This unit integrates three Science of Reading skills across three lessons — phonemic awareness, vocabulary in context, and fluency. The sections below give you the background knowledge to understand each skill, run the activity yourself, and prepare your staff. **You do not need a teaching degree to facilitate these lessons effectively.**

### Lesson 1 — Phonological Awareness

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>What it is</b>               | Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and work with the sound structure of spoken language—including syllables, rhymes, and individual phonemes. Phonemic awareness is a subset focused specifically on individual sounds (phonemes), entirely by ear, not by sight. It is one of the strongest early predictors of reading success. It is not about letters or spelling; it is purely about sound.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Why it matters</b>           | Students who can hear the building blocks of words—from syllables down to phonemes—are better able to decode unfamiliar words and spell. Phonological awareness is a critical foundation for phonics. Research shows it is best taught explicitly and playfully.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Skills in this unit</b>      | <b>Kindergarten: Syllable Clapping:</b> Clapping the syllables in forest words. Activity: Clap and count syllables in for-est, moun-tain, an-i-mal, wa-ter-fall, bea-ver.<br><b>1st Grade: Elkonin Boxes:</b> Segmenting a word into its individual sounds by pushing a counter into a box for each phoneme heard. The word "green" has 5 letters but 4 sounds: /g/-/r/-/ē/-/n/ = 4 boxes.<br><b>2nd Grade: Phoneme Substitution:</b> Swapping one sound for another to build a new word. Example: Change /gr/ in "green" to /s/ → "seen." Change /m/ in "moss" to /t/ → "toss." |
| <b>How to run Elkonin Boxes</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draw or print 3–4 connected boxes on paper (one row per word). Laminated sheets can be reused.</li> <li>2. Place small objects (coins, chips, beans) above the boxes, one per box.</li> <li>3. Say the word slowly. As you say each sound out loud, push one object down into a box from left to right.</li> <li>4. Count the objects in the boxes to confirm the number of sounds.</li> </ol> <b>Key rule:</b> Count sounds, not letters. "Moss" = /m/ /ō/ /s/ = 3 sounds, 3 boxes. "Fern" = /f/ /ē/ /r/ /n/ = 4 sounds, 4 boxes.     |
| <b>Director try-it</b>          | Practice segmenting these words before the lesson, say each sound aloud as you push a counter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "moss" → /m/ /ō/ /s/ = 3 sounds (m - o - s)</li> <li>• "fern" → /f/ /ē/ /r/ /n/ = 4 sounds (f - e - r - n)</li> <li>• "stream" → /s/ /t/ /r/ /ē/ /m/ = 5 sounds (s - t - r - ee - m)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>What to tell staff</b>       | "For K, stomp one foot per syllable like a deer walking through the leaves — it makes it memorable. For 1st grade, model Elkonin Boxes yourself first and always say sounds aloud as you push. Never spell the word — sounds only. For 2nd grade, celebrate each new word they build from a forest word."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

### Lesson 2 — Vocabulary in Context

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>What it is</b>           | Vocabulary in context means using surrounding text and pictures to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word, rather than giving students a definition before they encounter it. This mirrors how skilled readers naturally build vocabulary. This is completed in lesson 2, so students have heard the words in the read aloud from lesson 1.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Why it matters</b>       | Vocabulary is the bridge between decoding (sounding out words) and comprehension (understanding what you read). OST settings are uniquely positioned for vocabulary development because conversation and hands-on exploration are less restricted than during the school day.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Words in this unit</b>   | <p><b>Habitat</b> — The natural home or environment where an animal or plant lives, finds food, and raises its young. The forest is the habitat of birds, beavers, moss, and ferns.</p> <p><b>Observe</b> — To watch and study something very carefully, using your senses, to notice details that others might miss.</p> <p><b>Texture</b> — How something feels when you touch it — rough, smooth, bumpy, soft, scratchy, silky. Also describes what something looks like it would feel.</p>                    |
| <b>Teaching strategy</b>    | <p><b>Model the 4-Step Vocabulary Routine (Say It → Define It → Connect It → Use It) aloud before students try:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SAY IT: Say the word aloud together with expression.</li> <li>2. DEFINE IT: Give a student-friendly definition. Connect to the story.</li> <li>3. CONNECT IT: Ask students to connect the word to their own life or experience.</li> <li>4. USE IT: Students respond at their grade level (point/act out, sentence frame, or write).</li> </ol> |
| <b>Grade-level practice</b> | <p><b>K:</b> Teacher points to the picture + word. Students say it aloud and draw what it means.</p> <p><b>1st:</b> Sentence frame: "The word [ ] means ____ because in the book it says/shows ____."</p> <p><b>2nd:</b> Students write an original sentence using the vocabulary word in their own context.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>What to tell staff</b>   | "Don't give students the definition first, let them be word detectives. Point to the picture, read the sentence around the word, and ask 'What do you think this means?' Accept reasonable guesses and guide them toward meaning using the book as evidence."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

### Lesson 3 — Writing from a Mentor Text

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>What it is</b>              | Writing from a mentor text means using a familiar, well-crafted book as a model for students' own writing. <i>My Forest is Green</i> uses short, sensory-rich sentences about a personal outdoor place that make it an ideal model for K–2 writers at every level.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Why it matters</b>          | When students have a strong model to follow, writing feels approachable even for emerging writers. Studying a mentor text builds literary awareness, and voice. OST settings are ideal for this work because low-stakes sharing and celebration of outdoor places builds community.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Techniques in this unit</b> | <p><b>Sentence Frame (K):</b> Students complete: "My ____ is ____." using drawing and dictation. Focus on the illustration — draw every sensory detail.</p> <p><b>Sentence + Detail (1st):</b> Students write the sentence frame plus one detail sentence about color, sound, or texture. Example: "My park is golden. The leaves crunch under my feet."</p> <p><b>Expanded Writing (2nd):</b> Students write 2–3 sentences using sensory details and at least one vocabulary word (habitat, observe, texture, vibrant, dormant).</p> |
| <b>Director try-it</b>         | <p>Try this yourself before the lesson: <i>Write: "My park is golden." Then add one sensory detail sentence. Notice how the simplest sentence — four words — still creates a complete image.</i></p> <p>Share this with staff and model sketching an illustration that <i>adds details the words don't say</i>. The contrast between flat writing and vivid, sensory writing is exactly what students are practicing.</p>                                                                                                             |
| <b>Mentor text structure</b>   | <i>My Forest is Green</i> uses short, declarative sentences about a specific outdoor place that feel personal and proud: "My forest is..." Students step into Darren Lebeuf's role as author when they write their own "My ____ is ____." page.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>What to tell staff</b>      | "Model your own page first — think aloud as you write and sketch. Let students hear you choosing a sensory detail and adding it to the illustration. When students get stuck, ask: 'What does your place smell like? Sound like? Draw that detail first, then write it.'"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## Grant & Reporting Data

This unit supports the following reporting categories for **21st CCLC and similar OST grant programs**:

- **21st CCLC Program Quality:** Literacy enrichment aligned to Nebraska ELA standards (K–2). Each lesson targets grade-level reading standards in literary text, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and writing from a mentor text.
- **STEAM Integration:** Science + Engineering + Nature Exploration (L1: Local Habitat Engineering), Science + Observation + Math (L2: Mysteries of Nature — Mystery Bags), Science + Art + Creative Expression (L3: Nature Walk + Nature Art). All activities align to ELC Standard M.02.
- **School-Day Alignment:** Phonological awareness, vocabulary, and writing instruction mirrors the Nebraska Science of Reading framework at each grade level. This unit reinforces, not replaces, school-day instruction.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** Grade-level modifications are built into every lesson for K, 1st, and 2nd grade learners in a multi-grade OST setting, supporting both emerging and advanced learners.

## Recommended Documentation

If your program is collecting impact and student data, the following options are recommended:

- Photograph completed STEAM projects (Square Sculptures, Nature Observation Drawings, Mysteries of Nature)
- Collect student Check-In Forms to document character development and behavioral tiered data
- Note which grade-level Science of Reading activities were implemented
- Record attendance for each of the 3 sessions
- Optional: Have students write one sentence about what they learned for a portfolio artifact

## Materials & Budget Planning

All materials for this unit are intentionally chosen to be **low-cost and easy to source**. Most items are everyday classroom or household supplies. Where a standard item may not be available, substitutions are listed — nearly every material in this unit has a free or no-cost alternative. The **Student Materials and Printables** package includes all printable items needed per student.

| Material                                                            | Quantity                | Lesson | Substitution / Notes                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf                                 | 1 per class             | All    | Free library copy or YouTube read-aloud                         |
| Helix K-2 Check-In Forms                                            | 1 per student           | L1, L2 | Draw simple faces on sticky notes; post feelings chart on board |
| Recycled materials (cardboard, plastic bottles, tubes, egg cartons) | 1 bag per group         | L1     | For habitat engineering models (L1)                             |
| Natural materials (sticks, leaves, rocks) for details               | 1 per student           | L1     | Optional additions for habitat models (L1)                      |
| White paper                                                         | 1 per student           | L1, L3 | Any available white paper                                       |
| Scissors, glue, crayons/markers                                     | 1 per student or shared | L1, L3 | Share supplies across groups                                    |
| Elkonin Box sheets (1st grade)                                      | 1 per student           | L1     | Draw 3 boxes on any paper                                       |
| Counters/coins (1st grade)                                          | Set per student         | L1     | Bingo chips, buttons, beans, or ripped paper                    |
| Paper bags or small boxes with hidden natural objects               | 1 per student           | L2     | 1 per station for Mysteries of Nature (L2)                      |

|                                                                  |                    |    |                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Clipboards                                                       | 1 per student      | L2 | Use any notebook or binder; draw on any paper              |
| Mentor text structure (Mon–Sun)                                  | 1 per student pair | L3 | Pre-print with illustration box + writing lines (L3)       |
| Vocabulary word cards (medium, carve, erosion, pattern, texture) | 1 per student      | L3 | Print large for whole-group display or one set per student |
| Watering can / small cups + portable fan (L3)                    | 1 set per student  | L3 | For habitat model building details (L1)                    |
| Whiteboards (optional)                                           | 1 per student      | L1 | Use for SOR whiteboard activities                          |
| Observation recording sheets (L2)                                | 1 bag per group    | L2 | 3 columns: object, prediction, reveal — one per student    |

## Director's Prep Guide

The following provides an overview of prep for the full unit and itemized prep for each day. This can be completed by a director or site coordinator, or assigned to a staff member who receives prep time.

### BEFORE THE UNIT BEGINS (ALL 3 LESSONS)

- Obtain a copy of *My Forest is Green* by Darren Lebeuf.
- **Print required items:** Helix Daily Check-In Form (2 copies per student — L1 and L2), Vocabulary Word Cards (1 set for display, L2), “My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_” story page template (1 per student, L3). Optional: printed images of local habitats (forest, park, wetland, farm) for L1.
- **Organize grade-specific Science of Reading materials.** Determine whether students will be grouped by grade or whole group for SOR activities. K: Print Rhyming Picture Cards (L1). 1st: Print Elkonin Boxes and review instructions. 2nd: Prepare whiteboards and markers or paper.
- Collect recycled materials for L1 habitat engineering (cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, tubes, egg cartons, tape, scissors). Identify a safe outdoor space for the L3 nature walk.
- **Secure supplies for each lesson:** L1 – Recycled materials (cardboard, plastic bottles, tubes, egg cartons), tape, glue, scissors, optional natural materials. L2 – Paper bags or small boxes (1 per station), natural objects (stick, acorn, rock, pinecone, moss, feather, leaf), observation recording sheets, class tally chart. L3 – Clipboards + pencils for nature walk; collected natural items, large paper, glue for nature art; “My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_” templates.
- Set up Mysteries of Nature stations for L2: place one natural object in each paper bag, fold closed, and number them. Prepare the class tally chart on chart paper. Print observation recording sheets (one per student).
- Optional: Create teacher examples of STEAM projects.

### LESSON 1 CLASSROOM PREP – DAY OF

- Write “My Forest is Green” on the board. Below it write: “What is your outdoor place like?” Optional: Display printed images of local habitats (forest, park, wetland, farm).
- Set out Check-In Forms per student.
- Set out recycled materials at a central table for habitat engineering.
- Write today’s syllable target words on the board: for-est, moun-tain, an-i-mal, wa-ter-fall, bea-ver.
- 1st grade: Review Elkonin Boxes instructions to familiarize with the concept.

### LESSON 2 CLASSROOM PREP – DAY OF

- Set up mystery bag stations: place one natural object in each paper bag, fold closed, and number. Confirm tally chart is ready.
- Write the 5 vocabulary words on the board: Habitat, Observe, Texture, Vibrant, Dormant.
- Print or pre-write sentence frame strips for 1st grade (“The word \_\_\_\_ means \_\_\_\_ because in the book it shows \_\_\_\_.”).

