



Funded by
the European Union



Human-Nature Connectedness



WORKBOOK

Dear Earthian,

Welcome to the THIRD MODULE. Here, you begin a journey to understand the incredible connection between humans and nature. This educational module is all about discovering the special bond we share with nature, understanding how we are an integral part of it, and learning how we can take action to protect the Earth.

Section 3

3.1 Educational and awareness importance

The biophilia hypothesis is the idea that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life. The word "biophilia" translates to 'love of life' from the Greek words bio (life) and philia (love).

Though at first, the biophilia hypothesis was more aspirational than based on scientific fact, researchers are now finding that there are health benefits to being surrounded by nature.

Though science has come a long way in measuring and proving the link between nature, health, and happiness, most of us intrinsically know that nature makes us feel good. No one needs to tell us!

Another interconnected concept with biophilia is Ecological Identity, which emphasizes the importance of human-nature relationships. Ecological Identity refers to all the different ways people understand themselves in relation to the Earth, as manifested in personality, values, actions, and sense of self.

“Nature Visualization”

Close your eyes and imagine your favorite place in nature. It could be a beach, a forest, a park, or even your backyard. Anything that comes to your mind.

Once you imagine this place with all the possible details, open your eyes and try to draw it. If you don't want to draw just describe it in words.

3.2 Ecopsychology

“Eco psychology is a big word, but it's really all about how we, as humans, are connected to nature and how being in nature makes us feel happy and healthy”.

Let's explore this together!

What are the main principles of Ecopsychology?

1. Ecological Unconscious

There's a part of our mind that always knows we're part of nature, even if we don't always think about it. Remembering this helps us feel happy and balanced.

2. Cosmic Evolution Record

Deep inside, our minds hold memories of how the universe and life on Earth have changed over time. This makes us feel connected to everything around us.

3. Healing Separation

In cities, people might feel far away from nature. Ecopsychology helps us feel close to nature again, like we belong to it.

4. Natural experience in childhood

Kids see magic and life in nature. Ecopsychology helps adults remember and feel this special way of looking at the world by activating our “inner child”.

5. Ecological responsibility

As we grow, we learn to care for the Earth and feel it's our job to protect it.

6. Challenging Dominance

Some behaviors, like trying to control nature too much, aren't always good. Ecopsychology helps us appreciate and respect nature instead.

7. Healthy Modern Society

Our cities and technology are important, but Ecopsychology reminds us to also keep nature healthy and balanced with our modern lives.

8. Interconnected wellbeing

What's good for the planet is good for us. When we take care of the Earth, we also take care of ourselves

In this section, you will explore eight dilemmas connected to the principles of ecopsychology. Each dilemma is designed to help you reflect on how different aspects of your relationship with nature influence your psychological well-being. Carefully read the dilemmas provided and write down your thoughts

Dilemma 1:

You've noticed that spending time in nature makes you feel calm and centered, but lately, you've been too busy with school and social media to go outside. Should you disconnect from technology and spend more time in nature, or continue focusing on your current routine?

Dilemma 2:

You've learned that a local park, which is home to some very old trees, is going to be cut down to build a shopping center. You love shopping but also feel a deep connection to the history of the park as almost your whole childhood was spent there. Should you support the development for convenience, or advocate for preserving the park?

Dilemma 3:

You've learned that a local park, which is home to some very old trees, is going to be cut down to build a shopping center. You love shopping but also feel a deep connection to the history of the park as almost your whole childhood was spent there. Should you support the development for convenience, or advocate for preserving the park?

Dilemma 4:

You're helping to design a new playground for your younger siblings. One option is a high-tech play area with lots of gadgets and screens, while the other is a natural play area with trees, sand, and water features. Which one would you choose, and why?

Dilemma 5:

You've been asked to join a school project that involves creating a new product using cheap materials that could harm the environment. On the other hand, you could choose more sustainable materials, but the product would be more expensive and harder to sell. What should you prioritize: profit or the planet?

