

ESTER DOBIÁŠOVÁ AND NASTKA LIŠOVÁ

NATURE FIRST!

Lives of Amazing Environmentalists
and Animal Rights Activists for Kids

Fascinating
Life Stories of
13 Personalities
from Around
the World

NATURE NEEDS
HEROES

STAND FOR
NATURE

save oceans

HOME

NATURE FIRST!

ESTER DOBIÁŠOVÁ AND NASTKA LIŠOVÁ

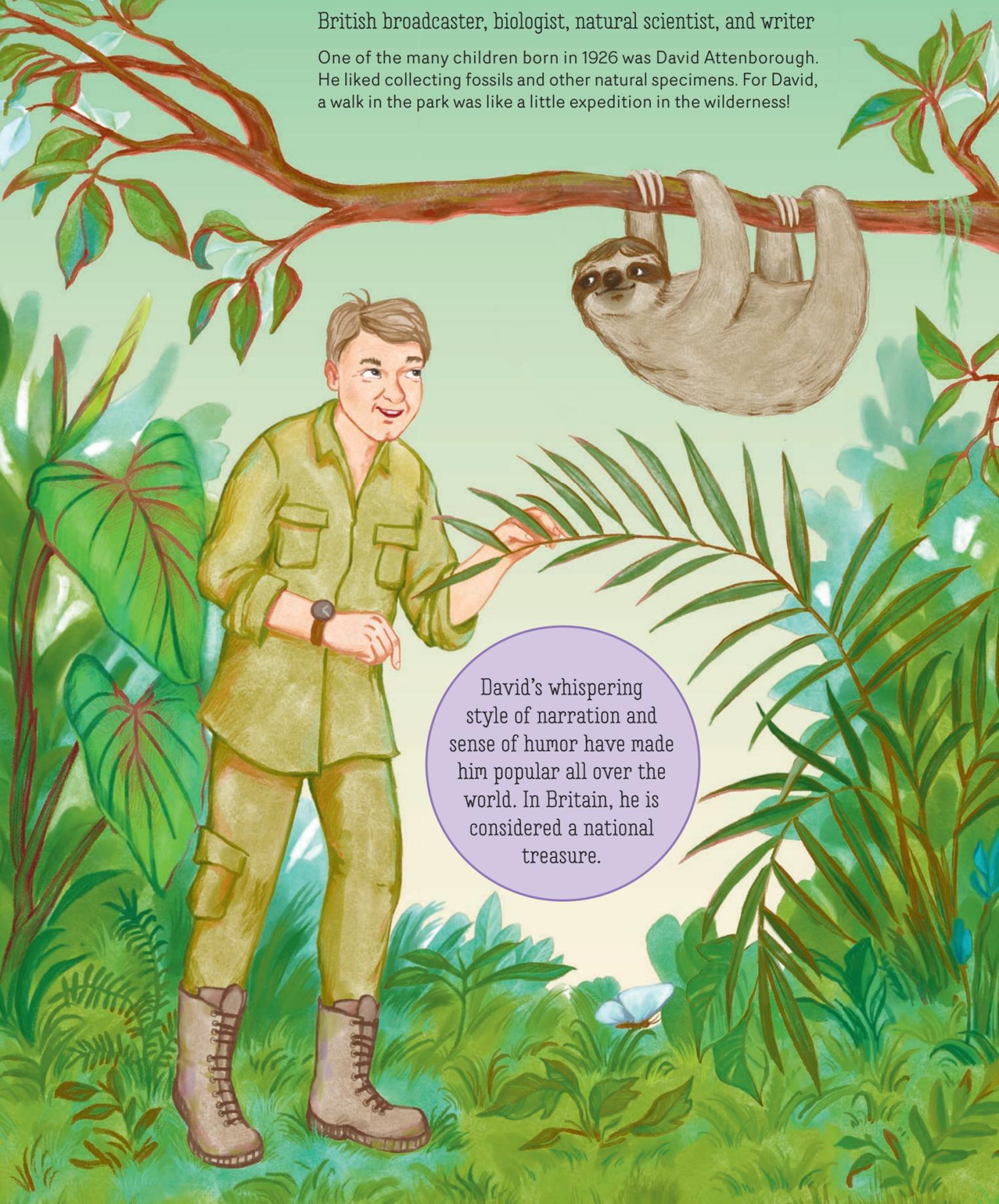


b. 1926

David Attenborough

British broadcaster, biologist, natural scientist, and writer

One of the many children born in 1926 was David Attenborough. He liked collecting fossils and other natural specimens. For David, a walk in the park was like a little expedition in the wilderness!



David's whispering style of narration and sense of humor have made him popular all over the world. In Britain, he is considered a national treasure.

Behind the camera

David dreamed of seeing the world and sharing his experiences of it. After grammar school, he went to the University of Cambridge, where he studied Natural Sciences. Now that he was a scientist, his adventures could