

SAVE TIMBER WOODS!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Narrator • Lucas • Laura
Gina • Hector

Scene I

Setting: The kitchen in Gina's home on the edge of the woods

Narrator: Laura, Gina, Hector, and Lucas are researching a current event for school. Gina is searching on a laptop. The others are looking through newspapers.

Lucas: What if we do our report on gas prices?

Laura: Boring!

(Suddenly, Gina sees a deer outside in the yard. She jumps up from her chair and dashes to the kitchen door, shouting.)

Gina: Get out of there! Scram!

(Grabbing a broom, Gina charges out the door, waving the broom and yelling as the deer runs away.)

Laura: Why did you yell at that deer, Gina? It was so cute.

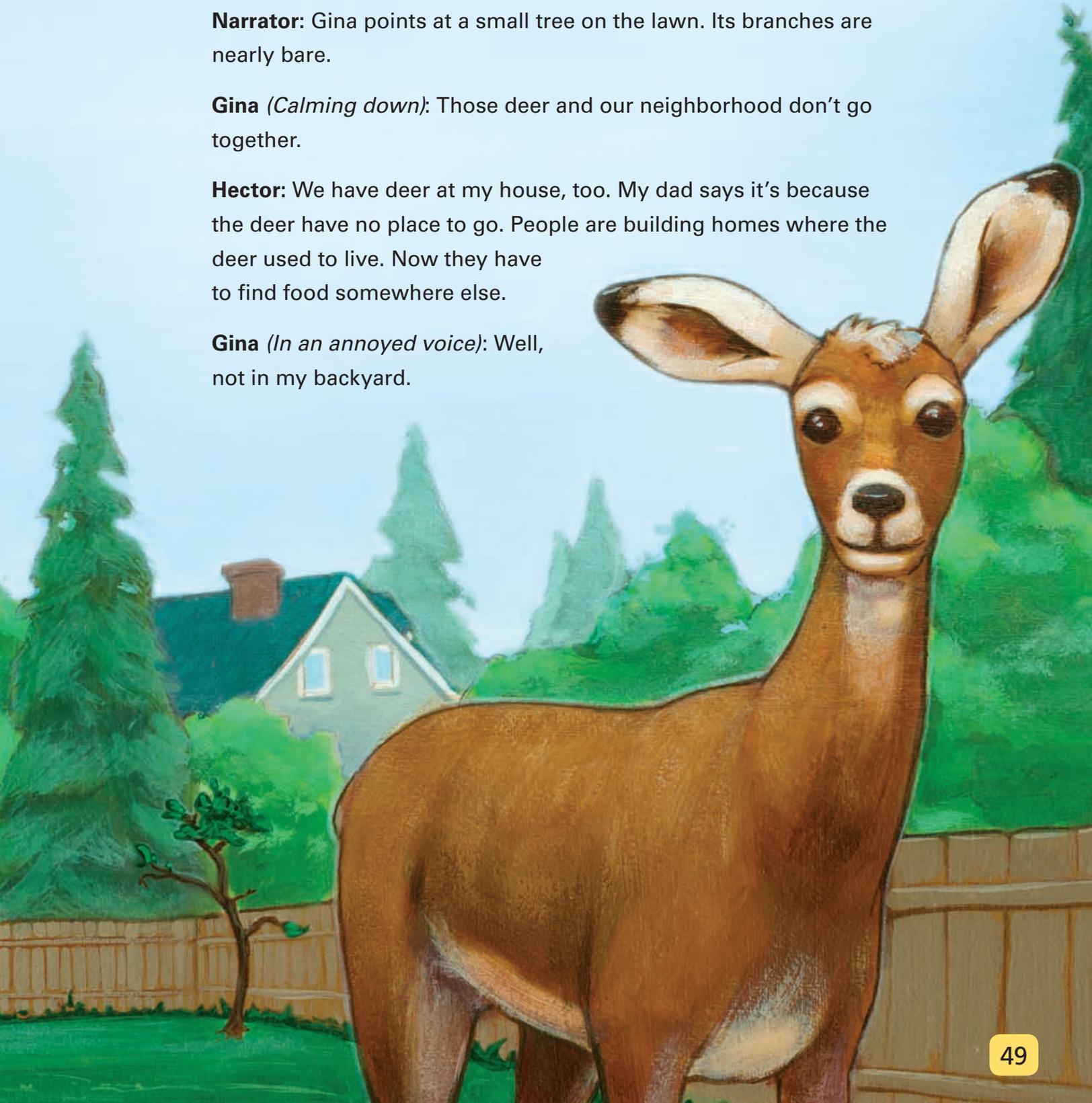
Gina (Outraged): Cute? Maybe, if you only see them once in a while; but they've started to show up in our yard every day. They are eating the tree we planted when my little sister was born!

