



Emerging Ecology

Experience Interchange
For The Global Classroom

November 2013

Essays by students at

Ayden-Grifton High School, Chikhale Ashram Shalla
and Forsyth Country Day School

Focus Question:

My Neighborhood

Writers describe how they interact with the natural world
around their school, home, village or neighborhood.

Student #39, 11th Grade Male

I am a senior at Ayden-Grifton High School. I am 17 years old. I play on the baseball team as a pitcher. I have a sister and I live with my parents in Grifton, NC. I have 3 dogs, one is a yellow and the other two are black Labrador retriever. I like to hunt and fish with my cousin, his name is Cameron and he is crazy as heck. I hunt around my house, but sometimes we go to other places to hunt. We like to hunt deer but will hunt for ducks also. I also like to fish for bream. My dad is a welder and a mechanic. He builds airplane body parts. My mom is a nurse for Eastern Dermatology in Greenville. My sister is 11 years old and is in the 6th grade. My favorite subject in school would have to be math because I am really good at math. I see myself as a construction manager after I graduate from high school. People always tell me that I am a good role model and that I am a leader. In Agriculture class we are learning about plants and growing farm crops. We are also learning about farm animals like cows, hogs and poultry. We are raising chickens at school and it is going well. Agriscience is really fun in school. My best friends are Nick, Cameron and Riley. I want to thank you for reading my letter and look forward to Skypeing with you this week.

Student #84, 11th Grade Female

I am seventeen years old. I am a senior at Ayden-Grifton High School. I have attended AGHS for the past 4 years and have been in the Agriculture Dept. every year. I enjoy writing, public speaking and writing music. I am the president of the FFA Chapter here. FFA stands for 'Future Farmers Of America' and I have been an active member ever since my freshman year. FFA is more than just farming and agriculture. Over the last several years it has grown to be more of a leadership and career training organization as well as an agriculture based program. FFA teaches premier leadership, personal growth and career success to its members around the nation. Before I joined I was very shy and did not like talking in public that much. After I became an officer, I was required to speak in public often. This experience helped me to be able to speak in public and not be nervous or afraid. I owe it all to FFA. To me speaking in public is an asset everybody needs to have, if you are able to express yourself then you will become a stronger person. By being the FFA President it allows me to lead people in a direction that will hopefully help them in the future. I have to be a good role model and example. My favorite thing about being an officer is that I get to teach people about an organization which is very near and dear to my heart. With students running the organization it allows for a sense of belonging and influence for students. The adults on advise us on what we need to do. To me the FFA is not just a club, it is a way of life and it is my way of life.

Student #43, 11th Grade Male

I am from Greenville, NC, but I was raised in Ayden, NC. My hobbies are playing basketball, track and field events, hanging out with my friends and playing video games. I think I may grow up to be a video game designer. I want to make my own video game. If I don't design video games I would like to be an actor or play basketball for a college. My favorite animals are dogs. When I had a dog I would take him for walks all of the time. I like to work outside to feel the sunshine and breathe to fresh air. I like to spend a lot of time outside.

Student #23, 11th Grade Male

I was born in New York and lived in Pennsylvania. I came down to North Carolina as of what they call foster care. It is where your parents cannot or will not take care of you anymore and the government takes over your life. I currently live in Ayden, NC. The town itself is really small, but I live outside of the town on an old dirt road. I am the only house on the road, which means it is very isolated except for the people I live with.

One of the ways that I interact with the people in my environment in my house is that we eat dinner together, we talk sometimes, and most of the time we are working on what we own. I don't like my aunt and uncle's selfish life style. Another way I interact is that I spend my time talking with God. He knows what I am going through, where I have been and where I will be in the future. Jesus plays a very important role in my life because he teaches me how to love one another and how to reach out to others. He saved me from all of the wrong things I have done and now he wants me to tell others about him.

One of the most important things that I like to do is read my Bible. Even though the words seem hard to read, the book speaks to you. I also have the freedom to take frequent walks down my dirt road and just reflect on everything. It clears my mind and lets me focus on good things. Another one of the things that I enjoy is singing. I like to sing because it lets me express myself in so many ways. I use my freedom to the best of my ability because what some people are dying for is something that I already have, freedom.

I see myself becoming a pastor in a church within ten years. I also plan to graduate from college, possibly get married and find out what God has in store for me. I also see myself going in to the ministry of music because it allows me to relay a blessing through a silver tongue.

We all have different ways of living all around the world, but the most important thing is that we all stay connected by helping one another. And make a difference in someone else's day.