begin! He joined Britain's BBC television service and began to make programs about animals. His work brought together two of his loves: nature and filmmaking. His expeditions have been full of fun and adventure, as well as many surprises!



David Attenborough and an armadillo entertaining Britain's TV-viewing public.



Around the world

David was one of the first broadcasters to show animals in their natural habitat. He and his colleagues visited the rainforests of South America, the savannas of Africa, and desert islands in Indonesia, relocating many of the animals they saw to London Zoo. David's programs were packed with footage of things never seen before. He used special cameras and microphones to capture every natural detail. He has become one of our best-known and most widely respected guides to nature.



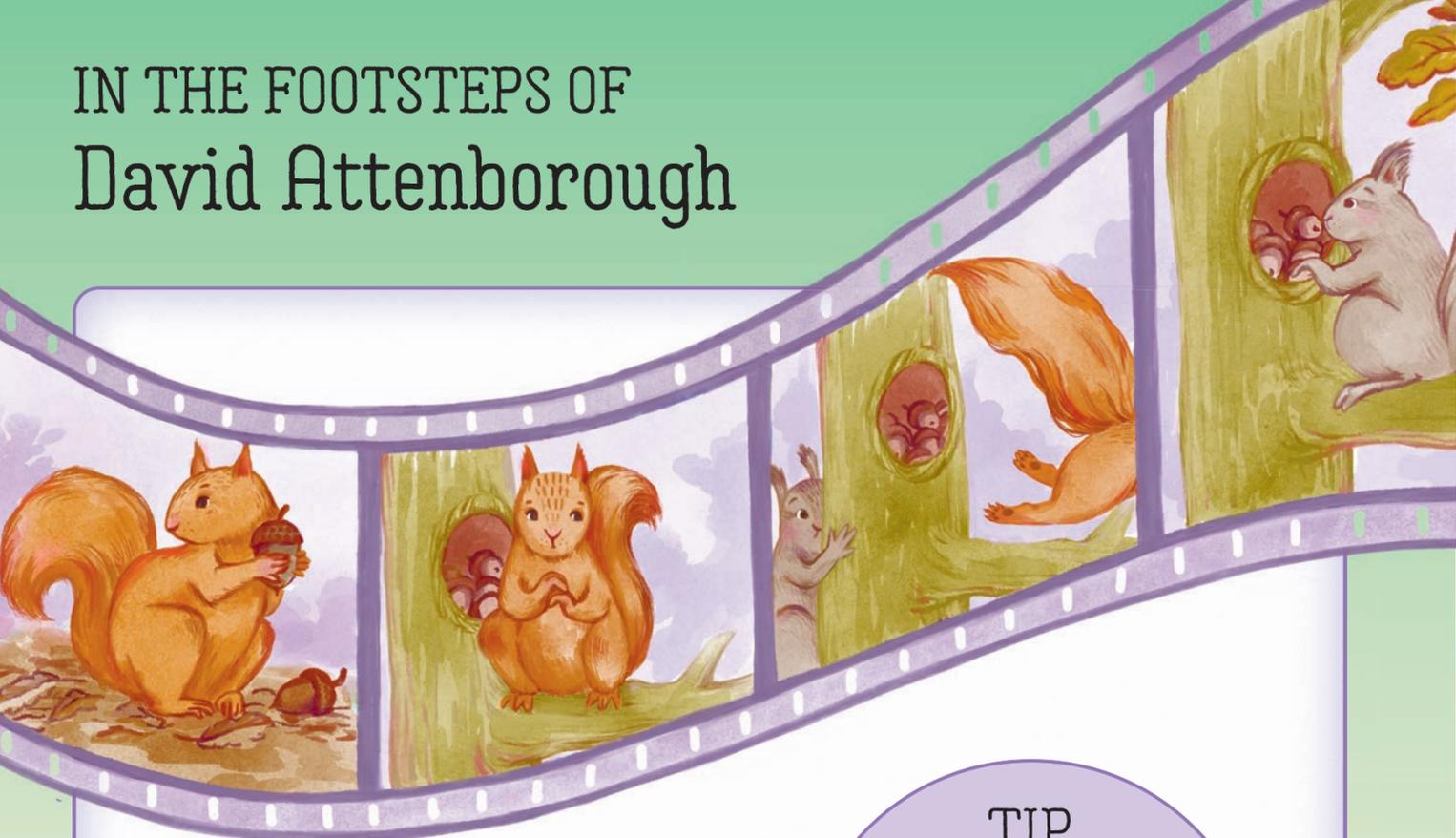
From left: Richard (b. 1923), John (b. 1928), David (b. 1926). David was the middle son of three. His parents fostered a little Jewish girl during World War II.