Narrator: Gina points at a small tree on the lawn. Its branches are nearly bare.

Gina (Calming down): Those deer and our neighborhood don't go together.

Hector: We have deer at my house, too. My dad says it's because the deer have no place to go. People are building homes where the deer used to live. Now they have to find food somewhere else.

Gina (In an annoyed voice): Well, not in my backyard.



Lucas: The poor deer lost their homes, Gina.

Gina: Well, my poor family is losing our favorite tree.

Hector (*Holding up the newspaper he's been looking through, excitedly*): Hey! Listen to this! Here's an article that says the deer problem is going to get worse. Land developers plan to cut down Timber Woods, by the school. Our town government has been renting the woods from a private owner. Now the owner plans to sell it to a developer who plans to build one hundred townhouses.

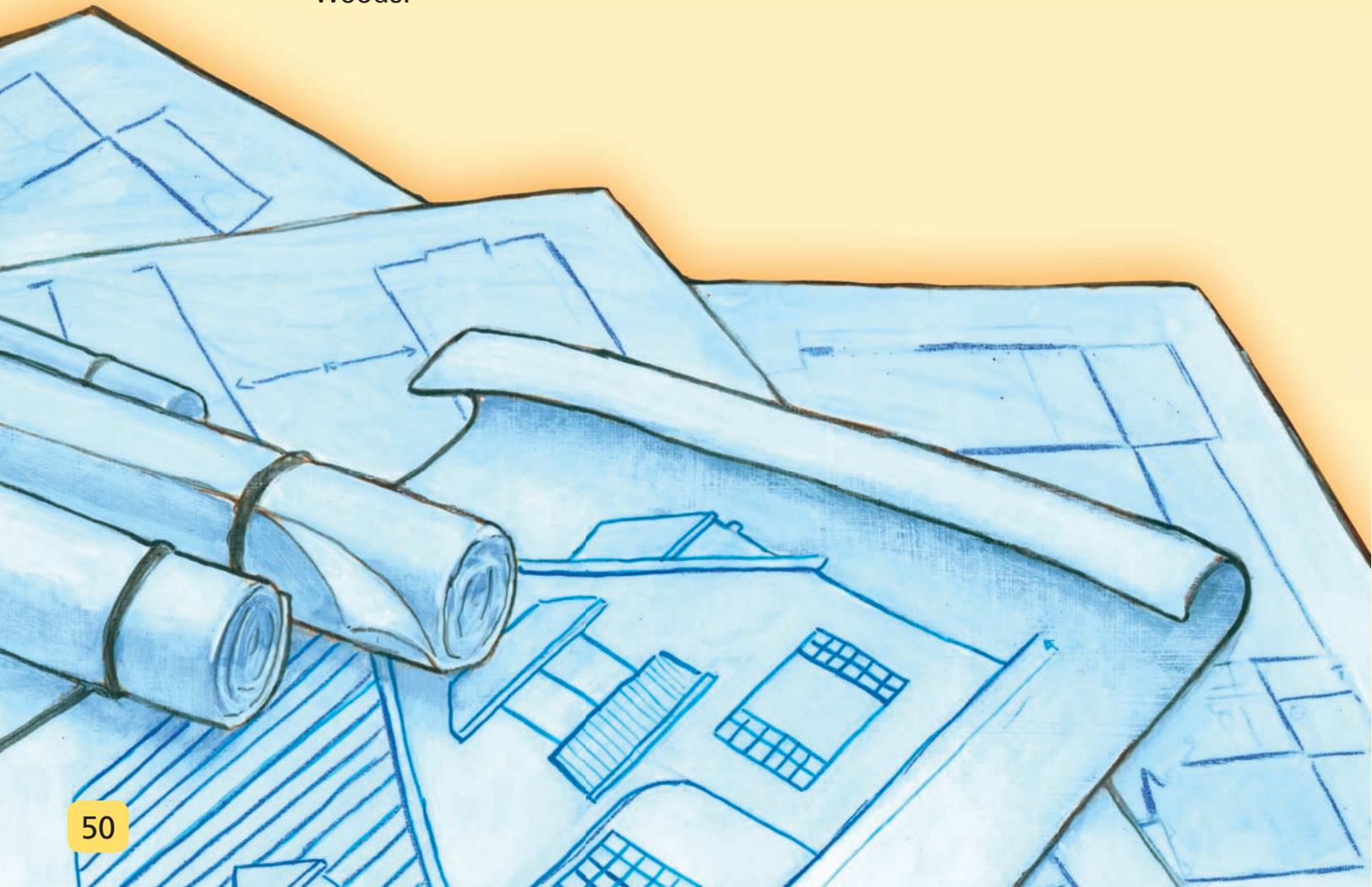
Laura: Timber Woods? That's where we do fieldwork for science class. That's where we camp and have picnics.

