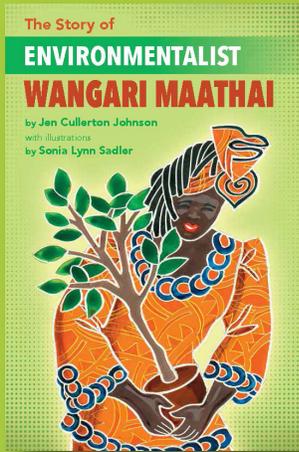


TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai

written by Jen Cullerton Johnson, illustrated by Sonia Lynn Sadler

About the Book

Genre: Nonfiction Biography

*Reading Level: Grade 6

Interest Level: Grades 3–8

Guided Reading Level: V

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the ATOS
Readability Formula

Themes: AAfrican/African American Interest, Animal/Biodiversity/ Plant Adaptations, Biography/ Memoir, Empathy/Compassion, Environment/Nature, Human Impact On Environment/Environmental Sustainability, Nonfiction, Occupations, Respect/Citizenship, Women's History

SYNOPSIS

As a young girl in Kenya, Wangari was taught to respect nature. She grew up loving the land, plants, and animals that surrounded her -- from the giant mugumo trees her people, the Kikuyu, revered to the tiny tadpoles that swam in the river.

Although most Kenyan girls were not educated, Wangari, curious and hardworking, was allowed to go to school. There, her mind sprouted like a seed. She excelled at science and went on to study in the United States. After returning home, Wangari blazed a trail across Kenya, using her knowledge and compassion to promote the rights of her countrywomen and to help save the land, one tree at a time.

The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai brings to life the empowering story of Wangari Maathai, the first African woman, and environmentalist, to win a Nobel Peace Prize. This chapter-book edition includes black-and-white illustrations as well as sidebars on related subjects, a timeline, a glossary, and recommended reading.



BACKGROUND

The Story Of Series

The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai is part of LEE & LOW’s Story Of series. Every title in our Story Of chapter book line introduces independent readers to a diverse historical figure with a powerful life story. All books in this series include informative sidebars, highlighted vocabulary words, a timeline, a glossary, photographs and images with captions and labels, a bibliography with complete sources, and recommended reading.

Nonfiction Text Features

The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai has different nonfiction text features that readers need to be aware of. The chart below lists the nonfiction features that readers will find. Consider printing or enlarging this chart for students to refer to in your classroom or library.

See the section titled, “Nonfiction Text Features: The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai” for details on how to teach these features with specific information in the book.

Types of Print	Words that are darker are called bold and words that are slanted are called <i>italics</i> , which point out specific information.
Sidebar	Additional information about a person, time period, or subject that is helpful to understand the story.
Table of Contents	A list of the book’s sections that says what information is in the book.
Timeline	A lists of the dates and years when events happened.
Glossary	An alphabetical list of vocabulary words mentioned in the book and their definitions, located in the back of the book.
Captions	A line underneath a photograph or image that describes what’s in the picture.
Text Sources	A list of the books, images, photographs, and other forms of information that the author used to write the story.
Title	The name of the chapter (that’s usually larger in size and in a different font) that describes the text and information that follows.
Label	A word that tells the name of the part of the photograph or image.
Key	A guide to understanding the symbols within a photograph or image.

Additional LEE & LOW titles in The Story Of series:

The Story of Movie Star Anna May Wong written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Ling Wang
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-movie-star-anna-may-wong>

The Story of Tennis Champion Arthur Ashe written by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Kevin Belford
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-tennis-champion-arthur-ashe>

The Story of Olympic Swimmer Duke Kahanamoku written by Ellie Crow, illustrated by Richard Waldrep
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-olympic-swimmer-duke-kahanamoku>

The Story of Trailblazing Actor Ira Aldridge written by Glenda Armand, illustrated by Floyd Cooper
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-trailblazing-actor-ira-aldridge>