Not just about fun

David came to realize that he should also tell the public about threats to the planet. His documentaries about coral reefs, melting glaciers, and rainforests draw attention to climate change, deforestation, and plastic pollution, helping people understand the importance of protecting nature and all living beings.

At least twenty living and extinct species have been named in Attenborough's honor.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF David Attenborough



TIP

Bear in mind that David Attenborough has always had a team of assistants. Why not ask your parents, brothers, sisters, other relatives, or friends to help shoot and edit your footage?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A GLOBETROTTER LIKE DAVID ATTENBOROUGH? TO TRY YOUR HAND AT MAKING A VIDEO ABOUT ANIMALS? CHECK OUT THESE SIMPLE, FUN INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO DO IT.

Choose an animal

Why not concentrate on an animal often seen in your surroundings, such as a squirrel in the park or a bird in the yard?

Preparing the shoot

Whether you are filming a squirrel or a yeti, find out as much as you can about it. What does it like to eat, and how does it live and behave? Can this be captured on video? What is the best time of day to shoot?

Film and document

Make sure that your battery is charged and your microphone is switched on. Filming animals takes patience and multiple attempts: they may hide or behave unexpectedly.

Edit your video

After filming, edit your video. You may add subtitles, as well as music and other sounds.

Share it

Once your video is ready, show it to your family or your friends at school. By asking for feedback, you can continue to improve as a filmmaker.

Have fun making your film! Good luck!

b. 1974

Julia Butterfly Hill

US ecological activist who lived in the crown of a redwood tree



From left: Dale (father), Kathy (mother), Mike (older brother), Julia, and Dan (younger brother)



Julia, age 7

Home on wheels

Julia had an unusual childhood. Her father was an itinerant preacher. Julia, her parents, and her brothers traveled from city to city throughout the United States, living in a travel trailer. Theirs was a simple life; the parents taught the children to make do with little. One day, a butterfly settled in Julia's hand—and it took her breath away. "Don't fly away!" she pleaded with it inwardly. It flapped its wings as if to reassure her and remained in her palm for her entire walk. This magical moment gave rise to Julia's nickname, Butterfly. Perhaps that was when she began to perceive nature a little differently from other children.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF Julia Butterfly Hill

WOULD YOU DARE SPEND THE NIGHT IN THE OPEN AIR, SURROUNDED BY WHISPERING NATURE? JULIA NEEDED TO BE VERY BRAVE TO FACE THE LOGGING COMPANY AND THE FORMIDABLE FORCES OF WIND AND FROST. TRY TO BUILD YOUR COURAGE SO THAT YOU ARE NOT AFRAID TO STAND UP FOR THE RIGHTS OF FORESTS, RIVERS, OR ANIMALS. IF YOU DON'T DARE DO IT ALONE AT FIRST, INVITE FRIENDS OR FAMILY MEMBERS TO JOIN YOU!