Lucas: What about the animals who live there? More animals will get kicked out of their homes.

Gina: More yards will be ruined by deer!

Hector: Well, at least we found a current event to report on.

Laura: I wish we could stop them from cutting down Timber Woods.





Hector: Maybe it's not too late. The paper says that people can talk about the development plan at next week's town council meeting. Let's ask our parents if we can go. Right now, let's find more information to put into our current events report.

Gina: Let's get all the facts. That way we'll have a good report for class and good ideas for the council meeting.

Lucas: Maybe our friends will come to the meeting.

Narrator: The group presents its current events report and the whole class gets excited. The class decides to ask the town's leaders to buy Timber Woods and preserve the land for both animals and people.

Scene II

Setting: The next day, in the dining room of Gina's home

Narrator: The four friends are making signs for the meeting. Gina and Lucas are working on a large sign.

Laura: What is your sign going to say?

Gina and Lucas: "Save Timber Woods."

Lucas: "Save the animals from us . . ."

Gina: ". . . and save our yards from the animals!"

Hector: It's about the woods, too. Remember that book we read about the water cycle? It said that natural areas, such as woods, help absorb water and prevent flooding when heavy rains fall or snow melts. But how can I put that on a sign?



Laura: How about: “Woods and water—important partners. Ask me why.”