Dilemma 6:

You notice that your friends often talk about controlling nature and dominating the environment for human benefit. However, you feel that respecting and working with nature is important. Do you challenge your friends' views, even if it might make you unpopular, or do you stay quiet to fit in?

Dilemma 7:

Your school is organizing a project where students are encouraged to create something innovative using the latest technology. However, you believe that focusing on sustainability and eco-friendly designs is more important. Should you follow the trend of using high-tech solutions or promote a simpler, more sustainable approach?

Dilemma 8:

You've started to realize that the fast food you enjoy is not only unhealthy for you but also harmful to the environment due to its packaging and production methods. Should you continue eating fast food for convenience, or make the effort to choose healthier and more eco-friendly options, even if they're less convenient?

3.3 Climate change and its Impact on Human Wellbeing

Climate change affects people in different ways and at different scales. Sadly climate change is also becoming one of the top threats to global health in the 21st century and we have to build resilience to protect our mental health and wellbeing.

Here are some tactics that can help you develop healthy coping skills around climate change.

1. Focus on what you can control

Climate change is a complex issue. While this may feel disheartening, it's also a good reminder to focus on what is within your control rather than what isn't.

Write down few examples of things that are within your control.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

2. Avoid overload

Working on too many climate projects or advocating for too many causes can lead to burn out. Instead, narrow your focus and efforts toward projects and issues that mean the most to you.

Write down some issues you that mean most to you and you would like to focus first

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

3. Practice compassion

Whenever we approach painful situations or emotions, it's important to do so with kindness and compassion for ourselves and others. Beating yourself up about it or worrying that you could be doing more can fuel emotional turmoil, which can make it difficult to move forward.

It can also be helpful to practice validating your feelings with affirmations like:

- It's okay to feel stressed about climate change.
- I can make a difference, and big changes are going to take time.
- I can take a break. This issue is important to me, and so is my mental well-being.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

4. Take a break from climate news

If you start to feel overwhelmed by news updates or events happening around the world, it may be a good time to take a break. If you feel pressured to stay informed, remind yourself that all those news stories, updates and information will be there when you're ready to re-engage.

Write down few examples how you can detox from news on climate change

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

5. Remember that you're not alone

It's easy to get caught up in all the 'bad' news surrounding climate change, but it's also important to remember that there are a lot of people working to solve this issue and positive change can and will happen.

Write few names or organizations you are in contact and who put efforts on climate change fight

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
- _____

6. Talk to someone about how you're feeling

Climate anxiety is a very real experience, and it's not something you have to go through alone. If your feelings start to affect your life or ability to cope day-to-day, it can be helpful to talk to someone about it. Reaching out to a friend, family member or mental health provider can help you work through your feelings and practice coping skills.

“My climate Superhero”

Today, we’re also going to create our very own climate superheroes! These superheroes will have special powers and qualities that help protect our planet and keep nature healthy.

While drawing think about

- What superpower does your hero have?
- Do they have any tools, costume?
- What’s the name of the hero?

3.4 Spirituality and Nature connection

Spirituality and the connection to nature have been intertwined throughout human history, forming a fundamental part of many cultures, religions, and individual beliefs. This connection highlights that humans are not separate from the natural world but are an integral part of it. Nature provides essential resources for physical survival and offers profound spiritual insights and a sense of belonging to something greater. The bond between spirituality and nature is a timeless and universal aspect of human experience. Embracing and nurturing this bond can lead to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, as well as a deeper understanding of the world and oneself.

To better understand the deep connection with nature, understanding how alike we can be to natural phenomena and also to learn to express gratitude to Nature we invite to this reflection journey. Read the questions below and write or draw your thoughts.

Connection

→ Think about a time when you felt deeply connected to nature. What were you doing? How did it make you feel, both physically and emotionally?