The Story of World War II Hero Irena Sendler written by Marcia Vaughan, illustrated by Ron Mazellan
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-world-war-ii-hero-irena-sendler>

The Story of Civil Rights Hero John Lewis written by Jim Haskins & Kathleen Benson, illustrated by Aaron Boyd
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-civil-rights-hero-john-lewis>

The Story of Car Engineer Soichiro Honda written by Mark Weston, illustrated by Katie Yamasaki
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-car-engineer-soichiro-honda>

The Story of Banker of the People Muhammad Yunus written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Jamel Akib
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-banker-of-the-people-muhammad-yunus>

The Story of Olympic Diver Sammy Lee written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Dom Lee
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-olympic-diver-sammy-lee>

The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls written by Janet Halfmann, illustrated by Duane Smith
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-civil-war-hero-robert-smalls>



VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Content Specific

arrowroot plants, aquatic, arborist, biodiversity, biologist, canopy, carbon dioxide, deforestation, erosion, extinct, fig, forest ecosystem, gecko, glaciers, greenhouse effect, habitat, Kikuyu, maize, microscope, millet, minister, molecule, mugumo, mulch, organisms, outweigh, petri dish, photosynthesis, reforestation, sapling, seedlings, Swahili, timber, ultraviolet light, utilities, village

Academic

activist, ambassador, asthma, beckon, climate change, coexist, colonialism corporations, democracy, drastically, exam, honor, hydrate, impose, interdependent, linger, nourishment, nutrient, organic, parliament, pollution, profit, protect, scholarship, scientist, sustainable, survive, utilities, unmistakable, wealthy, women's rights movements,

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. What do you know about environmentalists? What are the goals and motivations of environmentalists?
2. Why are trees important to the environment? Why does the world need trees? Why are forests important?
3. What do you know about the Nobel Peace Prize? Why is it an important award? What kinds of people have won the Nobel Peace Prize? Give examples.
4. What do you know about Kenya? Where is it in Africa? What do you think might be the significance of women's rights in Kenya?
5. Explain what the environment means to you. How do you define the environment? How do you interact with the environment? What elements of the environment are important to you?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

1. **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book *The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai*. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
2. **Read the dedications:** Read the dedications on the inside of the book. Why do you think Jen Cullerton Johnson and Sonia Lynn Sadler chose these dedications? Why do you think they chose to tell this story?
3. **Encourage students to stop and jot** in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, see a



powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.

4. Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebooks during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them write a journal entry about it.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how Wangari Maathai was inspired at an early age to care about the environment
- how Wangari Maathai’s legacy has lasting impact on environmental movements today
- the impact of deforestation in Kenya
- the importance of women’s rights

Encourage students to consider why the author, Jen Cullerton Johnson, would want to share with young people this story about Wangari Maathai.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

Chapter One: A Promise to Protect

1. Which ethnic group does Wangari’s family belong to?
2. What does Wangari’s mother tell Wangari about trees?

3. What promise did Wangari make as a child and why?

Trees and the Forest Ecosystem

4. What is a forest ecosystem?
5. Why is balance significant in an ecosystem?
6. What do trees provide for the forest?
7. What is the greenhouse effect and why is it important to keep it low?

Chapter Two: Bright Student

8. How did being the oldest girl in her family impact Wangari’s childhood? What kind of chores did Wangari have?
9. How are Wangari and her brother Nderitu treated differently from one another?
10. How does Wangari’s family feel about sending her to school?
11. Why does Wangari have to leave her village?

Going to School in Kenya

12. How did education for girls in Kenya change over time?
13. What is a typical Kenyan school day?
14. Which languages are taught in Kenyan schools?
15. Name some similarities and differences between the school system in Kenya and the school system in your home country.

Chapter Three: Budding Brilliance

16. What are some of the differences Wangari notices between Nairobi and her village?
17. What Kikuyu traditions does Wangari hold onto while away from her family?
18. What was Wangari’s favorite subject and why?
19. Why does Wangari go to the United States?
20. What does being a woman scientist mean to Wangari?