People in this country say that a smile goes a long way. The very truth of the matter is that it does. It strengthens our hope and lets us get through the day. Sometimes we all get a blessing in

Student #147, 11th Grade Male

I am 14 years old. I was born in Greenville, NC. My house is 24 years old and is in a small neighborhood outside of the city limits. I live in a 2 story house. My brother lives upstairs. He has a bedroom, bathroom, living area and weight room. I live downstairs with the rest of the family; my mom, my step dad and my dog Buster. There are three bedrooms, two bathrooms, living room, kitchen and dining room. My three dogs live in the fenced back yard. We have a basket ball goal in our driveway and I like to practice shooting basketball or playing with my family and friends.

My favorite hobby is baseball. I play on what are called "travel ball teams". This means I go to other cities and play ball on the weekends. We have to drive in our car to get to the baseball tournaments. I also like to hunt. I like to go deer and dove hunting. I use a shotgun to hunt with. When I go dove hunting, I have to sit very still in a corn field and wait for the birds to fly over. When I see a dove, I stand up and shoot. Hopefully, I will kill the bird. If I do, I have to watch very carefully so I can find it later. I also use a shot gun to hunt deer. If I am lucky enough to see a big buck I will shoot him. We get him and use him for food during the winter.

That is what I like to do in eastern NC. I enjoy spending a lot of time outside every day.

Student #17, 11th Grade Male

I live in Ayden, NC. I interact with my outdoors by playing baseball, soccer, kick ball, football and do other things. I live to sit outside with my family while we are cooking on the grill. I help my environment by cleaning, picking up trash and limiting chemicals used outside. I like the FFA because you can do so many things that involve interaction with the outdoors. You can grow crops and raise animals. I got some baby chickens to raise and I have had them now for about a month. They have grown so much in that time. They eat a lot more now and we will soon have to build them a new place to live. FFA is my favorite part of school, I love to get to know the members and the teacher and learn so many new things. I hope to one day be an officer and I will continue to work really hard to achieve that goal. I would like to be on the tool team and go to competition. I know I can do all of this as long as I work very hard and strive to do my best.

I would really love to know about you and your school. Where do you live and what is it like? I would love to know how you interact with nature there. What are some of the activities you like to do while you are at home and at school?

Student #37, 11th Grade Male

I live in the country between Ayden and Grifton, NC. I live in a house with just my mom. I am in the 11th grade at AGHS. When I am not in school I stay busy doing other things. I am heavily involved in Boy Scouts, Order of the Arrow, FFA and my church youth group. I am an Eagle Scout, which is the highest degree you can earn and the hardest to get. I am the Vice President of the FFA chapter. There honestly are no words to describe FFA. There are over 579,000 members nationally. There are lots of events and conferences you can attend and always new friends to meet. You get a ton of wonderful memories, experiences and learn things that will help you throughout life. The church group I go to is involved in the community. We volunteer at places to help out the people who may not be as fortunate as we are. We help with the food bank and Carolina Pregnancy Center

Doing all of these things keeps me pretty busy, but when I do have free time I like to go deer hunting, fishing, camping, driving, listen to music, and I love to watch racing. When I go deer hunting, I prefer to use a bow and arrow. My family owns a 40 acre farm and we have friends that let us hunt on their land and they have 300 acres so we have lots of room to hunt. Fishing is awesome, I live it. My family has 2 boats and we usually go fishing in one of them often. I have been camping for about 10 years. I go camping at least once every month; it is one of my passions. I have a 2012 metallic grey Toyota Tacoma; it is an amazing truck. If you want to learn about me all you have to do is look at my truck. I have an eagle scout license plate, FFA emblems on the front and back and small plastic deer antlers on my mirror. Country music is the best; it's all I listen to. Luke Bryan and Jason Aldean are my 2 favorite singers. I love NASCAR, and drag racing. One of my favorite racers can go 330 miles per hour in 4.5 seconds. Talk to you soon.

Student #206, 11th Grade Male

I live in Ayden, NC. I live so close to the high school that I am able to walk to school each day. Most of the other students live far enough away that they will ride the school bus or their parents will bring them. I have three siblings, one sister and two brothers. I am the youngest and the day we Skype I will celebrate my fifteenth birthday. I live with my mom, stepdad and my sister. My oldest brother has three children and lives about nine hours away. My other brother has one child and lives two hours away. I work part time after school for a man who makes knives. He has a shop in Greenville and I help whenever he is behind and needs some help. I plan to finish high school and go to college. I would like to study electronics engineering and programming. I am hoping that if I get a high paying job I can finally get things for myself and my family. We have never been homeless or poor, but we never could afford more than the necessities. I can't wait

Student #59, 11th Grade Male

My school name is primary secondary and high secondary ashram school chikhale. Behind my school there is national highway way near is Goa to pune which is 200m away from our school is railway station. which is 300m away from railway station. There have done shooting of HIMMATWALA & DHOOM. Near my school then is Vijay army school in which boy has been selected for N.D.A. exam there are many trees around my school. Some trees are useful to make medicine tree give as fruit and flowers in front of my school there is a LAKE. There are big hill in the village which 500m from my school there are temole4 of god Shiva Bhind my school there is B.R.C. colony due to my school beauty its natural work .I like so much my school.