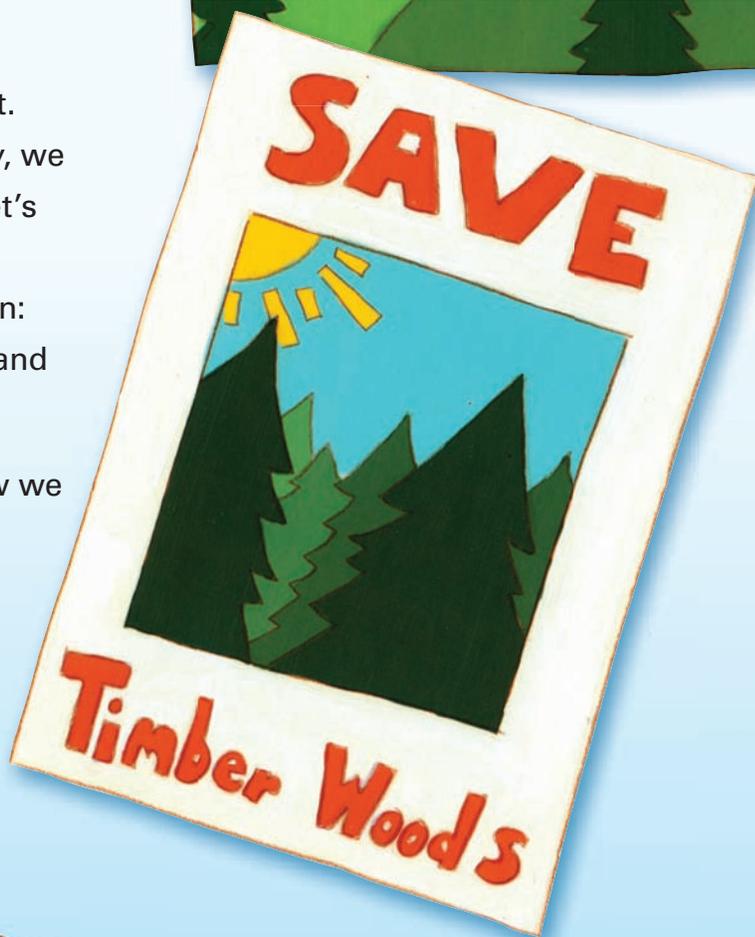
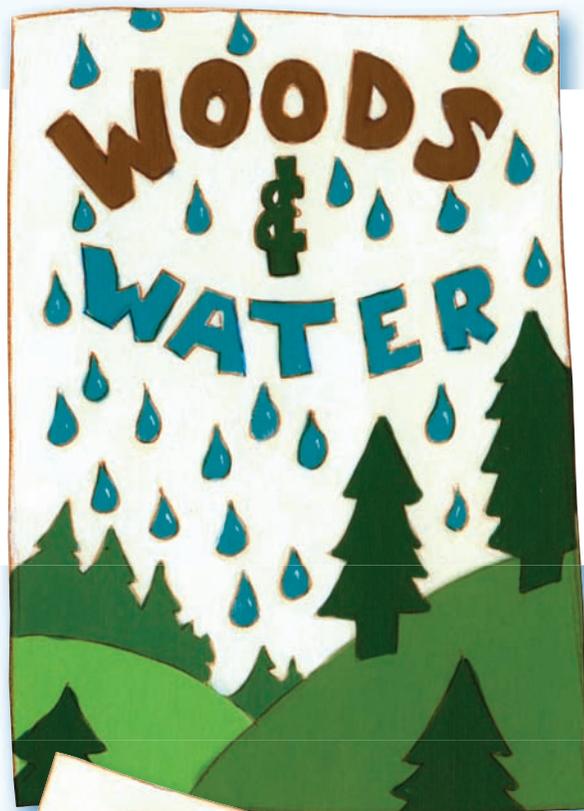
Hector: Good idea! Then I can talk about it when I give our statement.

Gina: It’s cool that the town council said you could present a statement from us, Hector. But how will the town ever get enough money to buy the woods? I also heard my mom talking about how much money the city will get from new taxpayers who move into the new houses.

Lucas: But the problems caused by cutting the woods will cost money. We have to help them see that.

Hector (*Pointing at Lucas*): You’re right. Instead of ignoring the issue of money, we should show that we understand it. Let’s do some more research so we know the facts. And how about this for a sign: “Saving Timber Woods saves dollars and makes sense.”

Laura: At least the town will know how we feel.





Scene III

Setting: A meeting room with rows of folding chairs, inside the town hall

Hector: I'm nervous.

Laura: You're going to be great, Hector. Look, I think that's the developer!

Hector: Maybe he could tear down those old Smithfield warehouses and build homes there. Nobody has used those buildings for a long time.

Lucas: Good idea. *(Turning around)* I think the meeting's about to start.

Narrator: The town council members soon introduce the main topic: the sale of Timber Woods. People take turns talking about the plan to build townhouses. Finally, it's Hector's turn to speak. The audience listens closely as he explains why the woods are so important, and what the students want the council to do.

Hector (*In a firm voice*): So, we ask the adults in town to join us in finding a way to turn Timber Woods into protected parkland.
(*He sits down as many people applaud.*)

Narrator: After more debate, the council decides to delay the sale of Timber Woods for three months. During that time, the town will try to raise enough money to buy the woods. After the meeting, the students get together.

Gina (*In an excited voice*): They listened to us after all.

Laura: Now we have to help find ways to raise money.

Lucas: How about a bake sale?

Hector: That's a good idea, but we'll need to do more than that.

Laura: Let's meet tomorrow.

Gina: Let's involve the whole class. Everyone will benefit if we can save Timber Woods, so we should all work together.

Reading the Play

With a partner, describe the structural features of the play—the scenes, dialogue, and stage directions—and discuss how they helped you follow the events.