**Chapter Four: The Seeds of an Idea**

21. What ideas did Wangari want to take to Kenya when she returned to teach?
22. What is Wangari's influence on equal rights for women and girls?
23. What was the impact of deforestation on Kenyan communities?
24. Why was Wangari criticized for planting trees? What was her response to the criticism?
25. What is the Green Belt Movement? How did they get their name? Who did Wangari enlist to help plant trees?
26. How many trees were planted and how did Kenya change as a result?

Deforestation

27. What is deforestation? What is the most common cause?
28. How are ecosystems impacted by deforestation? Give examples.
29. How do environmentalists work to combat deforestation?
30. What is reforestation?

The Changing Roles of Women in Kenya

31. How did colonialism impact the roles of women in Kenya?
32. Why is the year 1963 significant for Kenya?
33. When was the first woman elected to the Kenyan Parliament?
34. Describe the women's rights movement? What is the relationship between the women's rights movement and the Green Belt Movement?

Chapter Five: Mother of Trees

35. Why was Wangari seen as threat? Who were the people who were trying to stop her?
36. What was Wangari's experience in prison?

37. Why did Wangari begin to travel after being released from prison?
38. What does Mama Miti mean?
39. What was Wangari's position in the Kenyan parliament?
40. Why is it significant that Wangari won the Nobel Peace Prize?
41. What is Wangari's message to young people?

How to Plant a Tree

42. What are the steps for planting a tree?
43. Name some of the places you can buy a tree to plant.
44. When is the best time to plant a tree?
45. How do you best care for a tree?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3; and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. How did Wangari use persistence, patience, and commitment to achieve her goals?
2. How did Wangari's childhood affect her dream? How was she treated as a girl in Kenya? How did her experiences as a child shape her passions?
3. After finishing elementary school Wangari's mind was "like a seed, rooted in rich soil, ready to grow." What does this mean? How does education plant "seeds" in the mind?
4. What did planting trees mean to Wangari? How did her goal impact her sense of community and duty?
5. Although Wangari Maathai is honored, she did not act alone. What role did other women, particularly mothers, play in the Green Belt movement?



6. In what ways did Wangari Maathai overcome the many different obstacles in her life, starting at an early age? What were the different techniques and ways that Wangari overcame barriers?
 7. What qualities led Wangari Maathai to win a Nobel Peace Prize?
 8. How would you describe Wangari Maathai to a person who had never heard of her before? What are some of the qualities that you would use to speak about Wangari? What are the most important things to say when explaining Wangari's life and legacy?
 9. Explore the structure of the text. Was it written as chronology, comparison, cause/effect, or problem/solution? Why do you think the author made this choice? How does it compare to other texts you have read?
 10. Why do you think education, healthcare, and affordable housing were the three main important areas for women's rights?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books or historical people while you read *The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai*? Why did you make those connections?
 5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world, such as on television or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review each chapter and have students summarize what is happening in the chapter, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about how Wangari's story inspired them and how she showed dedication to her dream and fighting for women's rights in Kenya.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

1. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about Wangari Maathai's upbringing and her dedication to her goals. Why is she an influential figure, both during her lifetime and now?
2. What do you think the essential message is to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind Jen Cullerton Johnson's intentions to write the book. What do you think she wanted to tell her readers?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Wangari Maathai's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?



English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word. Guide students to the glossary at the back of the book for further definitions.

6. Use the text features to help ELL students make sense of what they're reading. The table of contents, chapter titles, callout boxes, bolded words, and diagrams are all visual, vocabulary, and content aids in helping students prepare to engage with the text.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9; Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Wangari Maathai states, "Through the Green Belt Movement, we have helped young people get involved in environmental activities. We have tried to instill in them the idea that protecting the environment is not just pleasure, but also a duty." Have students write a persuasive essay about whether or not it is our

duty to protect the environment. Students can use resources and articles they find online or in books to justify their arguments. Afterwards, have students share their writing pieces with a partner.