Student #75, 11th Grade Male

My school name is primary, secondary & higher secondary ashram school chikhale. There is National Highway Behind my school known as Mumbai to Pune. Behind national highway there is railway station which is 300 meter away from the railway station. There have done shooting of Himmatwala+ & Dhoom. Near my school there is Vijay army school in which boy has been selected for N.D.A exam. There is many trees around my school these are useful to make medicine. Trees give us fruits and flowers. In front of my school there is a lake. There is big hills in the village 500 meter away from my school . There is temple of God SHIVA. Behind my school there is B.R.C colony, due to my school's beauty & its natural work I like my school so much.

Student #1, 11th Grade Male

I am studying in 11th science. My school name is Primary secondary & higher secondary ashram school chikhale . Around my school there is many trees like coconut, mango, peepal, neem guava, gulmohar & many medicinal plant. Some trees give us fruits & flowers.

Behind my school there is BRC colony & also there is boy hostel of army school .Army school is near about 2km away from my school

Near my school there is railway station. Near it there is national high way which is known as Mumbai to pune .There is big hill in chikhale which is 500 metre away from my school. On the hill there is temple of God shiva which is also tourist place

Thank You

Student #158, 11th Grade Female

My school name is primary secondary & higher secondary ashram school chikhale. In village there is a temple of god many people comes in it for doing worship. My school is one of the best school in my village. It has a big play ground where students play different games.

There is a lake near my school student's uses it water for washing clothes and villagers' have planted so many trees around it on republic day. People would catch fish in it.

My school has a small garden where beautiful flowers, fruits and different kind of trees are planted. There is also railway station famous for celebrating good function it almost 700m away from our school. There is army school in it so many students are studding.

I like my chikhale village and natural beauty very much.

Student #32, 11th Grade Male

I am studying in 11th science class. My home is very beautiful. There are Six people in my house including father, mother , sister and myself. My language is Marathi

There is a hill near my house and close to it God Shankar temple.

In these temple people pray all day My grand parent

Lives in the foot of the hill. He has a canteen there they sell vadapaw, and tea and so many things. Near the house is my school. There is 650 student in my school. My school name is primary secondary and higher secondary ashram school chikhale. There are 1th to 12th standard available in my school.

There is so many trees around the school such as mango tree, banana tree, coconut tree, banyan tree and small bushes too. Medicinal plants also available around it.

Thank you sir

Student #13, 11th Grade Female

My school name is Anudanit primary, secondary and higher secondary ashram school Chikhale. One of the biggest and best schools in our town. It is situated in the heart of the town. The buildings have two floors, the classrooms are well lighted and airy. The headmaster's office is on the ground floor. The library is also available in the school with plenty of books. We have a common lab for physics, chemistry and biology. We can read the latest books and magazines in our reading room. Computer library is also in our school.

My school has a big playground where students play different games. There is a large assembly hall on the ground floor, all important functions are held in it.

Our school is surrounded by thick forest and different kinds of trees, medicinal plants also in it such as banyan tree, aloe vera, neem, jamun, etc.

Student #31, 11th Grade Male

My school name is primary secondary & higher secondary ashram school chikhale. There is lake near my school. Student uses it water for washing clothes and other things. We have planted trees around it on republic day. The national highway is behind my school. Many people use it while going on their works. There is also the railway station a walk away from my school. Early in the morning trains passes over it. There is army school nearly 700 metre away from the school where so many students are studding about their lesson. There is a temple of GOD HANUMAN in the village; people come in it for praying. It is said that he comes at a call in needful situation of his devotee. There is also shooting place in chikhale village. I like my school and its natural beauty and work very much.

Student #18, 11th Grade Male

My school name is primary, secondary and higher secondary ashram school chikhale. I am studying in 11th science class. My school is in the Chikhale village. There is a forest around of the school. We gets different types of medicine from forest .There is also gets furniture from wood .There is a lake to east side of the school. In this lake there is so much fishes fisherman catches fishes in the lake to buy to the another village. Students also washes their clothes in it.

. There is Mumbai to Pune highway close to the beside of the school

There is a big bridge and under the bridge have gone that highway. On the highway have done shooting of Dhoom film. There is a railway station near of the highway. This railway station is also shooting place. In this year there have done shooting of the HIMMATWALA film. People using that railway for going to the pavel.

