

Letters to David: By the Water Instructions and Answers

- Venue: Dragonfly Lake or Kingfisher Lake (Outdoors)
- Estimated duration to complete all the activities: 30 minutes per venue (excluding welcome and briefing)

Age Range / Subject

- 4 - 9 years old (Science): Conservation and Biodiversity

Learning Objectives:

- Learn about plants and animals at the Gardens
- Learn about conservation and environmental responsibility
- Develop investigative and problem-solving skills

About Letters to David: By the Water

Letters to David is a series of online children's activities which visitors can download for free, for their visit to Gardens by the Bay.

Each activity sheet features a different set of correspondences between David, the Botanist, and his friends around the world. Within each letter, is something interesting for your children to do in a different part of Gardens by the Bay.

Letters to David: By the Water introduces the children to nature walks and nature journaling by looking at two animals near the Kingfisher Lake, and two plants along the Dragonfly Lake. *By the Water* may be combined with the following *Letters to David* sets for a fuller or more tailored experience, depending on the age of the children and their specific needs:

- *Right at Home*
- *Flutter / Fascinating Trees*
- *Small Creatures / Larger Than Life*

Welcome and Briefing (10 min)

Upon arrival, allow the children to adjust to the new surroundings. Give a quick list of instructions to the children:

- Do not run or push your friends as you walk in the gardens
- Do not touch any plants unless instructed
- Whatever you bring to the gardens, bring them back with you; whatever you find in the gardens, leave them in the gardens
- Raise your hand if you wish to speak or answer any questions
- Let your teachers know if you feel unwell

Give the children time to visit the toilet. Once ready, prepare to take the children to [Kingfisher Lake](#) for a fauna-based nature walk, or [Dragonfly Lake](#) for a flora-based nature walk. Before setting off, ensure that the children are properly prepared for their time outdoors.

Suggested Plan for Pages 1 & 2 at the Kingfisher Lake (30 min)

As you walk the children to the [Kingfisher Lake](#), tell them that they will now take a walk to see if they can spot two animals that frequent the Gardens. Use Annex A to show the children what the animals look like. Please note that for this activity, there is a possibility that neither of the animals will be spotted on your walk. In this situation, you can ask the children to look out for other animals.

Start off by showing the children the picture of the Collared Kingfisher in Figure A1. Ask them to name the type of animal they see in the picture (bird). Get them to describe the appearance of the bird, focusing on the colours, patterns and its beak, as those are the bird's distinctive features. Then, use the information in Anton's letter to David to tell the children about the Kingfisher.

Now, do the same with the Monitor Lizard. Show the children Figure A2 and ask them to name the type of animal they see (lizard) and to describe it. Use David's reply to Anton to tell the children about the Monitor Lizard. Emphasise to the children that the lizard is very big.

Tell the children that you will now take them on the walk and that they should try to spot the two animals. Walk the children around the Kingfisher Lake area for about 10 minutes, following the foot path. Make appropriate stops to point out plants and animals.

If you fail to spot the kingfisher, you may point out the kingfisher sculptures to the children. Monitor lizards are often found swimming in the lake and ponds, so you may wish to look there. Please note that while monitor lizards are very shy, they can also move very fast. So if you do spot them, the children should be cautioned to observe the lizard/s from a distance and not try to approach them.

End off the activity by seating the children in a shady area and allow them to colour the animals in the activity sheet.

Suggested Plan for Pages 3 & 4 at the Dragonfly Lake (30 min)

As you walk the children to the [Dragonfly Lake](#), tell them that they will now take a walk to see if they can spot two plants along the lake. Use Annex B to show the children what the plants look like.

Start off by showing the children the picture of the Alligator Flag in Figure B1. Halfway along the boardwalk, there is a large patch of them en route from the [Supertree Grove](#). There are also some at the [Koi Pond](#). Walk the children to either of these patches and try to get them to spot the plant. Ask them to describe the appearance of the plant, focusing on the unique zig-zag pattern of the flower stalk and colour of the flowers. Then, use the information in Martha's letter to David to tell the children about the Alligator Flag.

Now, do the same with the Traveller's Palm. A good place for the children to see the plant is from the [Dragonfly Bridge](#). On the bridge, show the children Figure B2 and ask them to look along the lake, towards the direction of the conservatories, and try to spot the plant. There should be a group of very tall Traveller's Palms on the right. Ask the children to describe the shape of the plant. They should observe that it is shaped like a fan. Then, use the information in David's reply to Martha to tell the children about the Traveller's Palm.

End off the activity at one of the sheltered areas in the [Malay Garden](#). Allow the children to colour the plants there.

Note to Educator:

The above is a suggested plan. Please feel free to adjust the duration and complexity of the activities to suit the needs of your children.

Annex A: Animals at the Kingfisher Lake



Figure A1: Collared Kingfisher (Johnny Wee)



Figure A2: Monitor Lizard

Annex B: Plants at the Dragonfly Lake



Figure B1: Alligator Flag



Figure B2: Traveller's Palm