2. Have students write an essay or prepare a presentation about deforestation. How does deforestation happen? What are other instances of deforestation happening the rest of the world? For more information and research about deforestation, visit these websites from the World Wildlife Fund (<https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/deforestation-and-forest-degradation>), National Geographic (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/deforestation>), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (<https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/deforestation-and-forest-degradation>).
3. Have students create a Venn diagram using the "Going to School In Kenya" section. What are the similarities and difference that students see between their own school experience and schools in Kenya? Are the subjects the same? Does the quality of education depend on where you live? Students can compare and contrast their findings.
4. Have students think about expository nonfiction versus narrative nonfiction. How was reading *The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai* different from reading a newspaper article about Wangari? Have students read the article, "Wangari Maathai" from Time Magazine (<https://time.com/5793752/wangari-maathai-100-women-of-the-year/>). Have students create a Venn Diagram with the headings, "Narrative Nonfiction: The Story of Civil Rights Environmentalist Wangari Maathai" and "Expository Nonfiction: 'Wangari Maathai'" Students can compare and contrast the different formats of the texts and the information they learn in both. Afterwards, encourage students to write their own article



- for Time Magazine about Wangari Maathai. What would they choose to include?
5. Read *Seeds of Change* (www.leeandlow.com/seeds-of-change), the picture book version of *The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai*. Students can compare and contrast what it was like to read the picture book versus the chapter book version. What were the experiences like? What did they learn from the picture book that they didn't learn from the chapter book, and vice versa? How did it make them think about what it would be like to write a picture book versus a chapter book about a historical figure? Have students write a comparative essay and then share their thoughts with a partner or the whole class. Students can also examine how both picture books and chapter books are important for reading and learning.
 6. Challenge students to explore the characters more deeply with writing tasks that require perspective taking:
 - Write a dialogue between Wangari and her mother right before Wangari leaves for Nairobi. Have students discuss in small groups about how their dialogues are different and reflect on the relationship between Wangari and her mother.
 - Write a letter from Wangari's perspective while she is in jail. You can choose the audience you want to write to (i.e. the government, Wangari's family, the members of the Green Belt Movement). What do you think Wangari would want to share from her experience?
 7. Encourage students to select a resource from the Text & Sidebar Sources from the back of the book. Students can examine the piece, whether it's a book, video, photograph, or website, and write a reaction to how they think the author and illustrator were informed by this information and how it helped to develop the book.
 8. Tell students to imagine they will be interviewing Wangari Maathai for a local newspaper or talk show. Have them develop a list of five interview questions they want to ask. What do they want to learn about in terms of Kenya, her travels, the Greenbelt Movement, and the Nobel Peace Prize? Lead a class discussion, creating a combined list of questions and then narrowing that list down to ten questions.
 9. The rich, varied, and legal language used in *The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai* provides an opportunity for students to develop their vocabulary skills in authentic contexts. Challenge students to learn and practice using the academic and content-specific words listed in this teacher's guide:
 - Before reading: Provide students with a list of the vocabulary words to sort into categories (e.g. very familiar, somewhat familiar, unfamiliar).
 - During reading: Have students make note of the vocabulary words as they encounter them in *The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai*. They can underline, highlight, or keep a log. Have students predict what the words mean based on context clues.
 - After reading: Have students work in pairs to look up the definitions of the "unfamiliar" words on their combined lists. Were their predictions correct? Post the new vocabulary words on your word wall.
 10. Have students think about the main idea and details for a chapter of their choosing. Looking at the table of contents, have students pick a chapter that interested them. Then, have students write three key details, the most important information, in that chapter. Students can then generate the main idea, or what the chapter was mainly about. Finally, have students form small groups with each student representing a different chapter to share their results.