Ahead the school there is a shop. There is a big hill near about 500m away from my school. Temple of God Shiva is on the hill. So many people go there for doing pray at every morning and evening.

There is a Vijay Army school beside of the school. It is said students learns there about the life of army people so many students has been selected for the N.D.A. through common entrance exam .Almost 700mt far there is Ice factory where makes Ice from the water.

I like my school very much

Student #192, 11th Grade Male

My village name is the kharwai near khalapur in the, Raigad district. I live with my parents and younger brother in the home.

Behind my home is a big lake so many species of fishes in it. Every year the catching fishes being done in it. Children and women wash their clothes in it. Mangoes, papayas, bananas, oranges such kind of fruit tree are planted on the edge on it .medicinal plants also available around my school. People eat fruits laden over the tree as well as uses medicine made from the tree.

Railway station is available in my village; train takes stop at the station people commute through the train. They use trains for buying, going to offices, students goes to school by commuting the trains. Near my home is Mumbai nashik highway full of crowded with vehicle. Sometimes accident occurs on the road, too.

To avoid such kind of accident speed breaker have attached on the road, it makes peoples journey safe.

There is beautiful waterfall in the forest at the 2 km away from my village. It is situated between the hills. The tourists crowded to see the water fall. They Comes every Sunday to enjoy its water and natural beauty. There is a big hotel on the edge of the waterfall with all facilities. There are grandeur temple of God ganesha people from far and wide comes to take blessing from god ganesha It is said he completes wish of every people.

At the distance on 4km from my village is a lonavala ghat, It is beautiful place, lonavala is close to nature occupied trees plants, bushes, birds, animal etc. There are beautiful bungalows, hotels, building with lightened and lodge. Monkey point is famous place to see and hence so many monkeys come there. Another wonderful things to see people comes far and wide is that tiger comes to drink sweet water. Tourist takes a week Holiday to stay there. Near my village is army school where thought about the army training.

Student #109, 11th Grade Female

While people's surroundings from around the world differ in landscape and culture, everyone interacts with their environment in some way or another. These interactions can be categorized by destruction, restoration and observation. My efforts to renew the environment include watering the plants in my back yard and on my porch and recycling at home and school. My destructive actions to the environment and unintentional but present.. For example, When I get in my car to drive to school or work I don't consciously think about the harmful emissions that I am exposing to the environment. I may accidentally drop a napkin outside at lunch and not pick it up or toss an empty water bottle into the trash when there is no recycling bin available Although the restorative and destructive impacts I have on the environment are few, my observational interactions more common. I am often outside walking between classes or hanging around after school, enjoying the fresh air. I also go hiking on trails in the woods and up mountain faces that have been blazed, destructively by others. However, my goal in participating in this activity is not to increase the "human footprint" but to observe the beauty of nature and the serenity of isolation. The environment is something we should all strive to take care of because of the benefits it brings us.

Student #154, 11th Grade Female

The natural world is always waiting for me explore it, but with school and the hussle and bussle of everyday life, it is very hard to invest in using natural resources and spend time in natural areas. There are those special times, however, when I am able to escape from the busy world that we live in and spend time in the natural world that I love so much.

I really enjoy going fishing at our farm with my dad, which is a time when we are in the natural world and are surrounded by a lake of water with different species swimming below us. I also enjoy spending time going on runs at Reynolda Village, which is not too far from my house so it is nice to be able to run instead of use my car to drive there. I like to go on the trails surrounded by the tall trees, because it takes me away from the “city life” and allows me to feel close with nature.

Although I love doing both of those activities, I have never felt closer to nature as I did this past summer when I went hiking in Switzerland, France, and Italy for three weeks. I was with a group of 13 people and we didn’t have any phones or any source of electronics, not even a watch to tell the time of day. Everything we did was based off of the natural world, which showed me that electronics, which we are so used to using at home, are not a necessity for life. I was able to live and survive off a natural resources, and I feel that I have grown as a person and am able to be more independent now that I have such a strong connection with the natural world. I wish everyone would have.

Student #174, 11th Grade Female

The natural environment is a very important part of my everyday life. I interact with nature directly and indirectly every day. I walk and run outside, I live in a very natural setting, and I impact the environment in a variety of ways.

Although I am not often physically outside, I love to sit, walk, and run outside when I have time. I love the fresh air, beautiful colors of the seasons, and all the wildlife. I run cross-country at my school in the fall so I run outside every day. The run and natural environment are so refreshing. Except for cross-country, I do not get outside a lot, but I do live in a rural area. My house is the only house around so, it is surrounded by grass, trees, and a variety of animals. Often times, I see deer and turkeys in my field when I get home from school. Sometimes, I even see coyotes and foxes. Occasionally my family takes walks to a river that is a couple miles away from my house. These are the main ways that I directly interact with my natural environment.