Where to go

Find a place that appeals to you. You might sleep in your own garden, the meadow, or the woods. Choose a flat area protected from wind and dampness.

What to take with you

A fox survives the night snuggled up in a warm den. You could dress warmly and snuggle up in a sleeping bag, with a sleeping mat underneath you and a tarp over the sleeping bag to keep the dew from wetting it. You shouldn't forget to take a flashlight and a thermos of hot tea. You will feel like a true adventurer!

Listen to a nighttime concert

When darkness falls, nature comes alive. Lie on your back and take in the sounds around you: the soft rustling of grass, the hooting of an owl, the footsteps of small nocturnal creatures. Stars twinkle above you. How many can you count?

How do you feel?

A night in the open can be scary at first because of all the unfamiliar sounds. But the longer you lie there, the more you will feel how peaceful and friendly nature is. Overcome your fears and be woken in the morning by the light and the smell of grass. Having succeeded in sleeping outside, you will feel like a true hero!



b. 1907

d. 1964

Rachel Carson

US biologist and writer who awakened the world to nature conservation

A writer is born

Rachel Carson grew up surrounded by nature. Behind every horse's neigh and every bark in the forest she sensed a powerful story. No wonder that she began writing stories about animals at the age of eight, and her first short story came out in print when she was ten! Though her ardent wish was for others to fall in love with the animals and nature she admired so much, she could never have guessed the extent to which her wish would come true!



↑
Rachel grew up on a farm in Pennsylvania.



Tales of the sea

In college, Rachel studied biology and zoology. She fell in love with the underwater world. Feeling that the sea was whispering its secrets to her, Rachel longed to share them with others. She would have liked to continue her studies, but when she was twenty-eight, her father died, leaving Rachel as her mother's only support. Later, following the death of her sister, she had to support two little nieces. It was difficult to hold on to her dream, but she did not give it up. She began to write about the sea. Her third book, *The Sea Around Us*, made her name. People loved her style of writing. At last she was able to write to her heart's content. Soon she was working on what would become her most famous book. This book would change the world.

← Rachel Carson with her best friend Dorothy Freeman. They wrote 900 letters to each other during a twelve-year friendship.