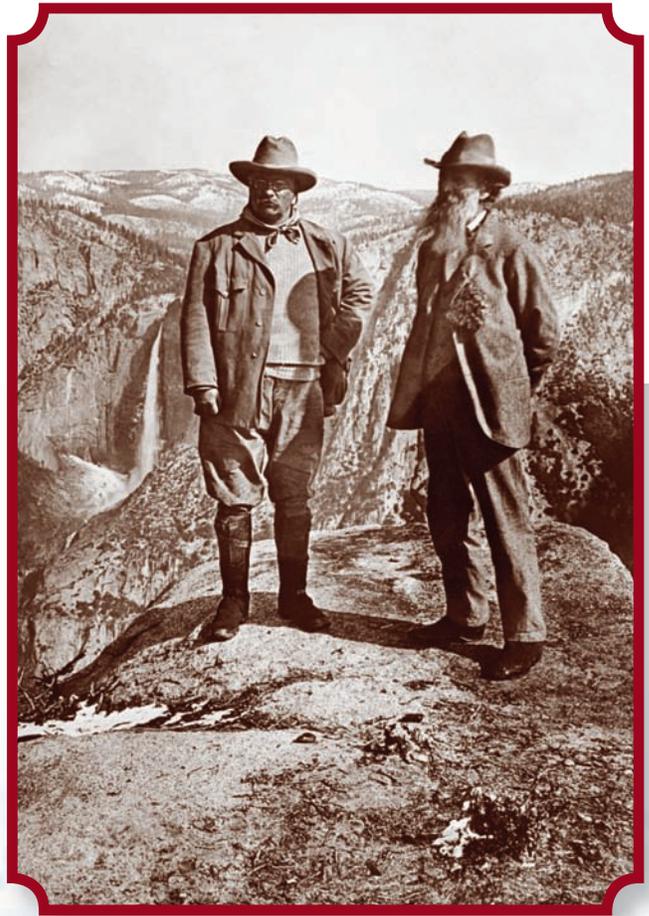
FOLLOWING MUIR:

A Persuasive Essay

John Muir was a protector of nature. He set an example that each of us can follow to protect the natural areas around us.

The first way we can follow Muir's example is to discover our local natural areas. Muir was a great walker. He once walked one thousand miles from Indiana to Florida. He also took a 250-mile walk from San Francisco, California, to the Yosemite (yoh SEH mih tee) Valley, in the heart of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Another way to follow Muir is to learn about nature. Muir loved to explore the outdoors. He learned everything he could about rocks, plants, and animals. From his exploring, he came to realize that the wilderness, places where people do not live or build, is an important gift. Muir decided that his life's goal was to protect this gift.



Muir's greatest example for us is his work to protect nature. He shared its beauty by writing books. He climbed Yosemite's towering peaks and described them as "clothed in light." In winter, he delighted in its "pearl-gray belt of snow." However, he also saw sheep eating Yosemite's plants and people chopping down its trees for wood. Muir gave talks and wrote books about these dangers. President Theodore Roosevelt was so impressed after hearing Muir that he visited Yosemite. In 1890, Roosevelt signed a bill making Yosemite a national park. This meant that the U.S. government would take care of it.

We can find our own pieces of nature to explore, learn about, and protect. We can write to our local newspapers about nature's beauty and tell people how to help care for it. We can all follow in John Muir's footsteps.



Analyzing the Essay

On a sheet of paper, list details the author used that you think helped persuade the reader. Explain to a partner why you think so.

John Muir Timeline

- 1838 ● Born in Scotland
- 1849 ● Family moves to the United States
- 1867 ● Walks from Indiana to Florida
- 1868 ● Walks from San Francisco to Yosemite Valley
- 1890 ● Helps Yosemite become a national park
- 1892 ● Forms the Sierra Club
- 1903 ● Camps with President Theodore Roosevelt in Yosemite
- 1912 ● Travels to South America and Africa
- 1914 ● Dies of pneumonia on December 24

The Comb of Trees

A SECRET SIGN ALONG THE WAY

By Claudia Lewis

Riding to Rock Creek
for our picnics
we swing around
a certain curve
and then I see it—

Standing high
on a mountain ridge
a little row
of firs, with trunks
tall and bare,
lined up one by one—
a comb
against the sky.