I also affect the environment in many ways. My family has trash and recycling at my house. Honestly, we generate a lot of waste, so we always try to recycle as much as we can. Much like my house, my school has trash and recycling. My green campus class has recycling bins, along with the trash cans, so the whole school can recycle as much as possible. Once a week, my class collects all the recycling from my school and takes it to be picked up by the recycling company. It is truly amazing how much recycling and waste in general that my school generates in just one week. There are definitely many ways that my home and school could become more environmentally friendly.

Honestly, I would not say that I interact with the environment very much. I am only occasionally outside, except for sports practices, and I do not do much to help the environment flourish. By taking this Green Campus class, I hope to learn about new ways that my family, my school, and the whole world can help the natural environment.

Student #92, 11th Grade Female

Throughout the course of the year, my interactions with nature are extremely limited. My direct interactions with nature are only made through extra curricular activities like hiking, camping and also lake swimming. Usually during the week at school, I rarely interact with nature. At Forsyth Country Day, we have been removed from a natural environment setting into a building that does not run off of the natural resources surrounding us nor is there a necessity to directly interact with nature for survival. Interactions with nature are solely by choice. An example of me interacting with nature would be when I go on camping trips. I will go to the mountains of West Virginia and spend up to a week on a camp ground. Only the necessities of clothing, food, drinking water, and a tent are brought along. The rest of the basic needs are met by nature. The natural environment can also produce fun activities such as lake swimming. My family and friends will go to the lake house and spend a weekend. We swim in the lake, get on jet skis, go tubing, jump off the rocks into the water, and go fishing. In my family, we like to have bonfires. In my backyard during the fall seasons, we will collect the leaves that have fallen from trees and will put them in the pit and have a bonfire. All of these interactions made are interactions by choice and to be specific these interactions are activities of enjoyment and not for survival. I greatly appreciate the environment that surrounds me but there are others that choose to violate and destroy nature. Littering would be an example of a negative interaction with nature. In conclusion, my interactions with nature are limited to extracurricular activities.

Student #61, 11th Grade Male

I interact with my environment in many different ways. Almost everything that I come into contact with at some point came from the environment or is still a part of it. It is amazing to me to consider how much a part of the outside is a part of your learning experience. Although there is forest around my school all of the land has been made safe by people. I couldn't imagine what it is like to see an animal in its natural environment so close to home. My interactions with my environment are very much based on how I choose to interact with it so even though it is there every time I go outside I have very limited real exposure to it.

Even though the environment has very little impact on me, people where I live have a huge impact on it. Very recently a whole forest was cleared out in my neighborhood in order to make room for new houses to be built. That area was home for many animals but had been replaced so that people can live there. I try to have as much of a positive impact on my environment as I can but certain things prevent me from being totally friendly to it. Activities such as driving to things instead of walking cause pollution but it would be very difficult to walk anywhere far away because of roads and it would simply take too long.

I am sure your impact on the environment is quite different from mine because we have different life styles but I believe that differences are what make everyone special. I am very interested to hear how you interact with your environment and I hope that you find the ways I interact with mine interesting.

Student #54, 11th Grade Female

Interacting with the environment I live in is important to me. I interact with my environment by recycling everything that is able to be recycled. Recycling is important because it allows our world to reuse certain items to make other products. I interact with my environment by doing yard work. Such as, mowing the grass, planting flowers and pulling weeds. Participating in all of these things allow me to see how the environment works in such a way that everyone should know. I also go hiking in the mountains, which is a fun way to interact with the environment. Hiking in the mountains allows me to see the nature and the changes that it goes through throughout the year. Another fun way that I interact with the environment is to go fishing. I go fishing at the beach where my grandparents live. We go fishing inshore and offshore. We always catch a lot of fish and cook them for dinner that same night. Interacting with the environment is important to me because the environment allows me to do things I enjoy. The importance of interacting with the environment is a way to learn about it and to improve it in any way possible.

Student #11, 11th Grade Female

Interacting with the natural world does not happen as often as it should in my life. I of course interact with my surroundings at school and at home but a lot of those are not necessarily natural. Despite that there is one thing I truly enjoy doing that does fall under this category. My grandmother has a garden in Illinois; it is large and full of plants. She grows fruits and vegetables along with flowers and herbs. When I am there I help her tend to it by picking the vegetables and fruits. This is something specific that I do that involves nothing but me and the natural environment around me. There are many things I can do to interact with the environment around me more. It could be as simple as planting my own garden, cleaning up trash that is harming the environment or simply just spending more time outdoors. I think that if we as a community at my school and in my neighborhood took advantage of our natural environment more than we would value it more and take better care of it. I would like to have more interaction with my natural environment because it is there for us and I believe that we must take advantage of it.