- Set out mini whiteboards and dry-erase markers at each table for 2nd grade vocabulary responses. Pre-write sentence frame strips for 1st grade.
- Bookmark specific pages in *My Forest is Green* for shared reading stops.

### LESSON 3 CLASSROOM PREP – DAY OF

- Pre-print the “My \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_” story page template (one per student). Prepare a shared writing model on chart paper — sketch an outdoor place and write an example sentence.
- Display vocabulary words from Lesson 2 prominently. Identify a safe outdoor area for the nature walk and prepare clipboards + paper.
- Prepare the class book cover: write “Our Class Book: My \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_” on cardstock.
- Collect natural items (sticks, leaves, rocks, flowers, pinecones) for nature art, or confirm outdoor access so students can collect on the walk.
- Optional: Prepare watercolor paints or colored pencils at art station for L3 nature art collage.
- Option: Pre-write sentence frame on story page templates for emerging students. Offer a picture menu of outdoor settings to choose from.

## FOR SCHOOL-BASED LEADERSHIP

# My Forest is Green — K–2 Literacy & STEAM Unit

A share-out for principals, superintendents, and school-based partners

**Developed by:** Helix Education in partnership with Beyond School Bells, informed by 4-H STEM Reading Connections 2025. Designed for K–2 students in out-of-school time (OST) settings.

**Purpose:** This 3-lesson unit uses *My Forest is Green* by Darren Lebeuf as an anchor text for integrated literacy and STEAM instruction.

## What Students Are Doing

Over three 60-minute sessions, students engage with *My Forest is Green* by Darren Lebeuf, a photo-illustrated picture book in which a child celebrates their forest with wonder, describing its colors, sounds, textures, and living creatures. This theme of **curiosity, wonder, and observation** connects literacy, science, engineering, and art into a cohesive three-lesson unit.

| # | Literacy Skill                                             | STEAM Project                                                                            | What Students Learn & Do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Phonemic Awareness — rhyming, segmenting & blending sounds | Local Habitat Engineering (Science + Engineering + Nature Exploration)                   | Clap syllables and segment/substitute phonemes; retell key story events; build a model habitat using recycled materials and the Engineering Design Process                                                                                                                                 |
| 2 | Vocabulary in Context — text + picture clues               | Mysteries of Nature (Science + Observation + Math)                                       | Define vocabulary (habitat, observe, texture, vibrant, dormant) using 4-Step Routine; use mystery bags of natural objects to practice tactile observation and prediction                                                                                                                   |
| 3 | Fluency — accuracy, expression, and partner reading        | Author's Craft & "My ____ is ____" Writing Celebration (Fluency + Science + Observation) | Write and illustrate original "the story using retelling cards; practice fluency; create nature art from collected materials the their "the story using retelling cards; practice fluency; write and illustrate story pages; go on a nature walk; create nature art; assemble a class book |

## Alignment to School-Day Standards

This program directly reinforces Nebraska ELA standards being taught during the school day. OST staff are often not certified teachers, so this unit is specifically designed with scripted lesson plans so non-credentialed facilitators can implement high-quality, standards-aligned activities.

| Grade | Nebraska ELA Standards              | Connection to School Day                                                                                       |
|-------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| K     | LA.K.RP.1 · LA.K.F.2.c · LA.K.F.4   | Retelling stories, syllable clapping, writing using drawing and dictation                                      |
| 1st   | LA.1.RP.1 · LA.1.F.2.a · LA.1.F.4.a | Retelling with details, phoneme segmentation and blending, narrative writing                                   |
| 2nd   | LA.2.RP.1 · LA.2.F.2.a · LA.2.F.4.a | Story retelling with lesson identification; phoneme substitution; writing for different purposes and audiences |

## Grant & Reporting Category Alignment

This unit supports the following reporting categories for **21st CCLC and similar OST grant programs**:

- **21st CCLC Program Quality:** Literacy enrichment aligned to Nebraska ELA standards (K–2) across literary text, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and writing from a mentor text.
- **STEAM Integration:** Art + Math + Engineering (L1), Science + Math + Nature (L2), Visual Art + Math + Creative Expression (L3). Aligns to ELG Standard M.02.
- **School-Day Alignment:** Mirrors the Nebraska Science of Reading framework at each grade level. Reinforces, not replaces, school-day instruction.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** Grade-level modifications built into every lesson for K, 1st, and 2nd grade learners in a multi-grade OST setting, with Emerging and Advanced learner supports.
- **Attendance & Engagement:** 3-session unit with structured check-in forms and portfolio artifacts for impact documentation.

## Additional Notes

Extra space to provide additional context and notes for school-based leadership.

## SCRIPTED LESSON PACKAGE

# My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf

## Lesson 1 of 3 — Introducing the Forest & Phonological Awareness

⌚ 60 minutes • STEAM Focus: Local Habitat Engineering — Science + Engineering + Nature Exploration

### Standards

#### Reading Prose & Poetry / Literary Text:

- K: LA.K.RP. With adult help, I can retell stories with details and show understanding of the main message or lesson.
- 1st: LA.1.RP.1 I can retell a story I know using important details.
- 2nd: LA.2.RP.1 I can retell stories and explain the important lessons within them.

#### Science of Reading: Phonological Awareness Focus:

- K: LA.K.F.2.c I can count, make, and segment words into syllables.
- 1st: LA.1.F.2.a I can break down short words and say each sound by itself. I can put sounds together to speak words.
- 2nd: LA.2.F.2.a I can break down short words and say each sound by itself. I can put sounds together to speak words.

### Objectives

#### Adult Language (SWBAT):

- Students will be able to retell key events in My Forest is Green and identify the central message that nature is alive, always changing, and full of beauty worth noticing.
- Students will be able to count and clap syllables in nature words (K), segment phonemes using Elkonin Boxes (1st), or substitute phonemes to build new words (2nd).

#### Student-Friendly Language:

- I can tell what happens in the story and explain what makes the forest special.
- I can hear and work with the sounds and syllables in words.

| Reading & Check-In                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | STEAM Activity: Local Habitat Engineering (from 4-H STEAM Imagination Guide)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf</li><li>• Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)</li><li>• Whiteboard or chart paper + markers</li><li>• Feeling words cards / emoji visuals</li></ul> <b>Science of Reading Mini Lesson:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whiteboard + markers (teacher modeling)</li><li>• K: Syllable picture cards (nature images: for-est, moun-tain, leaf, wa-ter-fall, an-i-mal)</li><li>• 1st: Printed Elkonin Box sheets (3–4 boxes per row)</li><li>• 2nd: Mini whiteboards + dry-erase markers OR lined paper</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scratch paper and pencils (for planning sketches)</li><li>• Recycled materials: cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, tubes, egg cartons</li><li>• Tape, glue, scissors</li><li>• Optional: natural materials (sticks, leaves, rocks) for details</li><li>• Optional: printed images of local habitats (forest, park, farm, wetland)</li></ul> <b>Optional / Additional Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Counters, coins, or bingo chips — 3–4 per student (1st grade Elkonin Boxes)</li><li>• Small mirrors to watch mouth movements while producing sounds</li><li>• Sentence strips pre-written with target words: green, moss, fern, brook, birch</li></ul> |

#### Before Students Arrive

- Write "My Forest is Green" on the board. Below it write: "What is your outdoor place like?"

- Set out Helix Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
- Write today's syllable target words on the board: for-est, moun-tain, an-i-mal, wa-ter-fall, bea-ver.
- 1st grade only: Draw 3–4 Elkonin boxes on chart paper. Practice pushing a counter per sound for "green" (/g/-/r/-/ē/-/n/) and "moss" (/m/-/ö/-/s/).
- Set out recycled materials at a central table for the STEAM habitat engineering activity.
- Optional: Display printed images of local habitats, forest, park, wetland, farm, as a visual anchor for the STEAM activity.

## Welcome & Student Check-In (8–10 min)

### Educator Script

Greet students warmly as they arrive and invite them to pick up their Check-In Form.

"Good [morning/afternoon], friends! Before we start today, I want to know, how are you feeling right now? Take a look at the feeling words and emoji on your form and circle or cut and paste the one that shows how you feel inside today."

Give students 2–3 minutes. Then invite 3–4 volunteers to share.

"Who would like to share? Tell us: 'I am feeling \_\_\_ today because \_\_\_.' All feelings are welcome here!"

### Say It Game: Observant

"Our feeling word today is observant. Say it together, observant! Now whisper it. Now say it like you just spotted something incredible in nature, a tiny spider spinning a web, or a deer disappearing into the trees! Turn and say 'I am feeling observant!' to a friend."

"When you are observant, it means you notice the details other people walk right past. You look closely. You use all your senses, your eyes, your ears, your nose, and even your fingertips. Today's book is written by someone who is very observant of nature. Let's find out more!"

### Modifications:

- Emerging: Provide printed emoji chart. Allow students to point to their feeling instead of writing or cutting.
- Advanced: Ask students to share two feelings and describe where they feel them in their body.

## Activate Prior Knowledge (7 min)

### Educator Script

"Close your eyes for just a moment. Imagine you are outside in your favorite outdoor place, it could be a park, a backyard, a forest, a beach, a farm, anywhere. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What does it feel like?"

Give students 10 seconds of quiet thinking, then:

"Open your eyes! Turn and tell a partner about your outdoor place. Describe it like I could see it without being there. Use all of your senses to describe it."

Take 4–5 responses. Celebrate sensory details.

"Every person in this room has a different outdoor place in their heart. Today's book, *My Forest is Green* by Darren Lebeuf, is about a child who loves their forest. As I read, notice how they describe the forest, what colors, sounds, and feelings they share. And think about: How is their outdoor place like yours? How is it different?"

### Modifications:

- Emerging: Provide a picture prompt, show 3–4 outdoor settings and let students point to their favorite before sharing. Ask the students to imagine the place and use all of their senses to describe it.
- Advanced: Ask students to use adjectives that appeal to two different senses in their description.

## Science of Reading Mini Lesson: Phonological Awareness (10 min)

### Educator Script

### Step 1 — Introduce (All Grades):

"Good readers listen carefully to the sounds and parts of words. Just like a forest is made of many layers — soil, roots, ferns, trees, and sky — words are made of many tiny sounds layered together. Let's explore them!"

### Step 2 — Kindergarten (Syllable Clapping):

"We're going to clap the BEATS in our forest words! Watch me: 'for-est' — [clap clap] — 2 beats! Now try with me: 'an-i-mal' [clap clap clap]. 'moun-tain' [clap clap]. 'wa-ter-fall' [clap clap clap]. How many beats in 'fern'? [clap — 1!]"

Teacher tip: After clapping, hold up fingers for each syllable — students have a visual and tactile anchor for counting beats. For a fun twist, stomp one foot per syllable like a deer walking through the leaves!

### Step 2 — 1st Grade (Elkonin Box Segmentation):

What are Elkonin Boxes? (Educator Background) Elkonin Boxes (also called Sound Boxes) are a research-based phonemic awareness tool. Each box represents ONE phoneme (sound), not one letter. The word 'green' has 5 letters but only 4 sounds (/g/-/r/-/ē/-/n/), so it uses 4 boxes. Students push one counter per sound as they say it aloud — the physical motion anchors the auditory learning.

"Watch me. The word is 'moss.' /m/ [push] — /ō/ [push] — /s/ [push]. Three sounds, three boxes! Now let's try 'fern' together. Say it slowly..."

Practice words from the book: moss (/m/-/ō/-/s/ = 3), fern (/f/-/ē/-/r/-/n/ = 4), stream (/s/-/t/-/r/-/ē/-/m/ = 5), leaf (/l/-/ē/-/f/ = 3)

### Step 2 — 2nd Grade (Phoneme Substitution):

"We're going to change one sound in a nature word to make a brand new word! Start with 'green.' Change the /gr/ to /s/... you get SEEN! Now try: change the /m/ in 'moss' to /t/. [toss!] Change the /f/ in 'fern' to /t/. [turn!]"

#### Modifications:

- Emerging: For syllables, use a mirror — each jaw drop = one syllable. For Elkonin Boxes, pre-draw the boxes and start with 2-sound words (e.g., 'bee').
- Advanced: Challenge students to sort their sound-swap words into nature vs. non-nature categories and explain why.

| Kindergarten                                                                                                                           | 1st Grade                                                                                                           | 2nd Grade                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Syllable counting &amp; clapping — counting beats in forest and nature-related words</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phoneme segmentation using Elkonin Boxes with words from the book</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phoneme substitution — changing one sound to make a new word</li> </ul> |

## Read Aloud (15 min)

### Educator Script

"Let's look at this cover together. The title is My Forest is Green, and the author and illustrator is a team. Darren Lebeuf and Ashley Barron worked together to write and illustrate. What do you notice about the cover?"

