



## Nature Deficit Disorder

**Age:** Grades 4-8

### **Lesson Plan Three:** The Child in Nature

**Objective:** To understand the concept of nature deficit disorder and the importance of being connected to nature. To build an understanding that we all have connections to nature and that nature is everywhere.

**Background:** Nature deficit disorder refers to the disconnect between people and nature. Author Richard Louv describes it as an “atrophied awareness” of the relationship between us and the environment. Back in 2013 I did a TEDx talk on this subject and a teacher in Haiti viewed the talk with her students. This lesson is an adaptation of what she asked her class to do with the following statements I made in that talk:

*Nature has given me things to protect, inspiration to be creative; its given me peace and quiet and a great way to stay healthy. It' given me things to do and questions to ask. Nature is a gift. It's something to be unwrapped and cherished and it makes us feel like we want to give back to it. I love to share the gift of nature with others because it usually has the same effect on them. I feel like people who haven't experienced nature have been robbed of a gift and kids have been robbed of part of their childhood. Nature has something to offer everyone and it's never too late to get outdoors.*

**Activity:** Write a letter explaining why you agree or disagree with the statement that “people who haven’t experienced nature have been robbed of a gift, kids have been robbed of part of their childhood.”

Do you think that if you aren’t playing outside you are missing out? Make sure to back up your opinions with facts from your own life or the lives of your friends.

**Read some of the letters from the students in Haiti that follow this lesson plan.**



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Singers these days sing only about getting all the most advanced technology and how wealthy they are. The others that don't sing about bad relationships. They don't teach kids about the environment let alone have them go outside and play. Sooner or later technology will advance to floating chairs so that the later people of the universe will not even know the definition of walking. Every living tree will soon die out if we don't care for nature, and pretty soon so will we.

This sounds wierd, but I actually don't like being called "human" anymore because the evolution of mankind has changed so much. That we'd rather lock ourselves indoors with technology than go outside where nature awaits us. Where the animals of the wild die because of our carelessness. It's time to put down that remote control and do something. We can't sit down on our computers forever. We need to change. , Hiba

Letter A



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Kids don't understand the treasures that nature offers us because their eyes are glued to the screens of Ipads, Ipods, tablets, etc. It's ridiculous how people can't come to appreciate Mother Earth. Instead of going outside to take a nature walk in their yard, kids prefer to watch Cartoon Network or play Infinity Blade II while eating chips on the couch. Imagine all the advantages you can get just by going site-seeing in a forest. Not only are you preventing obesity, but you're exercising and connecting to nature. The trees, the plants, the waterfalls, all natural creations can unlock a personality of yours that you never thought you had. Nature is one of a kind and there's nothing you can do to change that.

Letter B



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Instead of staying inside playing Playstation 3 or watching television all day, go outside, go to the beach, or hiking have some fun, admire nature, explore the world and enjoy life today because "you only live once". Miranda I need to tell some thing, where I live "Haiti" its not like other countries that you can walk or ride your bike on the street. In Haiti there is no protection, you can get kidnapped... that's why in my country we have to be careful. But we can still go outside and have some fun. To be honest with you Miranda at first I used to stay inside listening to music and watching television, but when I went online and saw your video about experiencing nature my thoughts have changed. I realized that instead of listening to music and watching TV I could go outside, sing and watch nature. Miranda, I agree with you once again and I'm glad that I watched your video because it made a huge difference in my life. If some people also watched that video it could made a difference in their life too. Miranda this is from you and me "To all people go, outside explore nature instead of staying inside."

Letter C

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