Student #78, 11th Grade Female

There are many different ways that I interact with nature and the environment. I always enjoy being outside and getting exercise. I interact a lot with the environment especially in the summer time or anytime that it is warm. For almost my whole life, I have played soccer which takes up countless hours of being outside. Playing soccer outside is definitely a calming environment and is one of my favorite interactions with the environment. Another way that I interact with the environment is when I go on hikes in the mountains. I get to see the different mountainous environment that is around me and all that it entails. I love seeing the views of the mountains and all the other sources of nature around the trails. Another time that I interact with nature and the environment is when I go outside to run. I usually run on a trail that goes through a place called Reynolda Gardens. On this run, I interact with the environment while running through fields, trails, and next to numerous small ponds. This is another one of my favorite interactions because of the different scenery I get to see while I am exercising. I also interact with the environment when I help my mom plant plants. I get to help create something that will benefit the environment. Overall, interacting with the environment is something that happens very often and almost daily in my life.

Student #205, 11th Grade Male

I interact with the environment indirectly by enjoying the many luxuries it produces. The main way in which I enjoy what the environment produces is through drinking water. Almost every day I go through about two to three bottles of water taken from various bodies of water that is later purified. I also enjoy various foods that grow from the earth such as various vegetables and fruits. Without these agricultural items much of what I eat every day would change. I also use the environment to exercise. Just about every day at 1:00 after eating, a group of guys and I play volleyball for about 30 minutes on an open field. This field is vital for our daily exercise needs and is important for us to stay fit after eating everything on the menu and more at the cafeteria. I play basketball and even though it is an indoor sport, we use the environment to train throughout the summer and preseason. We use the cross country course which is a trail that circles around our whole campus to get into ideal shape and build up our endurance. Running around this dirt track is not only important in order to prepare for our season, but it is also very peaceful and can really take your mind off of the many stresses of a typical school day. Even at home I use the environment every day as I use my front and back yard to let my dogs go to the restroom. I also use my backyard to throw a tennis ball to my dogs giving them exercise after being inside most of the day. If I let one of my dogs stay outside for a long period of time they will have a blast running around every which way and interacting with other animals. They also like to eat the grass for whatever nutrition that may provide along with digging holes into the ground for entertainment. Overall I find myself using the environment every day for many uses such as exercise, food, and entertainment.

Student #41, 11th Grade Male

There are many ways in which people interact with their environment around the world. Everyone interacts differently with their surrounding environment depending on where they live or what their interests are. Although I may interact with my environment differently, there are various ways in which I do so.

As the seasons change throughout the year, the weather provides many opportunities to go outside and do something. During the fall season every year during a couple weeks, the Dixie Classic Fair come around. People from all around travel to come experience it. It ranges from Amusement Park-like rides to games to any type of food you could possibly imagine. Being set up outside, the weather is usually perfect to go to the fair as long as it doesn't rain. When the winter rolls in, we get a break from school to enjoy the Christmas holiday. Within the couple weeks we get off, it will sometimes snow. From where I am, it's usually rare but when it snows, everyone including me, celebrates. I go outside and sled down the hills in my backyard or neighborhood. This is definitely one of the most joyful times of year.

Spring and summer provide great opportunities for outdoor sports. At my school I run track and field. My events include the 100-meter sprint as well as pole-vaulting. I usually begin to train for this early by exercising during the pre-season. I'll usually run outside to increase my endurance. After we get out of school for the summer break. I go on vacations. This includes trips to the beach where I love to swim in the ocean. Sometimes I'll go to the lake with some friends and take a boat out on the water for the day. Here in North Carolina, there are many options for vacation including even going to the mountains where I might hike along a trail for the day and enjoy the beauty of nature.

Everyone interacts with the natural world a little differently. Here in North Carolina I have many things to do outside. All of these things that I listed contribute to the way I interact with my environment including various thing I like to do in my free time as well as the sports I am involved in here at Forsyth Country Day School.