b. 1944

Sebastião Salgado

d. 2025

Brazilian documentary photographer who captured the planet's beauty and pain

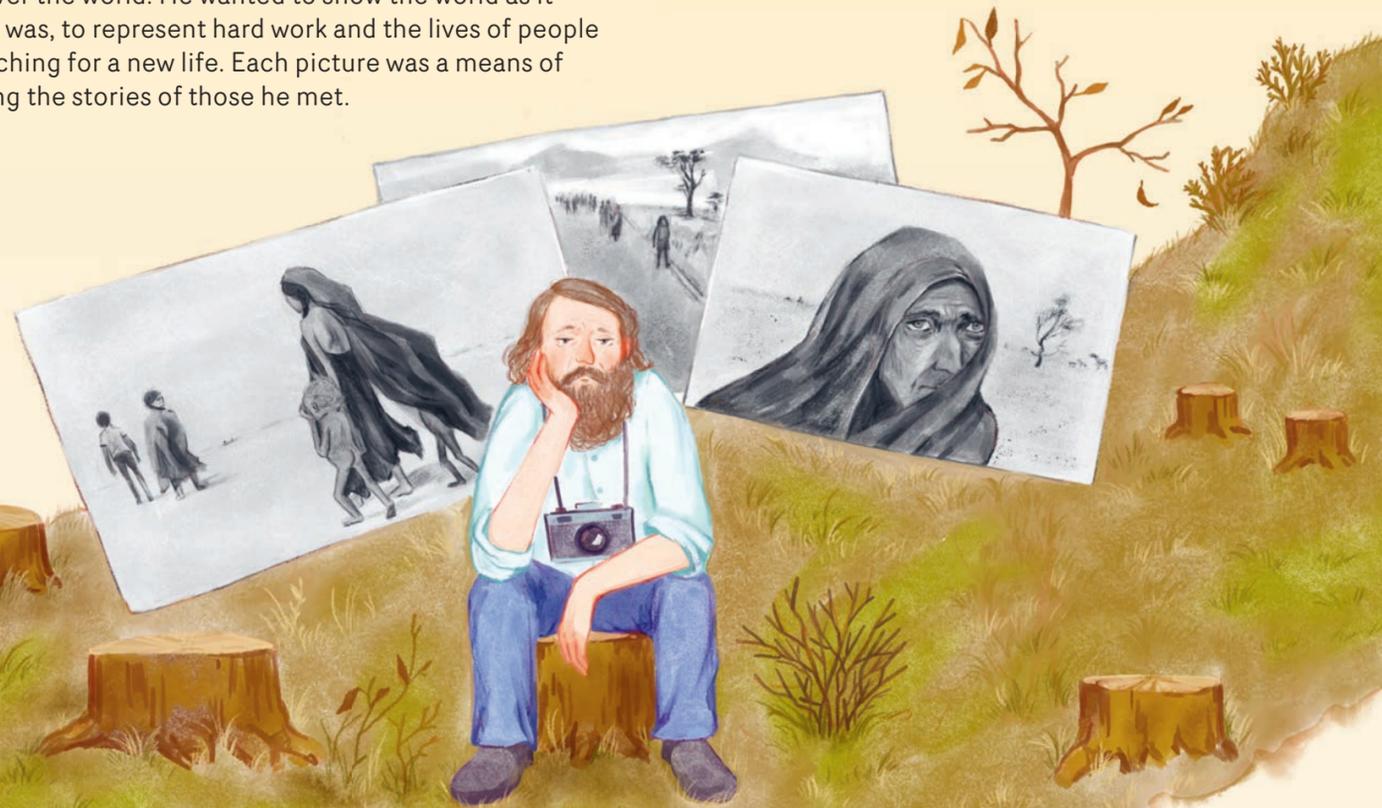
Love of his life

Sebastião Salgado grew up on a farm in Brazil, more than half of which was surrounded by dense rainforest. The farm was home to around thirty-five families, who worked together to grow everything they needed to survive. He loved his home. Every morning he was woken up by the sound of birdsong. In the afternoon, he would go swimming in the river with caimans. When he had to leave for the city to study at the age of fifteen, he was unhappy at first. But then he met a girl named Lélia, who became his great friend and companion for the rest of their lives.



Encounter with photography

After school, Sebastião started work at an organization that helped farmers in Africa grow and trade in coffee. He had always been interested in people's lives, and he enjoyed traveling with his work. Then he picked up a camera, and everything changed. Photography became his second language, one that was understood by people all over the world. He wanted to show the world as it truly was, to represent hard work and the lives of people searching for a new life. Each picture was a means of telling the stories of those he met.



Difficult test

But his travels were not happy ones. In Rwanda, he witnessed immense suffering and violence and was deeply affected by this. His doctor advised him to stop taking photos of difficult subjects for the sake of his health. Sebastião quit photography and returned to the family farm with Lélia and their two sons. There, too, he was in for a shock—the rainforest he remembered from his childhood had practically disappeared due to poor land management. The life and happiness that had once surrounded him were all but gone.

The man who planted trees

Troubled by the sight of her sick husband, Lélia had an idea that would change their lives. "What if we replanted the forest? We could bring back what we have lost," she suggested. Relishing the challenge, Sebastião agreed. The first years were difficult: many young plants did not survive. Over time, however, the bare hills turned green, and the animals returned to the forests. Sebastião healed along with the landscape.