"As I read, I want you to notice two things: What makes this child's forest special? And what words or phrases does the author use that really help you see and feel the forest?"

During reading, pause at these moments:

- "The author writes that the forest sings and dances. Trees and leaves can't really sing and dance, so what do you think the author means? [The wind moves the leaves and branches; birds and insects make music.] This is called figurative language, using imaginative words to paint a picture!"
- "Look at the colors on this page. How many different shades of green can you count? Why do you think there are so many greens in a forest?"
- "The child says 'I can't wait to see what my forest is tomorrow.' What do you think changes in a forest from one day to the next? From one season to the next? Turn and tell a partner!"

After reading, quick phonological awareness connection: "I heard so many great nature words in that story! Let's clap the syllables in 'bea-ver' — [clap clap] — 2 beats! What about 'mos-sy'? [clap clap]. And 'wa-ter-fall'? [clap clap clap]."

#### Modifications:

- Emerging: Seat near the book; use finger pointing to track. Offer the sentence frame: 'The forest is \_\_\_ because \_\_\_.'
- Advanced: Ask 2nd grade students to identify the central message and support their answer with two specific details from the text.

## STEAM Activity: Local Habitat Engineering — Science + Engineering + Nature Exploration (20 min)

### Educator Script

#### Part 1 — Introduce Habitats

"In our story, a child describes their forest, the animals that live there, the sounds it makes, and the colors everywhere. A forest is what scientists call a habitat. A habitat is the place where animals and plants live, find food, and raise their young. Different habitats look, sound, and feel very different from each other!"

"What kinds of habitats can you think of? Think about different places animals live. [Forest, farm, lake, wetland, prairie, park, ocean, desert.] Today, you are going to be engineers and build a model of a habitat that exists in your community, city, or state."

Option: Look at different pictures of different animal habitats.

#### Part 2 — Engineering Design Process: Ask → Imagine → Plan → Create → Improve

ASK: "What habitat will you build? Who lives there? What do animals need to survive in that habitat? [Food, water, shelter, space.]"

IMAGINE: Encourage students to discuss their ideas. Display habitat images if available. "What will your habitat look like? What shapes will you need? What materials?"

PLAN: Students use scratch paper to sketch their habitat model and label what each part represents. Who builds what?

CREATE: Students build using recycled materials, cardboard, tape, and natural items. Circulate and ask: What is this part of your habitat? What animal might use it? How did you decide on this shape?

IMPROVE: "What's working? What needs to change? How does your habitat help animals survive?"

"Explain that scientists who study animals, who are called ecologists, often build models and replicas to study habitats. It may take several tries to get it right. That is not failure, that is the engineering and science process working exactly as it should!"

#### Part 3 — Describe & Share

"When your habitat is ready, I want you to describe it just like the child in our story described their forest. Give your habitat its own sentence: 'My [habitat name] is \_\_\_\_.' What is special about it? Who lives there? Tell us!"

#### Modifications & Extensions:

- Emerging: Provide a simple 3-step sketch template (draw → label → build). Offer pre-cut material pieces so students focus on assembly and description.
- Advanced: Challenge students to write 2–3 sentences describing their habitat using sensory details from the book as a model, including an adjective, a sound, and an animal that lives there.
- Time: This activity can be extended based on students' interest and available programming time. This activity can also be adjusted into a simple research project for upper level students reading about an animal and their habitat, creating a fact sheet, and creating the habitat.

## Closing & Celebration (5 min)

### Educator Script

"Look at the habitats you built today! Each one is different because each of you thought about a different place, a different set of animals, a different set of details, just like every forest is different."

"Before we go, let's practice being observant! You were already observant by listening for details in a story, working with sounds in words, and building a model of a real-world place that matters. Now, look at someone's habitat, observe what you like about the habitat, and tell them!"

"Next time, we'll read *My Forest is Green* again, this time as vocabulary detectives, and we'll go outside to explore mysteries of nature with our own hands and eyes. I can't wait to see what your forest is next time!"

## SCRIPTED LESSON PACKAGE

# My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf

## Lesson 2 of 3 — Shared Reading & Vocabulary Exploration

⌚ 60 minutes • STEAM Focus: Mysteries of Nature — Science + Observation + Math

### Standards

#### Reading Prose & Poetry / Literary Text:

- K: LA.K.RP.2 With adult help, I can tell the main character, setting, and important events in a story.
- 1st: LA.1.RP.2 I can tell the characters, setting, and what happens in stories.
- 2nd: LA.2.RP.4 I can describe how a story is written, including how the problem is solved.

#### Science of Reading: Vocabulary Focus:

- K: LA.K.RP.6 With adult help, I can ask and answer questions about important details in stories. I can use words and pictures to understand new words.
- 1st: LA.1.RP.6 I can ask and answer questions about important details in stories. I can figure out the meaning of unknown words using clues from the story.
- 2nd: LA.2.RP.6 I can ask and answer different kinds of questions about stories I have read. I can use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

### Objectives

#### Adult Language (SWBAT):

- Students will be able to identify and explain key vocabulary words (habitat, observe, texture, vibrant, dormant) using the 4-Step Vocabulary Routine, including student-friendly definitions, story connections, real-life connections, and grade-differentiated practice.
- Students will be able to apply vocabulary words in context during shared reading, identifying them in the text and using them in oral and written responses.

#### Student-Friendly Language:

- I can learn what important words in our story mean, and use them in my own talking and writing.
- I can be a Word Detective and find clues that help me understand new words.

| Reading & Vocabulary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | STEAM: Mysteries of Nature (from 4-H STEAM Imagination Guide)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My Forest is Green by Lebeuf</li><li>• Vocabulary word cards: habitat, observe, texture, vibrant, dormant (one set per student or printed large for whole group display)</li><li>• Chart paper for class vocabulary anchor chart</li><li>• Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)</li><li>• Emoji Faces / Feeling word cards</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paper bags or small boxes — one per station, each containing a different natural object</li><li>• Natural objects to hide: stick, acorn, smooth rock, pinecone, dried flower, moss, seed pod, feather, bark, leaf</li><li>• Observation recording sheets (3 columns: object, prediction, reveal) — one per student</li><li>• Tally chart on chart paper for class predictions</li><li>• Optional: Magnifying glasses for the reveal phase</li><li>• Optional: Camera to photograph each mystery object after reveal</li></ul> <p><b>Optional:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small counters or bingo chips for tactile vocabulary practice</li><li>• Display 2–3 close-up photos of forest textures as a visual anchor</li></ul> |

#### Before Students Arrive

- Print or write vocabulary word cards large enough for whole-group display.
- Set out Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
- 1st grade: Pre-write sentence frame strips and place at each student's spot.
- 2nd grade: Set out mini whiteboards and dry-erase markers at each table.
- Set up Mysteries of Nature stations: place one natural object inside each paper bag, folded closed. Number the bags 1–8 (or however many you have).
- Prepare the tally chart on chart paper.
- Prepare the observation recording sheet — print one per student.
- Bookmark key vocabulary pages in *My Forest is Green* for shared reading stops.

### Welcome & Student Check-In (5 min)

#### Educator Script

Greet students warmly as they arrive.

"Welcome back, friends! Before we dive in, let's check in. I'm going to ask you a question, and I want you to show me with your emoji, or tell me with words."

"Think about the forest in our story. The child says the forest sings and dances. Close your eyes and think, have you ever been somewhere in nature that felt alive? A place that made sounds, moved, or smelled like something? Show me with your face how it felt to be there! Can someone describe to me with their senses what it felt, looked, and sounded like?"

Take 2–3 brief responses. Connect to the story theme:

"Today we're going to look more closely at our story through a new lens, the lens of a scientist and a word detective. We're going to learn powerful words that help us describe the living world around us."

#### Modifications:

- Emerging: Offer sentence frame: 'I felt \_\_\_\_ when I was outside because \_\_\_\_.'
- Advanced: Ask: 'What do you think makes some outdoor places feel more alive than others?'

### Activate Prior Knowledge (5 min)

#### Educator Script

"Yesterday, we read *My Forest is Green* together. Who can remember what some of the words or images that stood out to you from the forest? Turn and tell a partner before sharing out!"

Take 2–3 shares. Then:

"Today, we're going to read the story again, but this time we're going to zoom in on four powerful words that will help us describe any outdoor place the way Lebeuf and Barron describe the forest. These are words scientists and writers both use, and after today, you'll use them too!"

### Science of Reading: Vocabulary Word Detective (10 min)

#### Educator Script

#### Educator Background: 4-Step Vocabulary Routine

The 4-Step Vocabulary Routine (Say It → Define It → Connect It → Use It) gives students a consistent, repeatable structure for learning new words deeply. Each word takes approximately 2 minutes and can be extended for learners to more deeply understand new words.

#### Introduce the Routine:

"Today we're going to learn 4 powerful words from *My Forest is Green* using our Word Detective Routine. Every time I show you a new word, we'll do 4 things together: SAY IT — DEFINE IT — CONNECT IT — USE IT. Ready? Let's go!"

#### Word 1: HABITAT

"SAY IT: Habitat. Say it with me, habitat. Whisper it. Now say it like you're introducing your favorite outdoor place to someone who has never seen it!"

"DEFINE IT: A habitat is the natural home or environment where an animal or plant lives, gets food, and raises its young."

"CONNECT IT: In our story, the forest is a habitat for moss, ferns, birds, and beavers. Each creature depends on the forest to survive. What is the habitat for a fish? [A lake, river, or ocean.] What about a squirrel? [A forest or park with trees!]"

Grade-level USE IT: K: Point to your habitat building from yesterday! Tell us what animal lives in it. 1st: Complete your sentence frame: 'A habitat is \_\_\_\_\_. An animal that lives in a forest habitat is \_\_\_\_\_. 2nd: On your whiteboard, write one sentence: 'A \_\_\_\_\_ is an important habitat for \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.'

### **Word 2: OBSERVE**

"SAY IT: Observe. Say it together, observe. Now say it like you're a scientist with a magnifying glass, studying something amazing!"

"DEFINE IT: Observe means to watch and study something very carefully, using your senses, to notice details that others might miss."

"CONNECT IT: The child in our story is a careful observer; they notice the colors, sounds, textures, and movements of the forest. Scientists observe every day! Have you ever observed something in nature so closely that you discovered something surprising?"

Grade-level USE IT: K: Stand up and observe one thing in the room right now. Tell a partner: 'I observe \_\_\_\_\_. 1st: Complete your sentence frame: 'I observed \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_. 2nd: Write: 'A scientist would observe \_\_\_\_\_ in a forest by \_\_\_\_\_.'

### **Word 3: TEXTURE**

"SAY IT: Texture. Together, texture. Say it while you run your fingers across the table or your clothing, feel it as you say it!"

"DEFINE IT: Texture is how something feels when you touch it, rough, smooth, bumpy, soft, scratchy, silky. It also describes what something looks like, and how it would feel like, even before you touch it."

"CONNECT IT: A forest has so many textures! Rough bark, soft moss, spiky pinecone scales, smooth stones in a stream. What textures might you find in a forest? Can you think of two textures that are completely opposite?"

Grade-level USE IT: K: Touch something around you. Tell a partner: 'The texture of my \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_. 1st: Complete: 'A forest has \_\_\_\_\_ textures, like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. 2nd: Write a sentence using BOTH 'texture' AND 'observe.'

### **Word 4: VIBRANT (~1 min)**

"SAY IT: Vibrant. Together, vibrant. Say it like it's bursting with color and energy!"

"DEFINE IT: Vibrant means bright, full of color, energy, and life."

"CONNECT IT: The forest in our story is vibrant, full of greens, golds, and colors that feel alive. Can you think of something vibrant in nature or in your life? A sunset? A field of wildflowers?"

USE IT (all grades): Show me vibrant with your hands, and make them look full of energy and color! Now use it in a sentence with a partner: 'Something vibrant is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.'

### **Wrap-Up — Draw It:**

"Let's add a quick sketch next to each word on our anchor chart. Who wants to draw a tiny picture of 'habitat'? 'Texture'?"

Invite 1–2 students to sketch beside each word on the chart. This visual reference stays up for the remainder of the unit.

### **Modifications:**

- Emerging: Focus on SAY IT and DEFINE IT only for each word.
- Advanced: After the routine, challenge students to use all 5 words in one connected sentence or mini story: 'I observed the vibrant textures of the forest habitat and found a dormant seed waiting for spring.'

## **Shared Reading with Vocabulary Stops (15 min)**

### **Educator Script**

"Now that we know our 5 powerful words, let's put them to work! As I read, every time you see or hear one of our words, habitat, observe, texture, or vibrant, give me a quiet thumbs up. Let's see how many we can spot!"