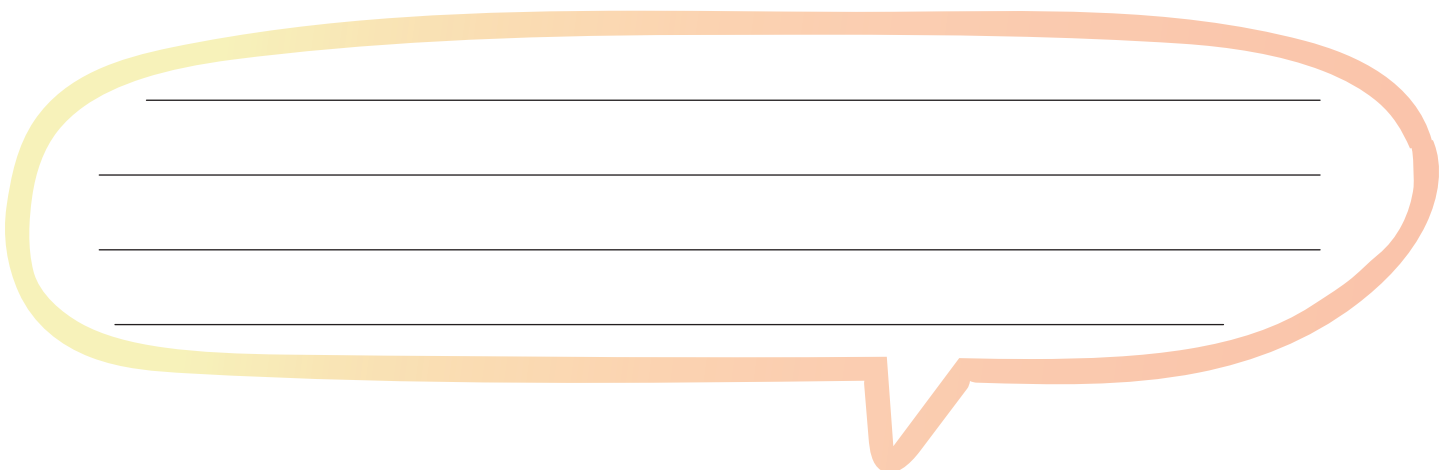
→ Are there any natural elements (like mountains, rivers, or trees) that you find especially meaningful or sacred? Why do you think these elements are special to you?

Gratitude

→ What are you most grateful for in nature right now? It could be a specific element (like a tree, river, or flower) or the overall experience of being outside. Describe or draw what makes you feel thankful.