The couple and a group of volunteers planted 2.5 million trees of more than 300 different local species and restored 2,000 water sources.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF Temple Grandin

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF COWS, SHEEP, GOATS, PIGS, AND OTHER FARM ANIMALS? HOW ABOUT VISITING THEM AND SPENDING TIME WITH THEM, AS TEMPLE DOES?

To the cows!

Ask your parents to help you find a friendly animal breeder or an organization that rescues and rehomes farm animals, such as a farm animal sanctuary. Call or email the sanctuary to see if it has open days, when you can look around and meet the animals.

No two animals are the same

Every animal has its own personality. Different species have different tastes, ways of expressing joy and other emotions, and levels of fear. Spend plenty of time with them and be patient as you get to know them.

Hello. Can I help?

You can offer to help out at the farm—e.g., by taking care of the animals, feeding them, cleaning their pens or stalls, or helping to organize events for the public. This will bring you even closer to the animals. If you have your own ideas on how to help, share them. How about making some posters to promote the farm?

Collections

You could organize a collection of items. What does the farm need? Feed for the goats, bedding for the cows, toys for the pigs? On your next visit, give the items to the farmer and see how the animals react to them.

Share your story

Show others how they can help animals. Encourage them to join you. Tell them what has surprised you about your experiences with animals.

Your efforts can have a big impact on animals' lives, as well as encouraging others to help them. So go for it!



b. 1934

d. 2025

Jane Goodall

British primatologist who lived with chimpanzees

Childhood dream

Jane Goodall loved animals since she was little, when she had a beloved dog, Rusty, a pony, and a tortoise. Once, her mother couldn't find her for several hours. Jane was sitting in the chicken coop with the hens, trying to find out where the eggs came from. No one had been prepared to tell her. Her mother eventually found her with the help of the police! Instead of telling her off, she praised her for her curiosity. Her parents gave her a stuffed toy chimpanzee she named Jubilee. She always had it with her. She dreamed of one day seeing wild animals for herself.

Trip to Africa

After high school, Jane worked as a secretary. She saved money for her dream. When she was twenty-three, she got the chance to go to Africa. She jumped at it. Her arrival in the jungles of Kenya felt to her like a homecoming. Upon her return to England, the eminent paleontologist Louis Leakey asked her if she would like to study the behavior of chimpanzees. Although Jane had no scientific training, Leakey believed that her passion and patience would lead her in the right direction.



Jane always liked dogs above all other animals.

Jane received a doctorate in ethology from the University of Cambridge in 1965, partly so that scientists would take her research seriously.

Jane was a vegetarian.



b. 1940

d. 2011

Wangari Maathai

Biologist and activist, nicknamed "the Mother of Trees"

Childhood in beautiful natural surroundings

Wangari grew up in a village in the beautiful Kenyan countryside, surrounded by rivers, trees, and wild plants. Although poverty and political problems were common in Kenya at this time, her childhood was full of fun and games. She would run through the woods with her friends, chasing butterflies, and listening to bird-song, and returning home barefoot, happy and covered in mud.



↑
Wangari means "she who belongs to the leopard."

Journey across the sea

As a teenager, Wangari had the opportunity to study in America. She found the long journey across the ocean exciting but frightening. On returning to Kenya after her studies, she noticed that the rivers were full of mud and the hills once covered with forest were bare. "What can I do about this?" Wangari wondered. In the United States, she had learned that nature could be protected by people coming together and helping each other. "We could plant trees!" she told herself.



Planting forests

In 1977, she founded the Green Belt Movement, which, with the help of village women, transformed the arid landscape into green forests. Each new tree was like a small miracle that helped the land breathe. Wangari wanted to help people find jobs and stand up for their rights and nature conservation. Gradually, the forest came to cover the bare ground, providing shade, purifying the air, and maintaining moisture in the landscape.

