



# TEACHER GUIDE

## LIVING THINGS CHANGE THEIR ENVIRONMENT GRADES K-2

### COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

- **Animals can only change their environment by building homes.**  
Animals can also change their environment by eating, building nests or carrying seeds from one place to another. As animals eat fruits and nuts, they poop them out in new places giving plants the opportunity to grow in new environments. All living things change their environment in some way.
- **Only animals can change their environment.**  
As trees grow, they change the amount of sunlight on the ground, which impacts the plants below. Roots also change the shape of the land when they push up through soil or even concrete. Students may enjoy learning that some of the cracks they see in sidewalks have been made bigger by plant roots.
- **One person can't make a difference in taking care of the environment.**  
One person can have an impact on the environment. It is important to share ways that humans can make a positive impact, such as by cleaning up after yourself and recycling. If only negative impacts of humans are shown, it can be perceived that the challenges are so large that there is no use in even trying to make a difference.

### BEAVER DAMS

The most common example used when teaching this topic is a beaver dam. The whole beaver family works together to build a dam. They are incredible engineers! First they cut down trees and stick them into the bottom of the river. Then they crisscross small branches to block the flowing water. They even seal the dam with mud and hold everything in place with stones. Beavers do this so they can stay protected from predators like a wolf, which cannot catch them in the water.

### OTHER EXAMPLES

All living things change their environment in some way. Common ways including digging a burrow, building a nest, eating other plants and animals, moving things around, etc. It is impossible to live on Earth and not change the environment around you, though some animals and plants change it much more than others.

## TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Emphasize that every little bit helps when students care for their environment and do their best to make positive changes. Sometimes students feel that their impact is so small that it won't make a difference. Give your students opportunities to make a difference by doing simple class projects, such as recycling.



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