During reading, pause at these moments:

- "The photographs show so many different textures, the rough bark of a birch tree, the soft pillow of moss, the smooth surface of a stream stone. What is the most interesting texture you can see on this page? Describe it to a partner."
- "Look at these colors. The word vibrant means bright and full of life. Does this page feel vibrant to you? What makes it feel that way?"
- "The forest is the habitat for so many living things. Look at this page, how many different animals or plants can you find? What do you think they eat? Where do they sleep?"
- "The author says 'I can't wait to see what my forest is tomorrow.' What do you think changes in a forest from day to day? From season to season?"

After Reading Discussion:

"Turn and tell your partner: What is the big message of this story? [Pay attention to the world around you. Nature is alive, changing, and worth noticing. Every outdoor place is worth celebrating.] Now, which vocabulary word best describes the forest in this book? [vibrant!]"

**Modifications:**

- Emerging: Provide a simple sequencing strip with pictures representing forest things from the book (moss, beaver, stream, bird, birch tree) — students point to each in order.
- Advanced: Ask students to identify how Darren Lebeuf uses real photographs instead of drawings to tell this story. How does that choice affect the reader? What does it make you feel about the forest?

## STEAM Activity: Mysteries of Nature — Science + Observation + Math (22 min)

**Educator Script**

**Part 1 — Introduce the Activity**

"Scientists observe the world. And today, you're going to observe like scientists! We have mystery bags, each one has something from nature hiding inside. Your job: reach in, feel it without looking, and predict what it is!"

"You're going to observe without your eyes today. You'll use your sense of touch to notice textures, shapes, weight, and size. Then you'll make a prediction, that's a scientific guess based on evidence."

**Part 2 — Mystery Bag Rotations**

"You'll have about 60 seconds at each bag. Reach in, feel the object, then write or draw your prediction on your recording sheet. Don't peek!"

Rotate students through 4–8 stations (adjust based on group size). Circulate and prompt:

"How does it feel? Rough, smooth, bumpy, soft? Is it heavy or light? Big or small? Does it have a shape you recognize? What texture word from our lesson fits this?"

"Record your prediction. When everyone has gone, we'll reveal together!"

**Part 3 — Reveal & Tally**

"Let's open each bag together! Bag 1: who predicted a [what is in the bag]? [Count and tally.] Who was right? [Celebrate.] Who was surprised? What made it hard to guess?"

Use the class tally chart to count and compare. Ask: Which object did the most people predict correctly? Which was the biggest surprise? What texture word describes each object?

**Part 4 — Writing Reflection**

"On your recording sheet, write one sentence: 'I was surprised by \_\_\_ because I thought it would be \_\_\_ but it was \_\_\_\_.' Its texture was \_\_\_\_.' Use at least one vocabulary word from today!"

**Modifications & Extensions:**

- Emerging: Provide a word bank of texture words (rough, smooth, bumpy, soft, hard, pointy, scratchy, silky) and a picture reference of the possible objects. Allow pointing or drawing predictions instead of writing.
- Advanced: Have students design their own mystery bag, select an object, write 3 clues using texture/science vocabulary, and read their clues to a partner who guesses. Connect to math: which object received the most correct predictions? Graph it!

## Closing & Reflection (5 min)

**Educator Script**

"Scientists and word detectives, today you explored vocabulary words, searched for meaning in our story, and used your sense of touch to observe the world like scientists!"

Do a quick vocabulary review:

"I'll say a definition, you say the word! 'The natural home where an animal or plant lives.' [habitat!] 'To watch and study something carefully using your senses.' [observe!] 'Full of bright color, energy, and life.' [vibrant!] 'How something feels when you touch it.' [texture!]"

"In our next lesson, we're going to think like the child in our story, we'll go on a nature walk and use art to show what WE see in our own outdoor places. Start thinking: What is your outdoor place? What would you tell the world about it?"

## SCRIPTED LESSON PACKAGE

# My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf

## Lesson 3 of 3 — Author's Craft & 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' Writing Celebration

⌚ 60 minutes • STEAM Focus: Nature Walk + Nature Art — Science + Art + Creative Expression

### Standards

#### Reading Prose & Poetry / Literary Text:

- K: LA.K.RP.5 With adult help, I can describe how images help me understand the story.
- 1st: LA.1.RP.5 I can explain how pictures and words work together to tell a story.
- 2nd: LA.2.RP.5 I can explain how the illustrations help the reader understand the mood and characters.

#### Science of Reading: Writing Focus:

- K: LA.K.W.1 With adult help, I can write about a topic or tell a story using a mix of drawing, dictating, and writing.
- 1st: LA.1.W.1 I can write opinions, informative pieces, and narratives for different reasons and audiences.
- 2nd: LA.2.W.1 I can write for different purposes and audiences, using what I know about writing.

### Objectives

#### Adult Language (SWBAT):

- Students will be able to write and illustrate their own 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' story page using grade-appropriate sentences, descriptive vocabulary, and illustration details that capture a real or imagined outdoor place — mirroring the structure and sensory style of My Forest is Green.
- Students will be able to share their writing with an audience and contribute their page to a class book that celebrates each student's unique outdoor place.

#### Student-Friendly Language:

- I can write and draw my own 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' page — describing an outdoor place and what makes it special.
- I can share my page with my class and celebrate our outdoor world together!

| Reading & Writing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | STEAM: Nature Walk + Nature Art (from 4-H STEAM Imagination Guide)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf</li><li>• Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)</li><li>• Emoji Faces / Feeling word cards</li><li>• Chart paper + markers for shared writing model</li><li>• Pre-printed 'My ____ is ____' story page template — one per student (large illustration box at top, writing lines at bottom)</li><li>• Pencils and fine-tip black markers for final tracing</li><li>• Crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor paints for illustrations</li><li>• Optional: sentence starter strips for emerging writers</li><li>• One piece of cardstock for class book cover + binder rings or stapler</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outdoor access for a nature walk with clipboards, pencils, and paper for recording observations</li><li>• Optional: cameras or tablets for students to photograph observations</li><li>• Collected natural items (sticks, leaves, rocks, flowers, pinecones, grass) for art-making after walk</li><li>• Glue or tape for assembling a nature collage or arrangement</li><li>• Large paper or cardstock, one sheet per student</li><li>• Optional: watercolor paints to add color to nature collages</li><li>• Optional: printed reference images of Andy Goldsworthy's ephemeral land art</li></ul> |

#### Before Students Arrive

- Pre-print the 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' story page template — one per student.
- Set out Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.

- Prepare a shared writing model on chart paper — sketch an outdoor place and write an example sentence.
- Display vocabulary words and definitions from Lesson 2 prominently.
- Identify a safe outdoor area for the nature walk and prepare clipboards + paper.
- Prepare the class book cover: write 'Our Class Book: My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' on cardstock with a blank center for students to illustrate together.

## Welcome & Student Check-In (8 min)

### Educator Script

Greet students warmly as they arrive.

"Good [morning/afternoon], friends! Today is a very special day, it's Author and Explorer Day! We are going to write our own pages inspired by the forest child in our story. But first, let's check in."

Have students complete their Check-In Form. After 2–3 minutes, invite sharing.

"Who would like to share how they're feeling? Tell us: 'I am feeling \_\_\_\_ today because \_\_\_\_.'"

### Say It Game: Wonder

"Our feeling word today is wonder. Say it together, wonder! What does wonder mean? [A feeling of amazement and curiosity when something is so beautiful or surprising that it stops you and makes you want to know more.]"

"Our authors wrote this book because they felt wonder about the forest, the way it looks, sounds, and changes. When have you felt wonder about something in nature? Maybe watching rain fall, or finding a creature you've never seen, or seeing a huge tree for the first time?"

"Now say wonder again, like you just discovered something incredible. Turn and say 'I feel wonder!' to a friend. Because today we are going to find our own wonder, and write it down."

### Modifications:

- Emerging: Provide emoji chart for pointing. Invite students to show their wonder face.
- Advanced: Ask: 'Do you think adults can feel wonder just as easily as children? Why or why not?'

## Science of Reading: 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' Writing Mini Lesson (10 min)

### Educator Script

### Writing Connection Overview (Educator Background):

Writing from mentor texts is a literacy strategy that helps students internalize the structures, vocabulary, and craft of strong writing by using a familiar book as a model. My Forest is Green has a clear, sensory-rich structure — short, declarative sentences about a specific outdoor place — that makes it an ideal mentor text for K–2 writers. Students focus on choosing precise, vivid words and letting their illustrations carry equal weight alongside their writing.

### Step 1 — Study the Mentor Text:

"Before we write, let's look at My Forest is Green one more time, but this time, we're looking at it like writers. What do you notice about how the authors built this book?"

Flip to 2–3 pages and point out:

- Each page describes the forest using short, clear sentences. Simple. Powerful.
- The words appeal to the senses, color, sound, texture, movement.
- The photograph does just as much work as the words. Together, they create the full picture.
- The author writes about the forest as it belongs to the character, 'my forest.' It's personal and proud.

### Step 2 — Shared Writing Model:

"Let me show you what this looks like. Watch me write my own 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_.'"

Model on chart paper — think aloud as you write and draw: "I'm going to choose... my park in the fall. [Write 'My park is golden.' on chart paper.] Now, what else do I want the reader to know? [Pause.] My park is golden. The leaves crunch under my feet, and squirrels dash between the old oak trees. [Write it, then begin sketching falling leaves, a squirrel mid-leap, and the silhouette of a broad oak.] See how my illustration adds details that the words don't say? There are shadows in the grass! The sky is that low, gray autumn color! My picture goes beyond my words."

### Step 3 — Brainstorm:

"Now it's your turn to brainstorm. Close your eyes. Think of the outdoor place that matters most to you, a forest, a beach, a park, a playground, a garden, a field, a backyard. What does it look like? Smell like? Sound like? Feel like? Whisper your outdoor place to a partner and describe it."

Take 3–4 shares. Ask students to share sensory details. Celebrate specific sensory details. Option to write sensory detail sentences on the board.

**Modifications:**

- Emerging: Provide a picture menu of outdoor settings (forest, park, beach, farm, backyard, playground) to help students choose their place.
- Advanced: Challenge students to include figurative language — a simile, a metaphor, or personification — to bring their outdoor place to life, e.g., 'My backyard is a jungle. The sunflowers lean down to listen when the wind tells its stories.'

## Writing Work Time: 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' Story Pages (15 min)

**Educator Script**

"Take your story page template. At the top is your illustration box, that's where your outdoor place lives. At the bottom are your writing lines, that's where your words go. Let's create!"

**Grade-Level Writing Guidance:**

Kindergarten: Write 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_.' using best sound spelling and/or dictation. Focus on the illustration — draw every detail of your place. Use the sentence starter strip if needed.

1st Grade: Write the sentence frame and add one detail sentence that tells more about what your outdoor place looks, sounds, or feels like. Example: 'My beach is wide. The waves are loud and the sand gets hot by noon.'

2nd Grade: Write 2–3 sentences. Include a sensory detail, something you can see, hear, smell, or touch. Try to use at least one vocabulary word from our Lesson 2 anchor chart (habitat, observe, texture, vibrant, dormant).

**Class Discussion Questions — ask individual students or the whole class:**

- What outdoor place did you choose? Why is it special to you?
- What is one detail about your place that you really want your reader to picture?
- What can your illustration show that your words don't say?
- Can you use a vocabulary word from our anchor chart somewhere on your page?

**Modifications:**

- Emerging: Pre-write the sentence frame on their page. Offer a printed picture menu of outdoor settings. Encourage drawing first, then dictate words while the educator or peer scribes. Provide a coloring sheet of different outdoors for students to pick, color, and write about.
- Advanced: Challenge students to write a second sentence that uses figurative language or personification to describe their outdoor place, e.g., 'My lake is a mirror that holds the whole sky inside it.'

## STEAM Activity: Nature Walk + Nature Art — Science + Art + Creative Expression (20 min)

**Educator Script**

**Part 1 — Nature Walk & Observe**

"We're going outside, just like the child in our story goes to their forest. Bring your clipboard, your pencil, and your most observant eyes and ears."

"As we walk, I want you to notice three things: something you can see that surprises you, something you can hear, and something you can touch safely. Record what you find, you can draw or write. This is your scientist's field journal!"

Guide students through a brief outdoor walk. Circulate and prompt:

"What do you notice? What surprises you? What texture word describes that bark/leaf/stone? What sounds can you hear? What might live here?"

If outdoor access is unavailable, bring a nature materials tray inside and display images of outdoor settings. Students observe the materials up close using magnifying glasses.

**Part 2 — Nature Art: Represent What You Saw**

"Now we're going to use what we found and observed to make art. You can create a scene, a pattern, a feeling, anything that shows something true about nature and what you saw."

Option: Show the students different pages of the book and ask them how they might create texture as they see in the book.

Circulate and ask:

"What did you decide to represent? What vocabulary word describes what you made? [vibrant, texture, habitat...] If the child from our story saw your art, what do you think they would say?"