Tough tests

Wangari faced many obstacles along the way. When she opposed plans to cut down the trees of Uhuru Park in Nairobi, some men of influence told her, "Stay at home as a woman should, and keep quiet!" Wangari sneered at this traditional attitude. She continued planting trees and was arrested for it several times. She believed that self-confident women had an important role to play in the life of the family, the village, and the entire African continent.

→ People called Wangari "the Mother of Trees" or Mama Miti.

→ The Green Belt Movement has planted more than 30 million trees.

Strength and courage

Wangari believed that democracy should grow in her country as the trees grew. People around her admired her for her strength and courage, which motivated them to continue in their efforts. For her work, Wangari was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, becoming the first African woman recipient. She helped shape a world in which every tree means hope. Today, the forests she helped plant protect soil, water, and life. "Nature will always find a way if we help it," she used to say.



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF Roger Payne

LET NATURE TELL ITS STORY, AS ROGER DID. SHOW OTHERS THE BEAUTY AND DIVERSITY OF THE WORLD AROUND US. THIS IS HOW TO DO IT.



Listen closely

Go to your favorite place and walk around, noticing the sounds that fill it. Do they differ in the morning from the evening? Are they different at different times of year? Imagine the kind of story you could tell using the sounds.

Move your place to the world of sound!

The time has come to record. Use your phone or another device that records sound. Concentrate on details and be patient. Did you hear that bird call? Wait to see if there is a response. Record moments of silence, too—this is what the place sounds like when it is “resting.” If you want to record sounds over several days and keep track of them, make notes and give the recordings names.

Tell a story

Compose your sounds into a story. What is going on at your place? Do the sounds change in the course of an hour, day or year? Your story might be called “Monday in the Garden,” “Sounds of Winter,” or “My Room at Night.”

Present your place to others

Once your sound story is ready, it’s time to share it. Play it to your friends, parents, or classmates. Do they recognize the sounds? You can let them guess where or when you recorded them. What feelings does the recording evoke in them?



children's laughter

a bumblebee buzzing

a dog sniffing

a twig snapping

b. 1935 Sylvia Earle

Her role models include Rachel Carson and Jane Goodall.

US oceanographer, innovator, and diver who brought hope back to the oceans

A new world

Sylvia grew up on a farm in New Jersey, where she came to love animals. When she and her family moved to Florida, she discovered a whole new world—the ocean! Having done very well at school, she began to study biology and oceanography. By the age of 20, she had earned a master’s degree in natural sciences from Duke University. She was convinced that the sea was not only an important source of life, but also an inspiration. “It’s like another universe,” she said.



You never know what you’re going to find. Ninety-five percent of the ocean is not explored.



Living underwater

In 1970, Sylvia, a passionate diver and scientist, led a team of women on a two-week stay at the Tektite II underwater habitat. For the first time, she wasn’t just a visitor to the ocean but was spending entire days and nights in and among it. She and her husband developed special submarines for deep-sea expeditions, thanks to which she got to know mysterious neon-colored fish and other strange creatures she had never seen before. She also became the first woman to head the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). She dived in all the world’s five oceans and led numerous undersea expeditions.

The habitat lies about ca. 50 feet below the surface of Great Lameshur Bay, off the island of St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Finding better ways

Ashish served on many committees that strove to influence laws and regulations related to nature conservation. But he felt that criticism alone was not enough. What if there were a better way? He began to collect stories of people who had helped develop the country with respect for nature and cultural diversity. He visited a village where people grew their own food, built their own school, and ran a community radio station. He met men who sold unpackaged food to avoid unnecessary waste. These stories were like small islands in the middle of a stormy sea.

Connecting islands

Ashish dreamed of connecting small islands of hope and change. He and some friends set up the Vikalp Sangam (“alternatives confluence”) project, within which people from all over India still come together, share ideas, and learn from each other. Ashish has found that nothing is more valuable than collaboration that brings together local communities, scientists, activists, and government for the common protection of nature and people. He believes that anyone can be a part of a bigger story in which small changes can, like the flapping of a butterfly’s wings, affect the future.



