

Letters to David: Right at Home Instructions and Answers

- Venue: Golden Garden and 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: Right at Home

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: Right at Home introduces the children to nature walks and nature journaling by looking at two plants and two animals that can be found in Singapore and at the Gardens. *Right at Home* 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:

- *By the Water*
- *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, walk the children to the **Golden Garden** or the **Kingfisher Lake**. If you intend to cover both venues, you may wish to start with the **Golden Garden**. 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 Yellow-vented Bulbul 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, especially of its neck, the patterns on its head/face, and its unique head feathers as those are the bird's distinctive features. Some of the children may observe that the bird looks like it is wearing an eye mask. Then, use the information in Keng's letter to David to tell the children about the Bulbul.

Now, do the same with the Common Scarlet Dragonfly. Show the children Figure A2 and ask them to name the type of animal they see (dragonfly) and to describe it. Make sure you ask the children to name its colour. Explain that "scarlet" is another word for "red". Use David's reply to Keng to tell the children about the insect.

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. You may wish to walk the children closer to any of the ponds around the area, or the lake itself to look for the dragonfly.

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 Golden Garden (30 min)

At the [Golden Garden](#), please ensure that you look out for Garden Cruisers and other electric vehicles. Use Annex B to help you identify the plants.

Look for the Tiger Orchid at the base planter of any one of the three Supertrees in the area. You may wish to pick one that is further away from the Shuttle and Garden Cruiser stop. Point out and name the Tiger Orchid. The plant may be identified by its long, feather-like leaves and curvy leaf stalks that look a bit like tentacles. Tiger Orchids seldom flower so do not be surprised if you fail to spot any flowers.

Ask the children to describe the appearance of the plant, pointing out its unique features such as its tentacle-like leaf stalks, and long wavy leaflets. Then, use the information in Tim's letter to David to tell the children about the plant.

Now, do the same with the Staghorn Fern. You can find Staghorn Ferns growing on the trees lining the path on the far right, leading towards the conservatories from the [Golden Garden](#). Identify and point out the Staghorn Fern to the children. Ask them to describe the appearance of the fern. Highlight the two very different leaf shapes of the fern to the children. You may wish to point out that this is not usually the case for many plants. Then, use the information in David's reply to Tim to tell the children about the plant.

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

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: Yellow-vented Bulbul (Rob Benton)



Figure A2: Common Scarlet (Sunny Chir)

Annex B: Plants at the Golden Garden



Figure B1: Tiger Orchid



Figure B2: Staghorn Fern