ACTIVITY 3 | TEACHER GUIDE

One Photograph, Three Stories

One wildlife image. Three kinds of writing. Three different reasons to speak to a reader.

Same moment. Different message.

Turn a photograph into a field note, a fictional scene, and a conservation caption.

FOR THE TEACHER / FACILITATOR

Students begin with what the image shows, then write about that same scene for three purposes: to document an observation, to tell a story, and to encourage informed care for wildlife.

LEARNING GOALS

- Recognize how purpose and audience change writing.
- Practice factual, imaginative, and persuasive language.
- Keep researched claims distinct from invented details.

MATERIALS & SETUP

- One wildlife photo, projected or printed
- Student sheets 1-4; pencils
- Optional species fact sheet or research access
- 40-50 minutes; individuals or teams of three

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

1. Study the image. Record only visible details on Student Sheet 1.
2. Create a short FIELD NOTE from known observations; label unknown information.
3. Write a FICTIONAL SCENE from the animal's perspective. Imagination is welcome; biology still matters.
4. Write a CONSERVATION CAPTION that names one real species or habitat issue. Verify factual claims.
5. Compare the three pieces. Mark statements that require evidence and those that are imaginative.
6. Discuss which version documents, connects, or encourages action.

CLASSROOM NOTE A photograph alone cannot establish a conservation problem or an animal's private thoughts. Facts must come from the image or an identified source.

STUDENT SHEET 1 | EVIDENCE & FIELD NOTE

First, the Facts

Before writing three stories, make a record of what the camera actually shows.

NAME _____ DATE _____

Photo subject / species, if known: _____

I CAN OBSERVE

Visible animals, actions, setting, objects, and other clues.

I CANNOT TELL YET

Names, motives, exact dates, and events outside the frame.

1. FIELD NOTE | WRITE TO DOCUMENT

Date/time (only if known): _____ Location (if known): _____

Use objective language. If a fact is uncertain, say “possibly,” “unknown,” or “not identified.”

FIELD NOTE CHECK Did I describe what happened without inventing a thought or feeling?

STUDENT SHEET 2 | FICTION

Now, Tell a Story

Write the second version as fiction. Let the animal have a point of view while keeping its physical behavior plausible.

NAME _____ DATE _____

2. FICTIONAL SCENE | WRITE TO ENGAGE

Write a short paragraph from the animal's perspective. It may have imagined thoughts or feelings.

The animal / narrator: _____

One real detail from the photograph that I will include:

One invented detail I will use (and clearly treat as fiction):

MY FICTIONAL SCENE

STORY CHECK Does the animal do anything impossible for its species? If so, is this deliberately fantasy?

STUDENT SHEET 3 | CONSERVATION

Words That May Help

Write an accurate public message about a real species or habitat issue.

NAME _____ DATE _____

3. CONSERVATION CAPTION | WRITE TO INFORM & INSPIRE

Choose a real issue connected to this species or habitat. Verify facts before sharing a claim.

My audience: [ ] School [ ] Families [ ] Community [ ] Other _____

One real issue affecting this animal or habitat:

Evidence or reliable source for this issue:

One practical action someone could take:

MY CONSERVATION CAPTION | 2-3 SENTENCES

ACCURACY CHECK Does my message avoid claiming the photo proves a threat or behavior it does not show?

STUDENT SHEET 4 | COMPARE & SHARE

Three Ways of Seeing

Read your three pieces side by side. Notice how the purpose changes, even when the photograph stays the same.

NAME _____ DATE _____

FIELD NOTE

Best at preserving an accurate record of an observation.

FICTION

Best at helping a reader imagine a life or a moment.

CONSERVATION

Best at encouraging informed concern or a practical response.

MARK THE DIFFERENCE

In each piece, circle any claim that needs evidence. Underline any detail that is clearly invented. Then answer:

Which version would be most useful to a wildlife researcher? Why?

Which version might make someone care or act? Why?

THE BIG IDEA Accuracy and imagination both matter. The writer's job is to help the reader know which is which.