Details:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Main Idea: _____

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)
 (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9; and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

1. Ask students to research the Green Belt Movement. Students should create an informational poster to present to the class, including relevant timelines and photographs. What was the impact of the Green Belt Movement? What does environmental conservation in Kenya look like today? Visit the Green Belt Movement’s website for more information (<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/>).
2. Ask students to research Kenya during British colonialism and after its independence. Students can create a multimedia presentation including relevant details and timelines. What was the impact of colonialism on gender roles in Kenya? What was education like under British rule and after? How did Kenya win their independence back?
3. Have students examine the timeline in the back of the book, and create a new timeline based on historical events that were occurring during that time period. In order for students to understand the historical context of Wangari Maathai’s life, encourage students to research about what other events were happening in

that time. Display both enlarged timelines in the front of the class so that students have easy access to both the dates and events. Students can work in groups in different years and then add their events and findings to the class timeline, located below the enlarged timeline from the book.

4. As a follow-up activity, encourage students to research other notable African women. What did they accomplish? How did they raise awareness around the particular cause that they were passionate about? How did they become leaders in their community? Students can select one figure and conduct a research project on that person. They can present on their findings in a variety of formats: written essay, visual presentation, a combination of both, and more.

Science

(3-LS1-1 From molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes: Develop models to describe that organisms have unique and diverse life cycles but all have in common birth, growth, reproduction, and death; 3-LS2-1 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics: Construct an argument that some animals form groups that help members survive; 3-LS4-4: Make a claim about the merit of a solution to a problem caused when the environment changes and the types of plants and animals that live there may change).

1. Students can conduct a long-term project in which they regularly and periodically observe the ecosystem of a classroom or school garden throughout the course of the school year and document changes that take place during the different seasons. To begin, students should discuss and catalogue all the elements of the ecosystem at the beginning of the observation period. They should then record changes they observe, and the dates on which they occur. More ideas for creating a classroom or school-wide garden can be found at the Center for Ecoliteracy’s “Getting Started: A Guide for Creating School Gardens as Outdoor Classrooms” (<https://greenourplanet.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Guide-for-Creating-School-Gardens.pdf>) or Growing Minds’ “Steps to a Classroom Garden” (<https://>



growing-minds.org/steps-to-a-classroom-garden/).

2. Have students create a diagram of the Greenhouse Effect. In creating their own visual representation, have students write about how the Greenhouse Effect is dangerous. NASA Climate Kids has additional information for students about the Greenhouse Effect (<https://climatekids.nasa.gov/greenhouse-effect/>).
3. Have students draw the essential parts of an ecosystem. Ask them to visualize all of the different plants, animals, nonliving things, and different weather conditions that they can picture. Project Learning Tree has more ideas and lesson plans about ecosystems for young children (<https://www.plt.org/educator-tips/ecosystem-activities-elementary-students>).
4. Have students look up the nearest community tree-planting program. What is their mission? How can students get involved? Look into the National Forest Foundation's Tree Planting Campaign for ideas on how to get started (<https://www.nationalforests.org/get-involved/tree-planting-programs>).
5. Explain that students will be going out into their schoolyard/neighborhood to observe the ecosystem around them. They will record their observations in a journal. Their entry should include:
 - date and location
 - description of the weather conditions (and drawing if possible).
 - description of the soil (color, texture, is it damp or dry?).
 - drawing of a plant with a brief description of where they found it (e.g., in the shade, in an open area, etc.), labeled with parts of the plant (stem, root, petal, etc).
 - drawing of an animal or insect and description of its location and what it was doing, labeled appropriately.