### **Part 3 — Label & Display**

"At the bottom of your nature art, write or dictate: 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_.' — describe your artwork the way the book describes the forest. Then display your nature art next to your writing page. Together, they tell the whole story!"

#### **Modifications & Extensions:**

- Emerging: Pre-sort a smaller collection of natural materials on a tray and let students choose from those. Educator or peer scribes the label.
- Advanced: Challenge students to write a 2–3 sentence artist's statement describing their nature art — what they chose to include, why, and what vocabulary words describe it.

## **Class Book Assembly & Author's Celebration (if time allows)**

### **Educator Note**

This celebration is the natural culmination of the writing work time above. It can happen at the end of this session or at the start of the next gathering. The completed story pages become the class book.

"It's time to celebrate! Let's do an Author's Share. I'll give a few friends the chance to hold up their page, show their illustration, and read their words aloud. Authors: stand proud, hold your work up high, and share your outdoor place with us!"

Call on 4–6 students to share. Celebrate specific details (ex: the outdoor place they chose, vocabulary words used, and sensory details in their illustrations.)

"Now let's put all our pages together to make our class book. We're all the authors and illustrators of this one! Let's sign our names on the cover together."

Assemble pages with the cover. Bind with binder rings or a stapler along the left edge.

## **Closing & Celebration (5 min)**

### **Educator Script**

"Look at everything we made and learned over these three lessons! You listened to a child describe their forest with wonder and love. You built a habitat, explored the mysteries of nature with your fingertips, walked outside, created nature art, and wrote your own pages describing a place that matters to you."

"In the book, we read 'I can't wait to see what my forest is tomorrow.' That sentence is about something more than a forest, it's about curiosity, and wonder, and the exciting feeling that the world is always changing and always worth paying attention to."

"Hold up your story page one more time. Look at it. You wrote that. You drew that. That outdoor place, the sounds, the textures, the living things inside it, is yours. And it matters."

"Let's finish by saying our feeling word one last time: wonder. Because after everything you did this week — reading, building, observing, writing, creating — you deserve to feel wonder at what you can do. I feel wonder when I look at what you made. I hope you do too."

## GRAB AND GO LESSON PACKAGE

# My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf

## Lesson 1 of 3 — Introducing the Forest & Phonological Awareness

⌚ 60 minutes · 🌱 Local Habitat Engineering (Science + Engineering + Nature Exploration)

### BOOK

My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf

### BIG IDEA

Nature is alive, always changing, and full of beauty worth noticing.

### VOCAB WORD

Observant: noticing details that others walk right past

## Materials

### SUPPLIES

- My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf
- Whiteboard or chart paper + markers
- Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)
- Feeling word cards / emoji visuals
- Recycled materials: cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, tubes, egg cartons
- Tape, glue, scissors
- Scratch paper and pencils for planning sketches
- **TO PRINT:** Helix Daily Check-In Form

### OPTIONAL / GRADE LEVEL SPECIFIC

- **K:** Syllable picture cards (for-est, moun-tain, wa-ter-fall, an-i-mal, bea-ver)
- **1st:** Printed Elkonin Box sheets (3–4 boxes per row); counters or bingo chips — 3–4 per student
- **2nd:** Mini whiteboards + dry-erase markers OR lined paper
- Small mirrors to watch mouth movements while producing sounds
- Natural materials (sticks, leaves, rocks) for habitat detail
- Optional: printed images of local habitats (forest, park, farm, wetland) for visual anchor

## Pre-Lesson Set-Up

1. Write 'My Forest is Green' on the board. Below it write: "What is your outdoor place like?"
2. Set out Helix Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
3. Write today's syllable target words on the board: for-est, moun-tain, an-i-mal, wa-ter-fall, bea-ver.
4. **1st grade only:** Draw 3–4 Elkonin boxes on chart paper. Practice pushing a counter per sound for 'green' (/g/-/r/-/ē/-/n/) and 'moss' (/m/-/ō/-/s/).
5. Set out recycled materials at a central table for the STEAM habitat engineering activity.
6. Optional: Display printed images of local habitats (forest, park, wetland, farm) as a visual anchor.

## Welcome & Student Check-In (8–10 min)

1. Greet students warmly and invite them to pick up a Check-In Form.
2. Give students 2–3 minutes to complete the "How am I feeling?" section. Invite 3–4 volunteers to share.
3. Play the Say It Game with the word Observant.
  - Say it together, whisper it, say it like you just spotted something incredible in nature — a tiny spider spinning a web, or a deer disappearing into the trees!
  - **Define:** "When you are observant, it means you notice the details other people walk right past. You look closely and use all your senses."
  - Turn and say 'I am feeling observant!' to a friend.
4. Introduce the book: "Today's book is written by someone who is very observant of nature. Let's find out more!"

### Modifications:

**Emerging:** Provide a printed emoji chart. Allow students to point to their feeling instead of writing or cutting.

**Advanced:** Ask students to share two feelings and describe where they feel them in their body.

## Activate Prior Knowledge (7 min)

1. Guide the students through a sensory exercise: "Close your eyes for just a moment. Imagine you are outside in your favorite outdoor place — a park, a backyard, a forest, a beach, a farm, anywhere. What do you see? Hear? Smell? What does it feel like?" Give students 10 seconds of quiet thinking. "Open your eyes! Turn and tell a partner about your outdoor place using all of your senses." Take 4–5 responses. Celebrate sensory details.
2. Introduce the book: "My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf is about a child who loves their forest. As I read, notice how they describe the forest — the colors, sounds, and feelings. How is their outdoor place like yours? How is it different?"

**Modifications:**

**Emerging:** Show 3–4 pictures of outdoor settings and let students point to their favorite before sharing.

**Advanced:** Ask students to use adjectives that appeal to two different senses in their description.

## Science of Reading Mini Lesson: Phonological Awareness (10 min)

**Before Starting: Determine your grade-level structure. Options:**

- Separate students into grade levels with an adult or student leader
  - Complete each activity per grade level as a whole group
  - Complete one main activity with the whole group
1. "Just like a forest is made of many layers — soil, roots, ferns, trees, and sky — words are made of tiny sounds layered together. Let's explore them!"
  2. Introduce and model the activity for your grade level (see the leveled table below).
  3. Complete the grade-level or whole-group activity.

**Modifications:**

**Emerging:** For syllables, use a mirror — each jaw drop = one syllable. For Elkonin Boxes, pre-draw the boxes and start with 2-sound words (e.g., 'bee').

**Advanced:** Challenge students to sort their sound-swap words into nature vs. non-nature categories and explain why.

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Kindergarten</b> | <p><b>Syllable Clapping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clap the BEATS in forest words. Model: 'for-est' [clap clap] = 2 beats!</li> <li>• Try: 'an-i-mal' • 'moun-tain' • 'wa-ter-fall'</li> <li>• Ask: 'How many beats in 'fern'?' [clap — 1!]</li> <li>• Fun twist: stomp one foot per syllable like a deer walking through leaves!</li> <li>• After clapping, hold up fingers for each syllable as a visual + tactile anchor.</li> </ul> |
| <b>1st Grade</b>    | <p><b>Elkonin Box Push</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model pushing one counter per sound.</li> <li>• 'The word is moss. /m/ [push] — /ō/ [push] — /s/ [push]. 3 sounds, 3 boxes!'</li> <li>• Practice words: moss (/m/-/ō/-/s/ = 3), fern (/f/-/j/-/r/-/n/ = 4), stream (/s/-/t/-/r/-/ē/-/m/ = 5), leaf (/l/-/ē/-/f/ = 3).</li> <li>• Always say sounds aloud as you push — this is about sounds, not letters.</li> </ul>                  |
| <b>2nd Grade</b>    | <p><b>Phoneme Substitution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change one sound in a nature word to make a new word!</li> <li>• Change /gr/ in GREEN to /s/ → SEEN!</li> <li>• Change /m/ in MOSS to /t/ → toss!</li> <li>• Change /f/ in FERN to /t/ → turn!</li> <li>• Students write two 'before → after' word pairs and share with the class.</li> </ul>                                                                                     |

## Read Aloud (15 min)

1. Preview the cover. Identify the author (Darren Lebeuf) and illustrator (Ashley Barron). Ask what students notice about the cover.
2. Introduce comprehension question: "As I read, notice two things: What makes this child's forest special? And what words or phrases help you see and feel the forest?"
3. Read the book aloud. Pause at these moments:
  - "The author writes that the forest sings and dances. What do you think that means? [Wind moves leaves and branches; birds and insects make music.] This is called figurative language!"
  - "How many different shades of green can you count on this page? Why do you think there are so many greens in a forest?"
  - "The child says 'I can't wait to see what my forest is tomorrow.' What do you think changes in a forest from one day to the next? Turn and tell a partner!"
4. After reading — quick phonological awareness connection: "Let's clap the syllables in 'bea-ver' [clap clap] — 2 beats! 'mos-sy'? [clap clap]. 'wa-ter-fall'? [clap clap clap]."

#### Modifications:

**Emerging:** Seat near the book; use finger pointing to track. Offer the sentence frame: 'The forest is \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.'

**Advanced:** Ask students to identify the central message and support their answer with two specific details from the text.

### STEAM Activity: Local Habitat Engineering — Science + Engineering + Nature Exploration (20 min)

#### Part 1: Introduce Habitats

1. **Define Habitats for students:** Define Habitats: "In our story, the child describes their forest — the animals that live there, the sounds it makes, the colors everywhere. A forest is what scientists call a habitat: the place where animals and plants live, find food, and raise their young."
2. **Ask:** What kinds of habitats can you think of? [Forest, farm, lake, wetland, prairie, park, ocean, desert.] Today you are going to be engineers and build a model of a habitat from your community, city, or state.
3. Show pictures of different animal habitats. [Take 2–3 responses about what students notice.] Divide students into pairs or small groups to create their habitats.

#### Part 2: Engineering Design Process

1. **ASK:** "What habitat will you build? Who lives there? What do animals need to survive? [Food, water, shelter, space.]"
2. **IMAGINE:** "What will your habitat look like? What shapes and materials will you need?"
3. **PLAN:** Students sketch their habitat model on scratch paper and label what each part represents.
4. **CREATE:** Students build using recycled materials, cardboard, tape, and natural items. Circulate and ask: What is this part of your habitat? What animal might use it? How did you decide on this shape?
5. **IMPROVE:** "What's working? What needs to change? How does your habitat help animals survive?" Remind students that needing to retry is the science and engineering process working exactly as it should.

#### Part 3: Describe & Share

1. When habitats are ready, ask each group to describe theirs using the sentence pattern from our story: 'My [habitat name] is \_\_\_\_.' What is special about it? Who lives there?

#### Sketch Example



#### Example Habitat



#### Modifications:

**Emerging:** Provide a simple 3-step sketch template (draw → label → build). Offer pre-cut material pieces so students focus on assembly and description.

**Advanced:** Write 2–3 sentences describing the habitat using sensory details from the book as a model — including an adjective, a sound, and an animal that lives there.

### Closing & Celebration (5 min)

1. Have students observe a neighbor's habitat and tell them one thing they like about it.
2. Ask students to share one way they were observant today — in the story, with sounds in words, or while building.
3. Preview Lesson 2: "Next time, we'll read My Forest is Green again as vocabulary detectives and explore the mysteries of nature with our hands and eyes."

## GRAB AND GO LESSON PACKAGE

# My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf

## Lesson 2 of 3 — Shared Reading & Vocabulary Exploration

⌚ 60 minutes • 🌿 Mysteries of Nature (Science + Observation + Math)

### BOOK

My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf

### BIG IDEA

Every outdoor place is worth celebrating. Nature is alive, changing, and worth noticing.

### VOCAB WORD

Habitat, Observe, Texture, Vibrant, Dormant

## Materials

### SUPPLIES

- My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf
- Vocabulary word cards: habitat, observe, texture, vibrant, dormant
- Chart paper for class vocabulary anchor chart
- Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)
- Emoji Faces / Feeling word cards
- Paper bags or small boxes — one per station
- Natural objects to hide: stick, acorn, smooth rock, pinecone, dried flower, moss, seed pod, feather, bark, leaf
- Observation recording sheets (3 columns: object, prediction, reveal) — one per student
- Tally chart on chart paper for class predictions
- **TO PRINT:** Helix Daily Check-In Form; observation recording sheet

### OPTIONAL / GRADE LEVEL SPECIFIC

- **K:** Printed picture response cards for acting out vocabulary words
- **1st:** Sentence frame strips: 'A habitat is \_\_\_\_.' / 'I observed \_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_.'
- **2nd:** Mini whiteboards + dry-erase markers OR lined paper
- Magnifying glasses for the reveal phase
- Optional: camera to photograph each mystery object after reveal
- Optional: 2–3 close-up photos of forest textures as a visual anchor

## Pre-Lesson Set-Up

1. Print or write vocabulary word cards large enough for whole-group display: habitat, observe, texture, vibrant, dormant.
2. Set out Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
3. **1st grade:** Pre-write sentence frame strips and place at each student's spot.
4. **2nd grade:** Set out mini whiteboards and dry-erase markers at each table.
5. Set up Mysteries of Nature stations: place one natural object inside each paper bag, folded closed. Number the bags 1–8.
6. Prepare the tally chart on chart paper and print one observation recording sheet per student.
7. Bookmark key vocabulary pages in My Forest is Green for shared reading stops.