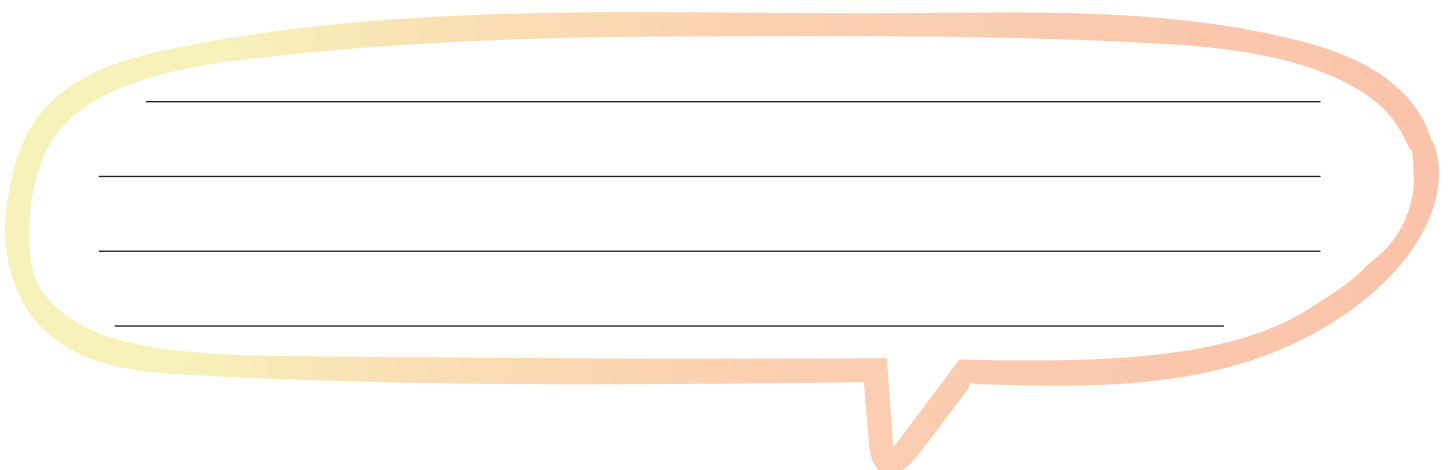


→ Has nature ever inspired you or helped you solve a problem? Reflect on a time when nature sparked creativity or provided clarity.

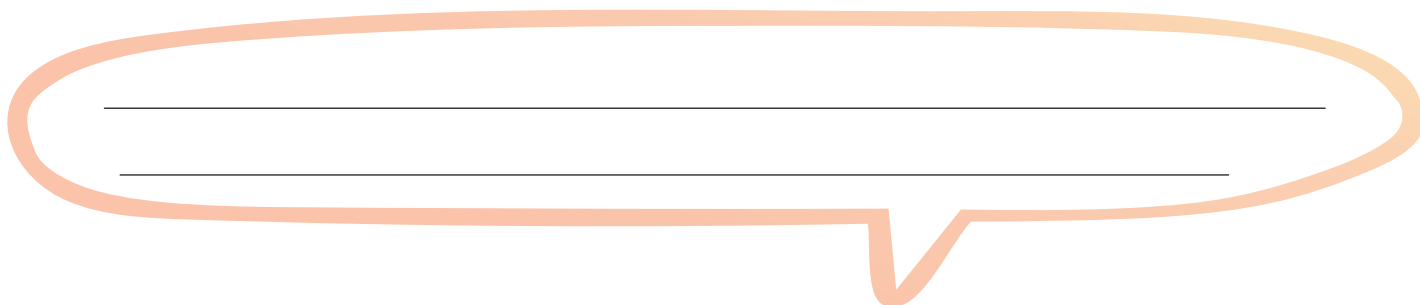


Similarity

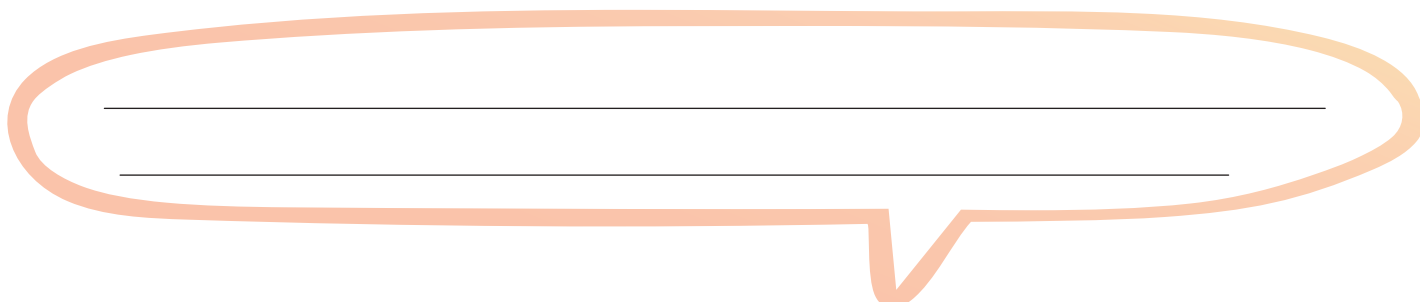
→ If you were an animal, which one would you be and why? Consider the animal's characteristics and how they relate to your own traits or qualities.