Student #58, 11th Grade Male

Due to the enormity of nature, there are numerous ways in which a person can interact with it. I, along with billions of other people, interact with nature every day, whether it be in my yard, school, neighborhood, soccer field, or even National parks. I typically derive the most pleasure from nature when I go on hikes in the mountains. One of my parents' philosophies about hikes is to not leave anything behind. Sometimes people leave behind trash, particularly plastic bottles, and my family tries to pick up the few bottles that do appear on the nature trails. In this way, my family positively benefits the environment, but that is not always the case. Every day, I have to be driven to school in a car. Cars emit environmentally harmful fumes, so while my family and I may try to help nature, we always end up hurting it when we drive off in our gas-guzzling car. The same goes for living in my house. While it may seem like I am completely separated from nature in my air-conditioned paradise, the very house I am living in uses huge amounts of energy derived from burning coal in order to keep lights on, and machines running. This is also a way of unintentionally causing nature harm. I also interact with nature when I go outside to play soccer. One way in which I interact with nature is when I go to my back yard to compost leftover vegetables and fruits along with the eggshells that I get from the chickens my family keeps in a large coop behind our garage. My family uses the compost dirt, which is very fertile, as a natural fertilizer so as to avoid environmentally harmful chemicals. Over the summer, one of the oak trees in my neighborhood died, and my neighbors had to pay a lot of money to get it chopped down. My Dad then asked for some of the wood so that he could use it for fires during the winter. The ways in which people can interact with nature are essentially endless, and the ways in which I interact with the environment are only a fraction of the possibilities.

Student #25, 11th Grade Female

My interaction with the environment is very limited. I drive my car everywhere because it would take too long for me to walk anywhere from my house. Therefore, I do not spend much time riding a bike or walking. The only time that I am surrounded by the environment is when I run cross country, because I run outdoors on trails and through woods. The times that I have been surrounded by nature and wildlife the most have been when I am running. Other than interacting with nature on runs, the rest of my interaction with my environment involves my dependence on my environment. I depend on the environment for water and food, even though I do not directly get these resources from the environment. The food that I eat comes from my environment, like meat from animals and products from farms. However, I do not ever interact directly with the animals that produce food and the farms that produce other types of food because I receive these items from the grocery store. There have been times when I have interacted with the environment more than I do now, such as when I went camping and used a fire to cook fish that we had caught earlier in the day. I also interact with the environment when I go to the beach and the lake because I swim in both places and spend time by the ocean when I go to the beach. Even though I interact with the environment when I do things like go camping, go to the beach, or go to the lake, I do not do these things very often and therefore do not interact with the environment very often. My interaction with the environment is probably more negative than it is positive, because a lot of human activities tend to harm the environment. I try to do things to help the environment when I think about it and I wish that I had more positive interaction with the environment but interaction with the environment is not a very common occurrence in American culture and there are not many ways that I could increase my interaction with the environment without it being inconvenient.

Student #7, 11th Grade Male

In my day-to-day life there are many ways I interact with the environment around me. After school gets out I go home and I like to jog around my neighborhood to get exercise. Most of the time I will bring my dog with me. This is relaxing for me, because it helps relieve the stress of school and I enjoy the fresh air. Not to mention my dog likes to run around and smell all kinds of things along the way.

On the weekends I enjoy going fishing. I go out on a lake that is similar to the size of the one near your school. I paddle around the lake by way of canoe and I cast my fishing line in the water and hope to catch some fish. In that lake there are three types of fish, grass carp, brim, and large mouth bass. The grass carp are very big and tend to eat the decaying leaves and grass clippings from a near by field. The brim are small and swim very quickly. The bass are pretty large, but not as large as the grass carp. The biggest fish I have caught in that lake was a twenty-two inch bass, which weighed close to five pounds.

When I am not fishing, or running I enjoy hiking mountains that are near where I live, or across the country. Sometimes, I go to Pilot Mountain or Hanging Rock and hike a few miles with my friends or family. In my lifetime I have hiked multiple mountains in North Carolina, Virginia, Colorado and New Mexico. I think hiking provides a great way to experience the beauty of nature untouched by man.

Student #82, 11th Grade Female

Society in the United States interacts with the natural world in various ways; unfortunately, some of those ways having negative aspects. Many people in the United States have a very small appreciation for the environment, often throwing trash into a yard, or not reusing materials. With that being said, there are many people in this country that take pride in the preservation and cleanliness of their environment, and that's what our class at Forsyth Country Day School has set out to accomplish. As one class, there is realistically no way for us to change every aspect of the school for the better, but we have greatly improved the school for the betterment of its students and faculty. I love nature and hiking because my dad and I used to go fishing and hiking when I was very young. When I am stressed at school my dad and I will often go on walks to discuss what's bothering me, allowing me to forget my troubles and focus on the beauty of nature. The United States, especially North Carolina where we live, offers so many amazing nature trails and rivers to go swimming in that one never gets bored. I love flowers, so my mom and dad always fill the house with them because the vibrant colors always put a smile on my face even when I'm having a bad day. As students of Forsyth Country Day, we are so lucky to be on such a beautiful campus; however, it's often easy to take that for granted. As students and members of the Forsyth Country Day Community it's our job to take care of the surrounding environment and leave it cleaner and more beautiful than the way we left it. Neighborhoods operate in the same manner; the neighborhood that I live in has the houses grouped very close together, so as neighbors it's our responsibility to watch out for one another. The same is true of a school environment, which creates a great atmosphere of trust. We also extend this trust to environment issues, in which we make promises to ourselves to help, but never intentionally harm the environment.