## Welcome & Student Check-In (5 min)

1. Greet students warmly. Ask students to show or share how they're feeling using emojis or words. Take 2–3 brief responses.
2. "The child in our story says the forest sings and dances. Have you ever been somewhere in nature that felt alive — a place that made sounds, moved, or smelled like something? Where were you? How did you feel?" [Take 2–3 responses.]

### Modifications:

**Emerging:** Sentence frame: 'I felt \_\_\_\_ when I was outside because \_\_\_\_.'

**Advanced:** What do you think makes some outdoor places feel more alive than others?

## Activate Prior Knowledge (5 min)

1. Recall the story. Ask students to turn and tell a partner one word or image that stood out from the forest, then have 2–3 whole-class shares.
2. Share that today students will be word detectives zooming in on five powerful words that scientists and writers both use to describe the living world.

## Science of Reading: Vocabulary Word Detective (10 min)

Use the 4-Step Vocabulary Routine for each word: SAY IT → DEFINE IT → CONNECT IT → USE IT

### HABITAT

- **Say It:** "habitat" — say it together, whisper it, now say it like you're introducing your favorite outdoor place to someone who has never seen it!
- **Define It:** The natural home where an animal or plant lives, gets food, and raises its young.
- **Connect It:** In our story, the forest is a habitat for moss, ferns, birds, and beavers. What is the habitat for a fish? [A lake, river, or ocean.] A squirrel? [A forest or park with trees!]
- **Use It:** K: Point to the habitat you built in Lesson 1! | 1st: 'A habitat is \_\_\_\_\_. An animal that lives in a forest habitat is \_\_\_\_\_. ' | 2nd: 'A \_\_\_\_\_ is an important habitat for \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.'

### OBSERVE

- **Say It:** "observe" — say it like you're a scientist with a magnifying glass studying something amazing!
- **Define It:** To watch and study something very carefully, using your senses, to notice details that others might miss.
- **Connect It:** The child in our story is a careful observer — they notice the colors, sounds, textures, and movements of the forest. Have you ever observed something in nature so closely that you discovered something surprising?
- **Use It:** K: Observe one thing in the room right now. Tell a partner: 'I observe \_\_\_\_\_. ' | 1st: 'I observed \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_. ' | 2nd: 'A scientist would observe \_\_\_\_\_ in a forest by \_\_\_\_\_. '

### TEXTURE

- **Say It:** "texture" — say it while you run your fingers across the table or your clothing. Feel it as you say it!
- **Define It:** How something feels when you touch it — rough, smooth, bumpy, soft, scratchy, silky. Also describes how something looks like it would feel.
- **Connect It:** A forest has so many textures! Rough bark, soft moss, spiky pinecone scales, smooth stream stones. Can you think of two textures that are completely opposite?
- **Use It:** K: Touch something around you. Tell a partner: 'The texture of my \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_. ' | 1st: 'A forest has \_\_\_\_\_ textures, like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. ' | 2nd: Write a sentence using both 'texture' AND 'observe.'

### VIBRANT

- **Say It:** "vibrant" — say it like it's bursting with color and energy!
- **Define It:** Bright, full of color, energy, and life.
- **Connect It:** The forest in our story is vibrant — full of greens, golds, and colors that feel alive. Can you think of something vibrant in nature or in your life? A sunset? A field of wildflowers?
- **Use It:** All grades: Show vibrant with your hands — make them look full of energy and color! Use it in a sentence: 'Something vibrant is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. '

### DORMANT

- **Say It:** "dormant" — say it quietly, like something sleeping and waiting to wake up.
- **Define It:** In a state of rest or sleep, alive but not actively growing — like a tree in winter or a bear in hibernation.
- **Connect It:** The forest changes through every season. In winter, many plants look dormant — bare and still. But they're not dead, they're waiting. Have you ever seen something in nature that looks dormant? [A bare tree. A frozen pond. A garden in January.]
- **Use It:** All grades: Show dormant with your body — curl up small and still. Now use it in a sentence: '\_\_\_\_\_ is dormant in winter because \_\_\_\_\_. '

Wrap-Up — Draw It: Invite 1–2 students to sketch beside each word on the class anchor chart to help everyone remember the meaning.

### Modifications:

**Emerging:** Focus on SAY IT and DEFINE IT only for each word. Use picture response cards — students hold up a card matching each word's meaning instead of writing.

**Advanced:** Use all 5 words in one connected sentence or mini story: 'I observed the vibrant textures of the forest habitat and found a dormant seed waiting for spring.'

## Shared Reading with Vocabulary Stops (15 min)

1. Complete the read-aloud. As you read, ask students to give a quiet thumbs up when they hear or see a vocabulary word.
2. Pause at these moments:
  - "The pictures show so many different textures — rough bark, soft moss, smooth stream stones. What is the most interesting texture on this page? Describe it to a partner."
  - "The word vibrant means bright and full of life. Does this page feel vibrant to you? What makes it feel that way?"
  - "The forest is the habitat for so many living things. How many different animals or plants can you find on this page? What do you think they eat? Where do they sleep?"
  - "The author says, 'I can't wait to see what my forest is tomorrow.' What do you think changes in a forest from day to day? From season to season?"
3. After reading discussion: "What is the BIG message of this story? Which vocabulary word best describes the forest in this book? [vibrant!]"

#### Modifications:

**Emerging:** Provide a simple sequencing strip with pictures of forest elements from the book (moss, beaver, stream, bird, birch tree) — students point to each in order as you read.

**Advanced:** Ask students how Darren Lebeuf's use of real photographs instead of drawings affects the reader. What does it make you feel about the forest?

### STEAM Activity: Mysteries of Nature — Science + Observation + Math (22 min)

#### Part 1: Introduce the Activity

1. "Scientists observe the world. Today, you're going to observe like scientists — we have mystery bags, each one has something from nature hiding inside. Your job: reach in, feel it without looking, and predict what it is!"
2. "You'll use your sense of touch to notice textures, shapes, weight, and size. Then you'll make a prediction — a scientific guess based on evidence — on what is in the bag."

#### Part 2: Mystery Bag Rotations

1. Begin rotation: Students have about 60+ seconds at each bag. Reach in, feel the object, then write or draw a prediction on the recording sheet. No peeking!
2. Circulate and prompt:
  - How does it feel? Rough, smooth, bumpy, soft? Heavy or light? Big or small?
  - What texture word from our lesson fits this object?
  - What is your prediction? What evidence from your sense of touch supports it?

#### Part 3: Reveal & Tally

1. Open each bag together. Count and tally predictions on the class chart. Celebrate correct guesses and discuss surprises.
2. Ask: Which object did the most people predict correctly? Which was the biggest surprise? What texture word describes each object?

#### Part 4: Writing Reflection

1. On the recording sheet, students write: 'I was surprised by \_\_\_ because I thought it would be \_\_\_ but it was \_\_\_. Its texture was \_\_\_.' Use at least one vocabulary word!

#### Modifications:

**Emerging:** Provide a word bank of texture words (rough, smooth, bumpy, soft, hard, pointy, scratchy, silky) and a picture reference of possible objects. Allow pointing or drawing predictions instead of writing.

**Advanced:** Students design their own mystery bag: select an object, write 3 clues using texture vocabulary, and read the clues to a partner who guesses. Connect to math: graph which object received the most correct predictions.

### Closing & Reflection (5 min)

1. Ask students to tell a friend one surprising thing they discovered. Connect that they observed like real scientists today.
2. Quick vocabulary review: "I'll say a definition — you say the word!"
  - 'The natural home where an animal or plant lives.' → [habitat!]
  - 'To watch and study something carefully using your senses.' → [observe!]
  - 'Full of bright color, energy, and life.' → [vibrant!]
  - 'How something feels when you touch it.' → [texture!]

## GRAB AND GO LESSON PACKAGE

# My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf

Lesson 3 of 3 — Author's Craft & 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' Writing Celebration

⌚ 60 minutes • 🌿 Nature Walk + Nature Art (Science + Art + Creative Expression)

### BOOK

My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf

### BIG IDEA

We can write and illustrate our own pages describing an outdoor place that matters to us.

### VOCAB WORD

VOCAB FOCUS — Review: habitat, observe, texture, vibrant, dormant

## Materials

### SUPPLIES

- My Forest is Green by Darren Lebeuf
- Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)
- Emoji Faces / Feeling word cards
- Vocabulary anchor chart from Lesson 2 (displayed for reference)
- Chart paper + markers for shared writing model
- Pre-printed 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' story page template — one per student (large illustration box at top, writing lines at bottom)
- Pencils and fine-tip black markers for final tracing
- Crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor paints for illustrations
- One piece of cardstock for class book cover + binder rings or stapler
- **TO PRINT:** Helix Daily Check-In Form; 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' story page template

### OPTIONAL / GRADE LEVEL SPECIFIC

- Outdoor access with clipboards, pencils, and paper for recording observations
- Collected natural items (sticks, leaves, rocks, flowers, pinecones, grass) for art-making
- Glue or tape for assembling a nature collage
- Large paper or cardstock — one sheet per student
- Optional: cameras or tablets for students to photograph observations
- Optional: watercolor paints to add color to nature collages
- Optional: printed reference images of Andy Goldsworthy's ephemeral land art
- Optional: sentence starter strips for emerging writers

## Pre-Lesson Set-Up

1. Pre-print the 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' story page template — one per student.
2. Set out Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
3. Prepare a shared writing model on chart paper: sketch an outdoor place and write an example sentence. Example: 'My park is golden. The leaves crunch under my feet, and squirrels dash between the old oak trees.'
4. Display vocabulary anchor chart from Lesson 2 prominently.
5. Identify a safe outdoor area for the nature walk. Prepare clipboards + paper.
6. Prepare the class book cover: write 'Our Class Book: My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' on cardstock with a blank center for students to illustrate together.

## Welcome & Student Check-In (8 min)

1. Greet students. Have students complete their Check-In Form. After 2–3 minutes, invite sharing.
2. Play the Say It Game with the word Wonder.
  - Say it together, whisper it, say it like you just discovered something incredible!
  - **Define:** "Wonder is a feeling of amazement and curiosity when something is so beautiful or surprising that it stops you and makes you want to know more."
  - "When have you felt wonder about something in nature? [Take 2–3 responses.] Turn and say 'I feel wonder!' to a friend. Today we are going to find our own wonder, and write it down."

### Modifications:

**Emerging:** Emoji chart for pointing. Invite students to show their wonder face.

**Advanced:** Do you think adults can feel wonder just as easily as children? Why or why not?

## Science of Reading: 'My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_' Writing Mini Lesson (10 min)

Note: My Forest is Green has a clear, sensory-rich structure — short, declarative sentences about a specific outdoor place — making it an ideal mentor text for K–2 writers. Students focus on precise, vivid words and letting their illustrations carry equal weight alongside the writing.

1. Study the Mentor Text: “Let’s look at My Forest is Green one more time, but this time like writers. What do you notice about how the author and illustrator created this book?” [Each page uses short, clear sentences. The words appeal to the senses. The pictures do just as much work as the words. The author writes about the forest as if it belongs to the character — ‘my forest’ — it’s personal and proud.]
2. Model on chart paper: Think aloud as you write and draw. “I’m going to choose... my park in the fall. [Write ‘My park is golden.’] What else do I want the reader to know? The leaves crunch under my feet, and squirrels dash between the old oak trees. [Sketch falling leaves, a mid-leap squirrel, a broad oak.] See how my illustration adds details the words don’t say?” Emphasize that students do not need to be professional artists.
3. Brainstorm: “Close your eyes. Think of the outdoor place that matters most to you — a forest, beach, park, playground, garden, field, backyard. What does it look, smell, sound, and feel like? Whisper your outdoor place to a partner and describe it.” Take 3–4 shares. Celebrate specific sensory details.

**Modifications:**

**Emerging:** Provide a picture menu of outdoor settings (forest, park, beach, farm, backyard, playground) to help students choose their place.

**Advanced:** Include figurative language — a simile, metaphor, or personification: ‘My backyard is a jungle. The sunflowers lean down to listen when the wind tells its stories.’