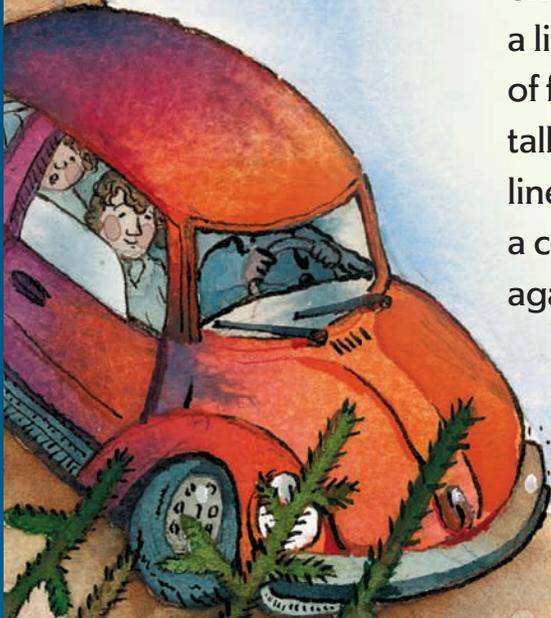
As we draw near
each time
I wonder—
it...?
Is it...?

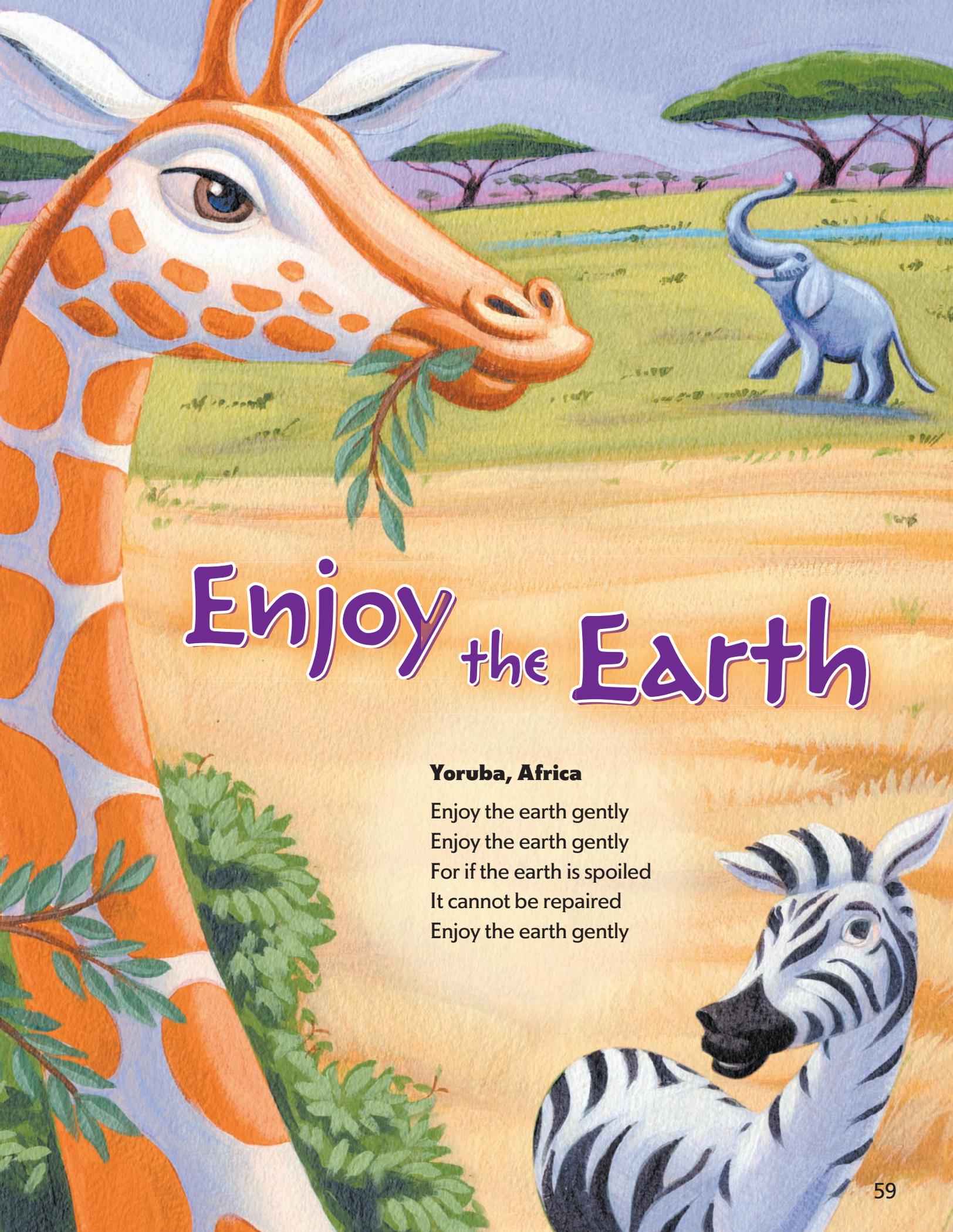
Then we turn—

Yes! It's there!

No storm
has wrecked my comb,
no lumberjack
has chopped it down—

All's well
still
(a while?)
up there.





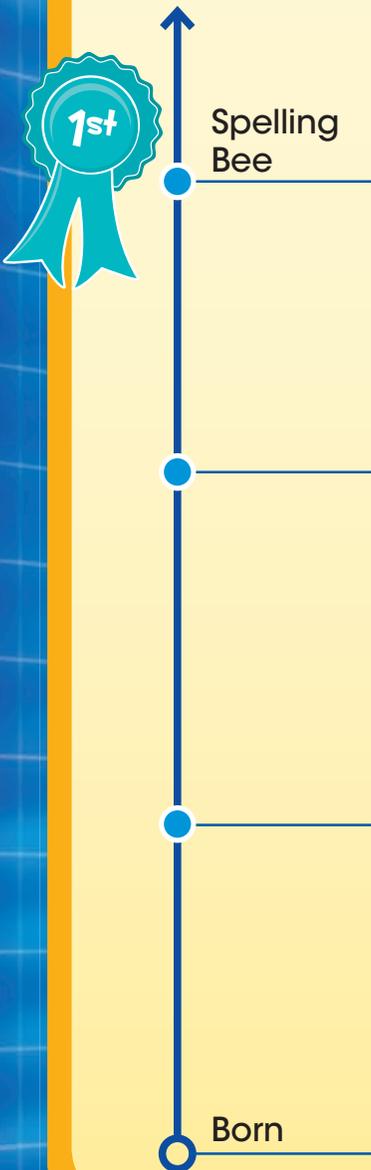
Enjoy the Earth

Yoruba, Africa

Enjoy the earth gently
Enjoy the earth gently
For if the earth is spoiled
It cannot be repaired
Enjoy the earth gently

The Impact of Life's Events

Your timeline should end with an arrow to show that the line will continue.



A timeline of a person's life often includes events that impact or shape the person. Look back at the essay about John Muir. The timeline shows important events that shaped who he was. It also shows the dates for when he was born and when he died.

Create a timeline about your life. Include the year of your birth and four important events in your life.

Write About It Choose one event from your timeline. Write a paragraph telling about the event and why it was important.

Your timeline begins with a point and gives the date you were born.





Say It
with a
Sign

Tear down
warehouses—
NOT
WOODS!

Preserve
our
Picnic
Place!

People use signs to show their feelings in a public place, as the students do in “Save Timber Woods!” The students want the town council to know how they feel about the proposed sale of Timber Woods to a developer. So they make signs that the people going to the meeting will see.

Make a sign that the students in the story could use to save Timber Woods. Or make a sign about a local habitat you want to save. Try to make your message clear in as few words as possible.

Try to See

In "Save Timber Woods!" the friends persuade a town to protect a threatened woodland habitat.

The photos on these pages show four common woodland animals. Choose one, or a different animal whose habitat might be in danger. Write a persuasive essay explaining why it is important to protect the animal's home. Use "Following Muir: A Persuasive Essay" as a model for writing your essay.

Be sure to include the following:

- an introductory paragraph that states the point you will be making
- at least three reasons or examples that support that point
- one paragraph for each reason or example
- a concluding paragraph that restates the point you have made





It My Way!