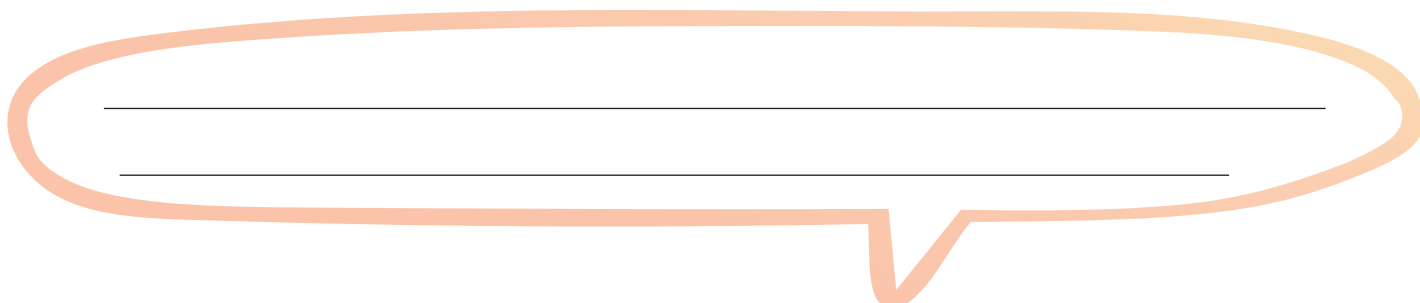
- If you were a flower, which one would you be and why? Think about the flower's colors, shape, and symbolism, and how these aspects reflect your personality or values.



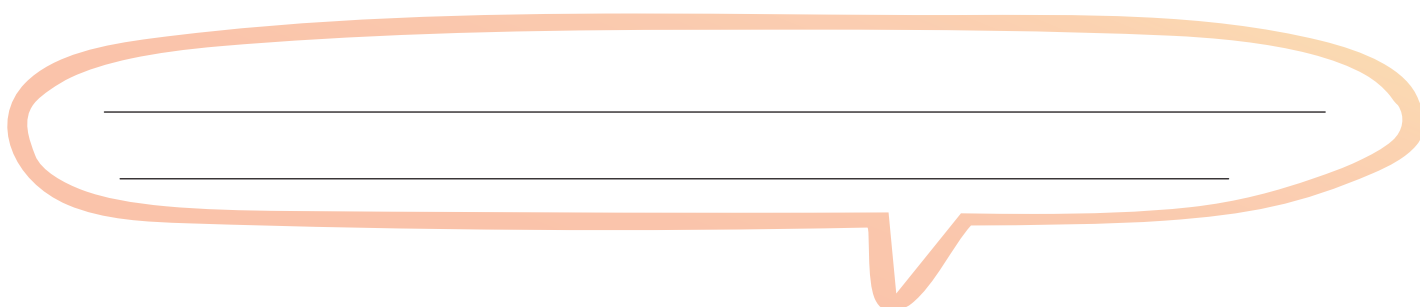
- If you were a tree, which type would you be and why? Reflect on the tree's size, type of leaves, or habitat, and how these features might represent your own qualities or experiences.



- If you were a fruit, which one would you be and why? Reflect on the fruit's flavor, color, and characteristics, and how these might represent your own attributes or preferences.



- If you were a natural phenomenon, what would you be and why? Think about different types of natural phenomena such as wind, storms, volcanoes, thunder, lightning, rainbows, earthquakes, or waterfalls. Reflect on the characteristics of these phenomena and how they might symbolize different aspects of your personality, behaviors, or life experiences.





If you were a bird, what type of bird would you be and why? Reflect on the characteristics of the bird you choose and how they symbolize different aspects of who you are.

Two horizontal lines for writing inside an orange speech bubble.



If You Were a Natural Sound, which sound you would be and why.

Two horizontal lines for writing inside an orange speech bubble.



If you were _____ (add your ideas here)

Four horizontal lines for writing inside an orange speech bubble.