## Writing Work Time: ‘My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_’ Story Pages (15 min)

**Grade-Level Writing Guidance:**

- **Kindergarten:** Write ‘My \_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_.’ using best sound spelling and/or dictation. Focus on the illustration — draw every detail of your outdoor place.
- **1st Grade:** Write the sentence frame and add one detail sentence about what your place looks, sounds, or feels like. Example: ‘My beach is wide. The waves are loud and the sand gets hot by noon.’
- **2nd Grade:** Write 2–3 sentences. Include a sensory detail — something you can see, hear, smell, or touch. Try to use at least one vocabulary word from the Lesson 2 anchor chart.

**Circulate and prompt with these questions:**

- What outdoor place did you choose? Why is it special to you?
- What detail about your place do you really want your reader to picture?
- What can your illustration show that your words don’t say?
- Can you use a vocabulary word from our anchor chart somewhere on your page?

**Modifications:**

**Emerging:** Pre-write the sentence frame on their page. Offer a printed picture menu of outdoor settings. Encourage drawing first, then dictate while an educator or peer scribes.

**Advanced:** Write a second sentence using figurative language or personification: ‘My lake is a mirror that holds the whole sky inside it.’

## Class Book Assembly & Author’s Celebration (if time allows)

1. Complete an Author’s Share. Call on 4–6 students to hold up their page, show their illustration, and read their words aloud.
2. Celebrate specific details: the outdoor place they chose, vocabulary words used, and sensory details in their illustrations.
3. Assemble pages as a class book. Bind with binder rings or a stapler along the left edge.

## STEAM Activity: Nature Walk + Nature Art — Science + Art + Creative Expression (20 min)

### Part 1: Nature Walk & Observe (8 min)

1. Explain the nature walk: "We're going outside, just like the child in our story goes to their forest. Bring your clipboard, pencil, and your most observant eyes and ears. As we walk, notice three things: something you can see that surprises you, something you can hear, and something you can touch safely. Record by drawing or writing — this is your scientist's field journal!"
2. Go outside and model for the students, adding to your scientist field journal.
3. Circulate and prompt:
  - What do you notice? What surprises you?
  - What texture word describes that bark, leaf, or stone?
  - What sounds can you hear? What might live here?

If outdoor access is unavailable: Bring a nature materials tray inside and display images of outdoor settings. Students observe materials up close using magnifying glasses.

### Part 2: Nature Art — Represent What You Saw

1. Connect with the book: Show the students different pages of the book and ask how they might create texture as they see in the illustrations.
2. Model how students can show different textures.
3. Circulate and ask:
  - What did you decide to represent?
  - What vocabulary word describes what you made? [vibrant, texture, habitat...]
  - If the child from our story saw your art, what do you think they would say?

### Part 3: Label & Display

1. At the bottom of their nature art, students write or dictate: 'My \_\_\_ is \_\_\_.' — describing their artwork the way the book describes the forest.

### Example Indoor Nature Tray



### Student Example Textures



### Student Example Full Forest Creation



### Modifications:

**Emerging:** Pre-sort a smaller collection of natural materials on a tray and let students choose from those. Educator or peer scribes the label.

**Advanced:** Write a 2–3 sentence artist's statement describing what they chose to include, why, and what vocabulary words describe it.

### Closing & Celebration (5 min)

1. Celebrate how extraordinary the writing and nature art pieces are. Invite students to do a quick gallery walk and tell a friend: 'My favorite detail in your piece is \_\_\_.'
2. Highlight the three lessons together: "You listened to a child describe their forest, built a habitat, explored nature with your fingertips, walked outside, created nature art, and wrote your own pages about a place that matters to you."

## Sound (Elkonin) Box Mats

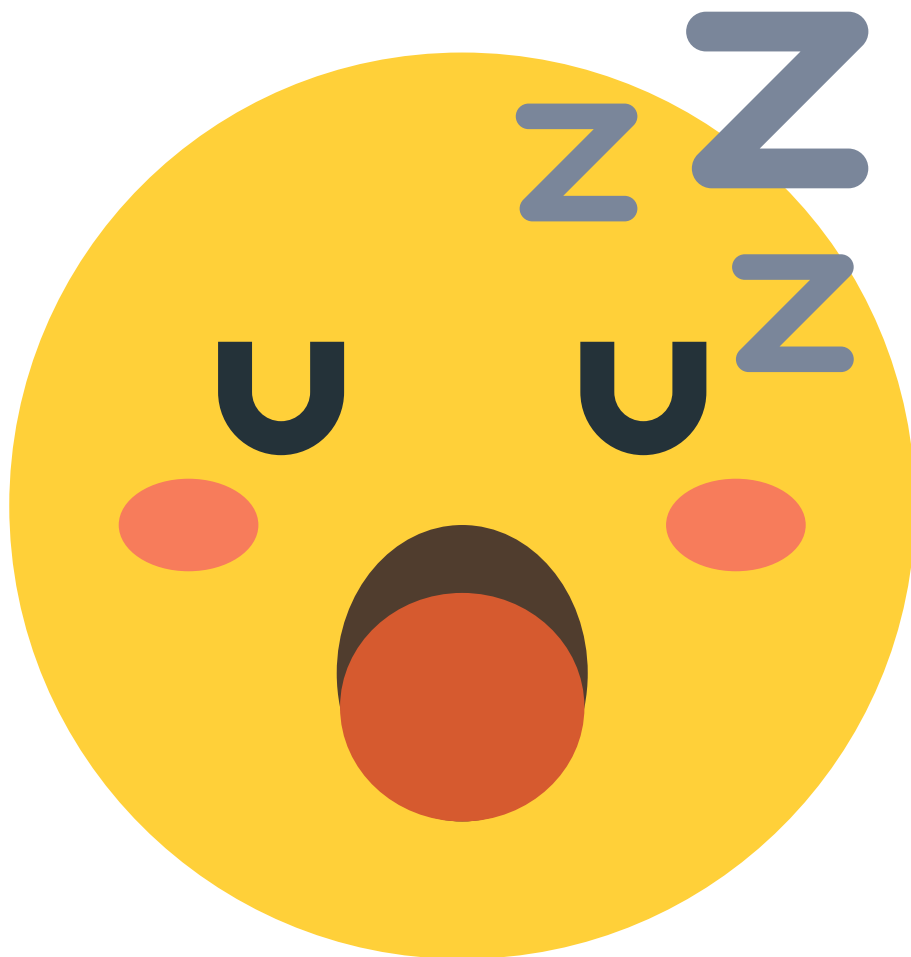
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Happy



Sleepy



Angry



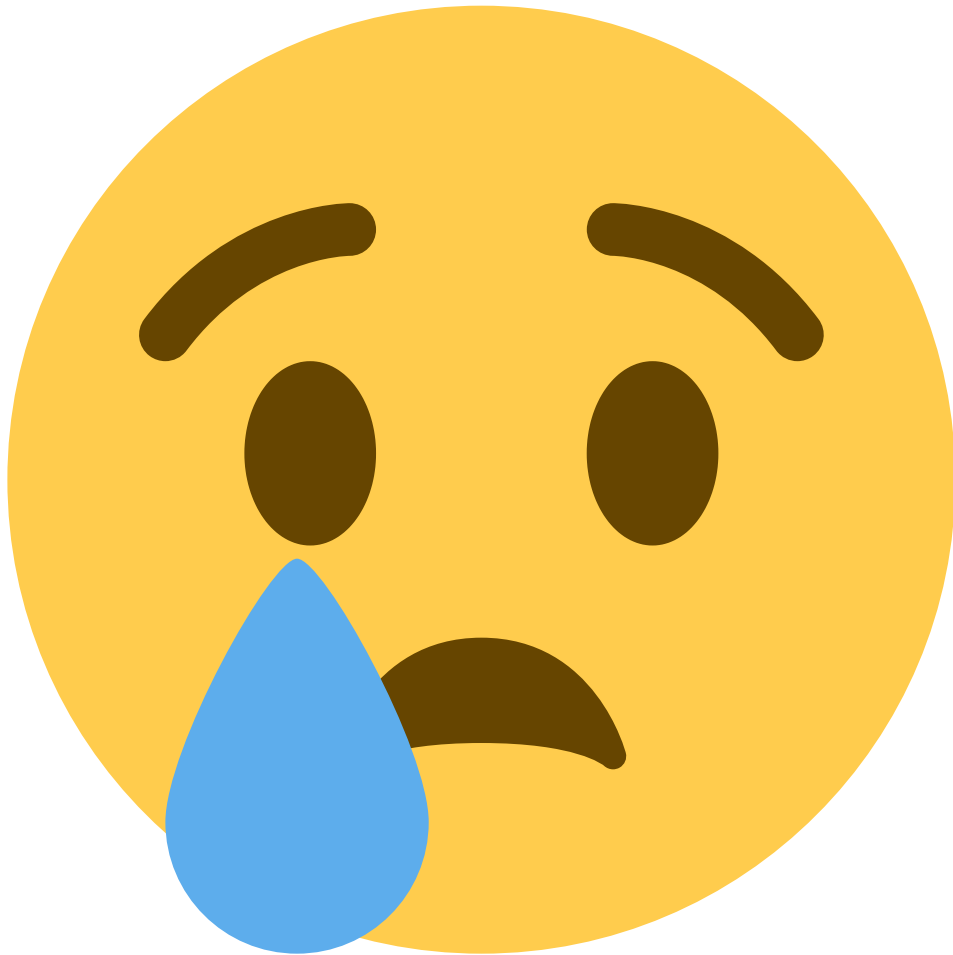
Sick



Nervous



Sad



Scared



Silly



Frustrated



Excited



Calm



Afraid



Confused



Caring



**Day of the Week:**



**Date**

**What will I do today?**

Cut and paste at least 4 pictures of what you will do today. Glue them in the order that you will complete them.

1

2

3

4

**How am I feeling?**

Cut and paste the feeling faces you are feeling right now.