Does a river have any rights?

Of course. It has the right to flow freely, play with stones, and sing.

For Ashish and many Indians, the river is more than a source of energy—it is a life-giving mother.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF Ashish Kothari

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT THE THINGS YOU REALLY NEED TO BE HAPPY? YOU CAN HELP NATURE BY OWNING FEWER THINGS.

1. Reject things you don't really need

The first step is to say “no” to things you don't really want. How about rejecting single-use plastics and using boxes or bags instead? Do you actually play with all your toys, or are some of them just lying around? Make a list of things that other people have given you that you don't really want. Next time you are offered such a thing, try to refuse it.

2. Making reductions: What do you have too much of?

The second step is to figure out what you no longer need at home. Do you have T-shirts that you have stopped wearing? Find five items that you no longer need and decide what to do with them. You could donate them, swap them with friends, or lend them to someone.

3. Repurposing: Give old things new life!

Try using a thing you no longer need in a different way. Old T-shirts can be cut down for use as cloths, jars can be made into vases or crayon containers, and boxes can be made into dollhouses or toy garages. Choose one old item and repurpose it. You can make gifts for friends in this way, too.

4. Recycling: Send things on a new mission!

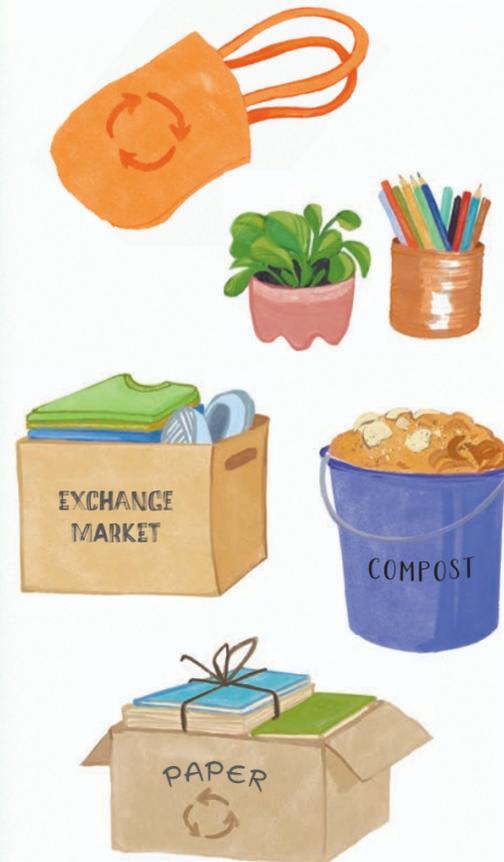
If you have something that obviously has no further use, find out if it can be recycled. Paper, plastic, glass, and cans should be put in the appropriate container for sorting. Be aware that not everything can be recycled; it is better to reduce what you use and reuse things first.

5. Composting: Give back to nature what is natural

Did you know that food scraps, peel, and eggshells will transform into fertile soil? If you have a garden or a composter, why not compost? Composting can be done in cities, too. Some neighborhoods even have places where you can take your scraps.

Exchange market

Why not set up an exchange market with your friends? You would bring things you no longer need (books, toys, clothes, etc.) and trade them for things that make you happy. Left-over things can be donated to charity or given to someone who will use them. By doing all this, not only will you create less waste, but you will also have fun!



Every one of us can be a zero-waste hero. We just need to think about what we really need and give new meaning to things we already have. So, are you ready to become a conservationist?

ESTER DOBIÁŠOVÁ AND NASTKA LIŠOVÁ

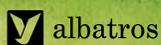
NATURE FIRST!

Lives of Amazing Environmentalists
and Animal Rights Activists for Kids

The world is losing animals and plants... but is everything really lost? What if there are people who protect nature and change the world for the better? Do you know Jane Goodall or David Attenborough and think you can't do anything like that? What if you can? Discover the stories of courageous conservationists who started out with ordinary curiosity — and inspired the whole world. Maybe one day you'll be one of them.



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