Student #51, 11th Grade Male

Monday-Friday during the week I go to school and in my country this is very normal. On Saturdays and Sundays we get to relax and decide how we want to spend the two day break. I interact with the environment on the weekends by playing sports and occasionally talking walks with my mom. Occasionally I do yard work on Sundays with my dad and also help my mom plant flowers in the early fall or early spring season. I try to get out on the weekends as much as possible outside, interacting with the environment. During the school week, we have a 12:45-1:30 lunch break and we always go outside and play sports when the weather is nice. I drive my car my car to school every day and sadly this means I negatively affect the environment. I live four hours from the beach and it is always a fun place to travel during the summer and on the warm summer weekends. I spend a large amount of the summer at the beach and I love to swim in the ocean and fish for fun as well. My family of four has two black Labradors retrievers and they love to swim in the ocean as well. I also live near many lakes so when I go to the lake with friends, we usually take the boat out and tube and do fun water sports. I live one hour from Lake Norman and that is my favorite lake because during the summer the water is very warm and refreshing. Sometimes we will find a shore on the lake and sit out and eat lunch and relax and enjoy sitting by the water. I mainly interact with the environment during my free time away from schoolwork or during the summer by swimming in the ocean, fishing, or swimming in the lake. My dad also likes to bike, not only to save gas but to get a good exercise in. Occasionally my dad and I will bike to a nearby shopping center and eat lunch and maybe get ice cream. I live in North Carolina so the summers are very warm and the winters are usually very cold. I live about two hours from the mountains so during the winter months my friends and I will sometimes go snow tubing or skiing for the day. I usually interact with my environment through physical activity and negatively affect it by driving my car or using other forms of transportation. With such a great environment to live in, I find many ways to interact with my environment through physical exercise or relaxation.

Student #93, 11th Grade Female

Everyone interacts with the environment, but some do more than others. I believe that my direct interaction with the environment is very limited, because I do not rely on it for day to day activities, such as washing my clothes. I do however interact in other ways. For example, during the spring and summer I am outside for the majority of the day. In the spring I play lacrosse every day after school at the field by our school. In the summer I swim laps at the pool every morning with my swim team. I am not completely immersed in nature when I do these things, but all the time that I spend outside I am directly interacting with the natural environment. In addition, my family has a garden in our backyard and it is my responsibility to weed and water the garden. We grow mostly vegetables in our garden including tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, snap peas, cucumbers, bell peppers, and squash. We also grow some fruits including watermelon, cantaloupe, and strawberries. However, my family does not rely totally on our garden, especially during the winter. We also drive to the grocery store to purchase food. It is also very possible that I occasionally interact with the environment in negative ways. For example, when I drive to the grocery store, I emit harmful gasses from my car into the atmosphere. I probably do this the most often in terms of negative interaction with the environment. I interact so often with the environment on a day to day basis, that I never really take the time to stop and think about what my influence on my surroundings is truly capable of.

Student #57, 11th Grade Male

In the United States, we interact with our environment every day without even noticing it. Every weekday, Monday through Friday I wake up at 7 in the morning and take a shower using the water supply of Winston-Salem, NC. I then make my way to school using my car which impacts the environment in a very negative way. The car releases harmful toxins and pollutants that are released into the air. I have school from 8:30 AM to 3:15 in the afternoon. But during the day, for example, my friends and I go outside to our activity field and play volleyball and basketball during lunch. After the school day is over, our school has a cross country trail that goes all around the campus. We run through the woods and by the pond to make our way around it as fast as possible. The athletics at our school are very important to the student life. We constantly have soccer games that are played on our soccer field and we have field hockey games that are played on another field nearby. Away from school, I love to play golf. I play at least 5 days out of the 7 day week. I practice by myself at times but I love playing with friends. No matter what the weather is like, even if it is raining, we play. During the summer I go to the coast of North Carolina to the beach. My family and I drive 3 and half hours to get to our house. When I am at the beach I enjoy going on boat rides and swimming in the ocean. We honestly do not interact with our natural environment that much compared to the school that you attend. Our limited interaction with our environment sometimes removes us from being conscience of our surroundings that are so important. We wash our clothes in different ways that is not as environmentally friendly and we drive cars that harm our surrounding air. To improve our environmental awareness, we need to realize how little things that we do not notice we do in the United States, harm our environment in such a great way.