**How am I feeling?**

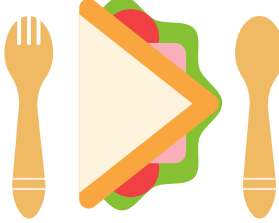




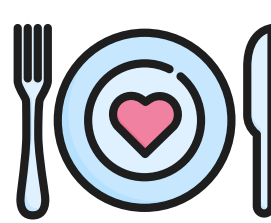
Brush Teeth



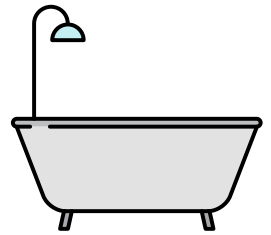
Eat Breakfast



Eat Lunch



Eat Dinner



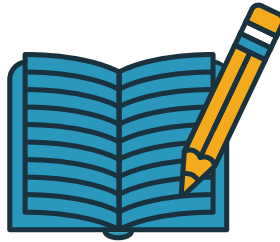
Shower or Bath



Read



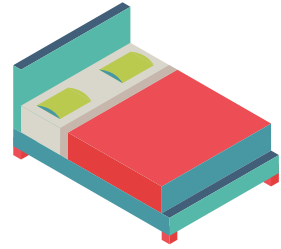
School



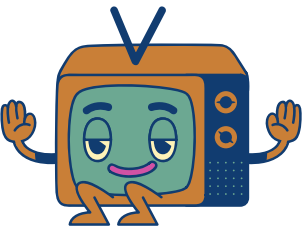
Homework



Exercise



Get ready for bed



Watch TV



Do Your Chores



Wake Up



Play with friends  
or family



Relax



Happy



Sleepy



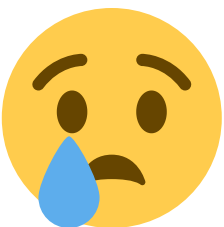
Angry



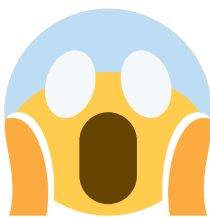
Sick



Nervous



Sad



Scared



Silly



Frustrated

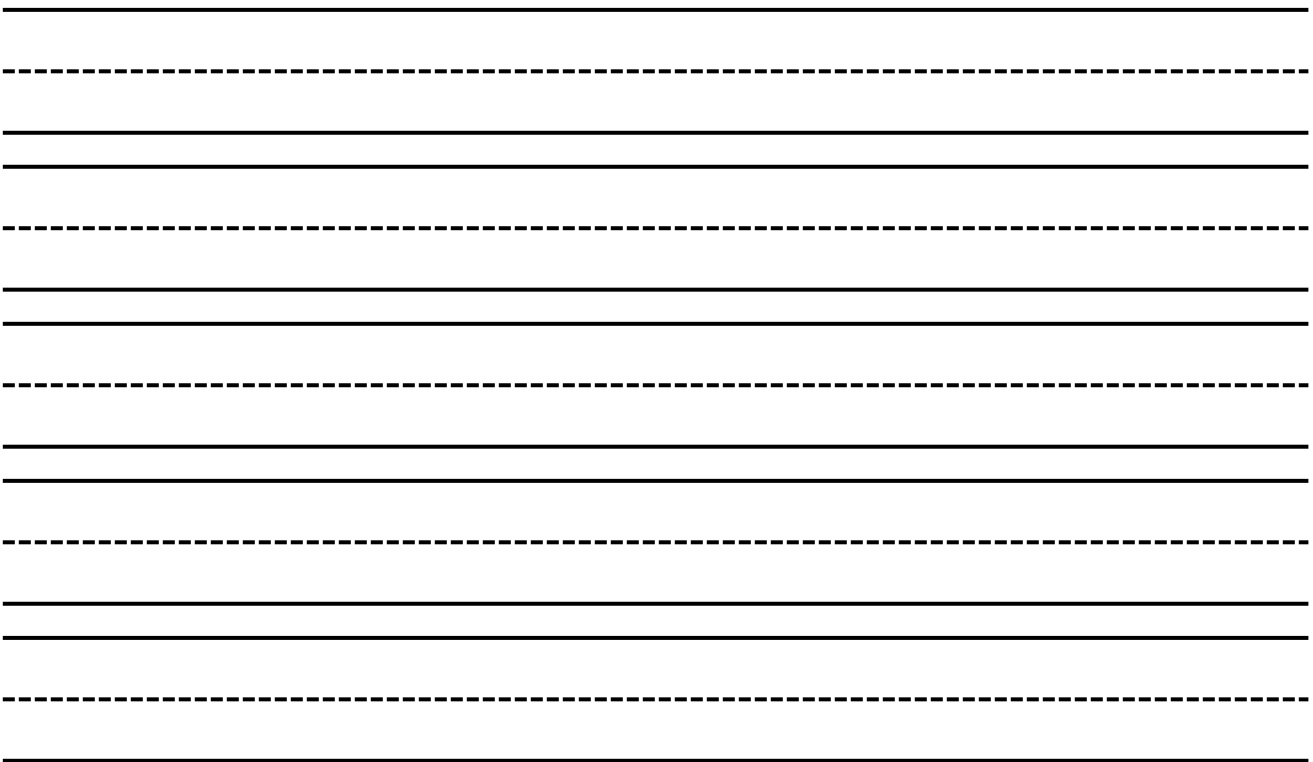
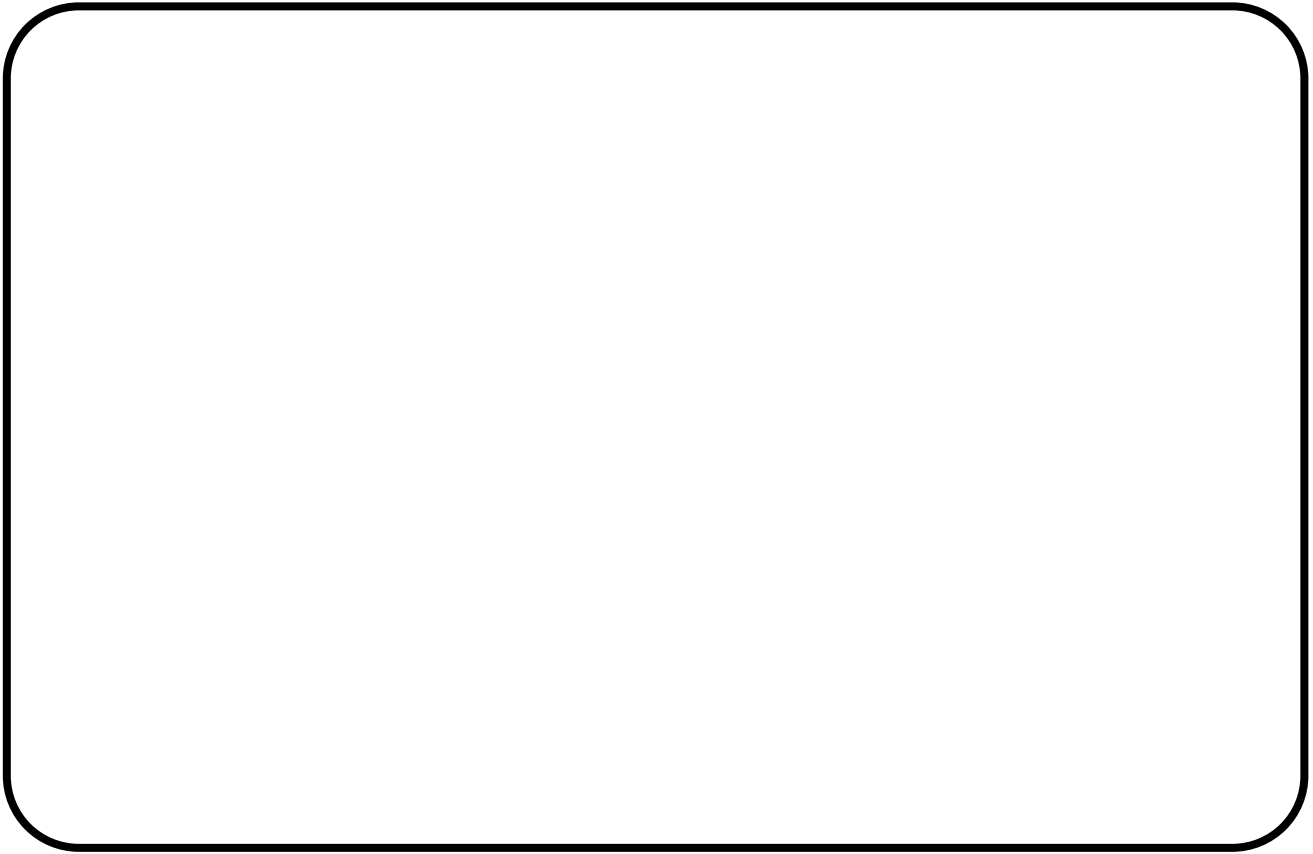


Excited

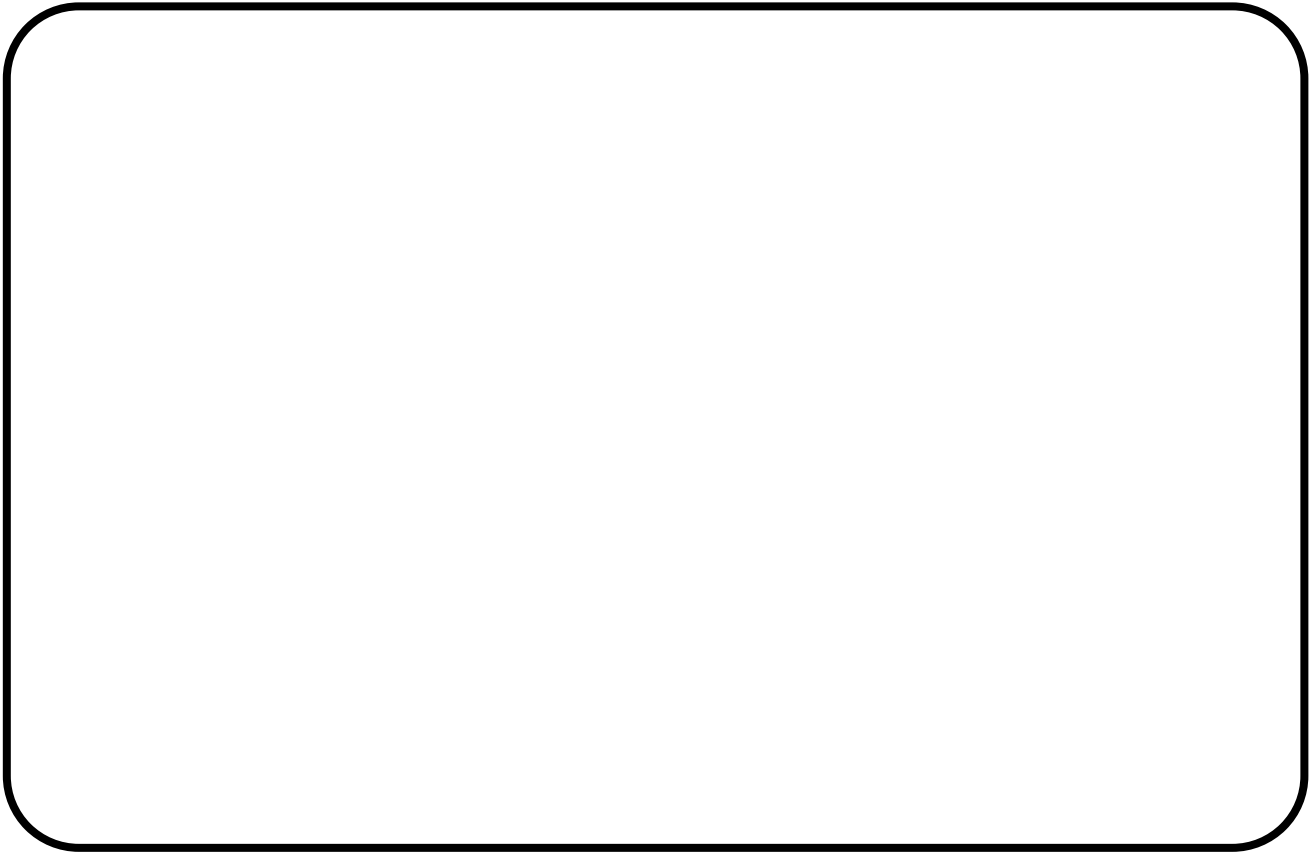
Cut out each of the schedule squares and the feelings and emotions. Use these to complete your daily reflection. Use the blank boxes to create your own!



**MY** \_\_\_\_\_ **IS** \_\_\_\_\_

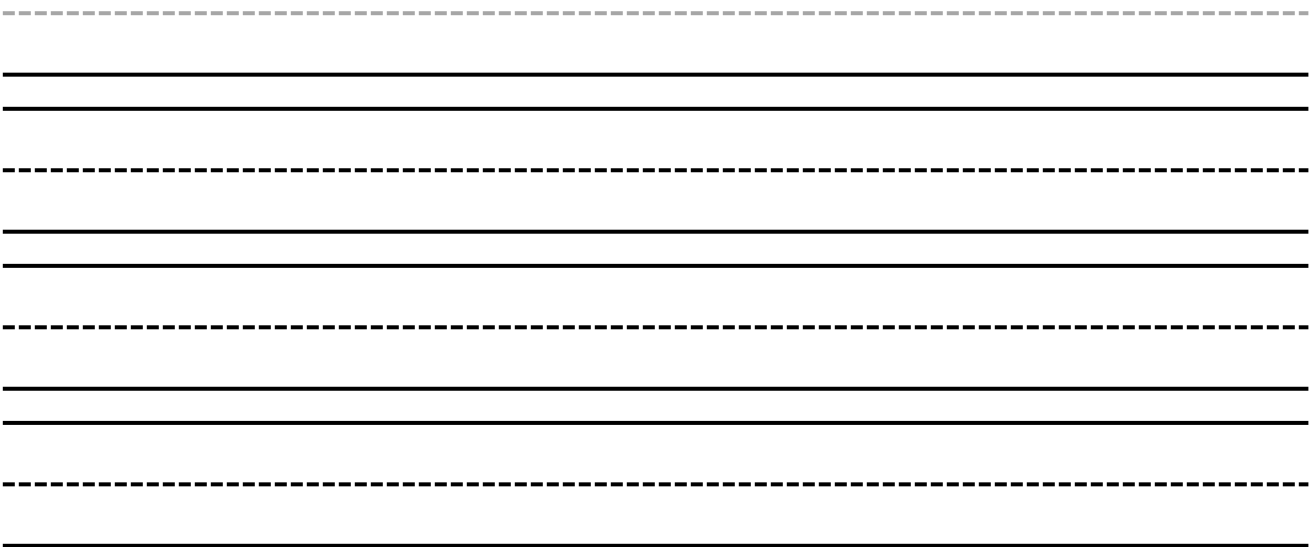


**MY** \_\_\_\_\_ **IS** \_\_\_\_\_



My

is





HABITAT



OBSERVE



TEXTURE



VIBRANT



DORMANT

# Mystery Bags

Complete the table as you guess the mystery items

[illegible]



**forest**

for · est



**mountain**

moun · tain



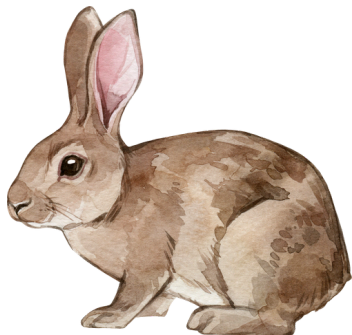
**waterfall**

wa · ter · fall



**leaf**

leaf



**animal**

an · i · mal

Syllable cards for My Forest is Green