Arts/Media

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Have students watch an interview with Wangari Maathai (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rntQeLcih8>). What details overlap with *The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai*? Are there any differences? Why is Wangari Maathai's story so unique? What surprises or does not surprise you? What questions do you have? Students can discuss their reactions in small groups or partners, and then share their ideas with the whole class.
2. Being Kikuyu deeply shaped Wangari Maathai's sense of self. Have students create a mixed-media collage based on their own personal and cultural identities. Each student should include a photograph of themselves within the collage, as well as experiment with colored pencils, paints, magazine clippings, text, and other art materials. How will you capture and depict your personality, family background, and different and interconnected identities? How does society view your culture and background? What historical moments have your family and/ or culture been a part of? What symbols, imagery, words, and colors will you use? How will you organize them? How do the included images or objects represent you? Ask students to present their mixed-media collages in small groups.
3. Ask students to create posters for Earth Day or for environmental advocacy in their communities. Encourage students to have their posters reflect the information they learned *The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai*.
4. Have students write a reaction essay to the Time Magazine Cover for their Women of the



Year feature showcasing Wangari Maathai (<https://time.com/5793752/wangari-maathai-100-women-of-the-year/>). What do they notice about the cover? How does the cover reflect Wangari Maathai and her accomplishments? What do they like/dislike about the cover? Have students design their own covers afterwards with collage or other materials.

School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. If possible, provide students with a copy of *Seeds of Change* (leeandlow.com/books/seeds-of-change). Encourage family members to read the picture book version of *The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai* at home. Have students and their families talk about what resistance, dedication, and discrimination means to them.
2. Wangari Maathai’s family deeply impacts her dreams and goals. Have students bring in a family object or family saying to share. Ask students to write a summary explaining how the item or saying is significant to and representative of who they are.
3. Ask students to create portraits of people who are their personal role models through drawing, collage, or photograph. In writing, students should describe what actions and qualities they admire about this person. Students can write in prose or submit a poem or song.
4. If accessible, have students and families research other titles featuring influential Kenyan women. How did they shape history? How did they react to and handle the situation when they were faced with obstacles?

5. If accessible, have students and families research other titles featuring women in science. How did they shape history? How did they react to and handle the situation when they were faced with obstacles?

Nonfiction Text Features

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

Types of Print	Point students to the words that are darker in the book, such as beckoned . Why do they think those words are darker, or in bold? What can they use to figure out what the word means if they do not know the meaning? Encourage students to look at the rest of the sentence, and if they still don’t know the word’s meaning, then point them to the glossary.
Sidebar	When students see: “Going to School in Kenya,” why do they think that the text and format look different from the text on the first few pages in Chapter One? Why do they think that there are these specific parts in the book? What is the point of sidebars? What kind of information can they learn from sidebars?
Table of Contents	Point students to the Table of Contents prior to reading. Why do they think a Table of Contents exists? Why is a Table of Contents important?
Timeline	Show students the timeline in the back of the book. Encourage students to think about why timelines are important. After reading, make photocopies of the timeline and then cut up the different events. Have students rearrange and place the different events in order.
Glossary	Prior to reading, show students the glossary in the back of the book. Why do students think that there is a glossary? What can you find in a glossary? When students read and encounter a bold word, have them go to the glossary and read the definition.
Captions	Ask students why they think there is a line of text next to a photograph, illustration, or diagram. What is the purpose of that line of text, or a caption? How would it be different if there was no caption? Have students look at the photograph of the women activists. Then, uncover the caption. Have students describe what they see with the additional knowledge of the caption. How do their feelings about the photograph change when they know the real names of the people in it? Use the caption and the rest of the page to describe the photograph in more detail.
Text Sources	Have students look at the text sources in the back of the book. Why do you think the author chose to include these? Why is it important to show the sources that you used in your writing? Have students select one of the web links (or books, if available) and have them look for information that the author could have used in writing the book
Title	Show students the text that comes after the chapter number. Then have students read the title of that chapter and make a prediction from the words about what the chapter is going to be about. How does the title of the chapter help them to think about what they’re going to read?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jen Cullerton Johnson is a writer, an educator, and an environmentalist with master's degrees in nonfiction writing and curriculum development. She teaches at both the elementary and college levels in Chicago, where she also conducts writing workshops. Johnson can be found online at jencullertonjohnson.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sonia Lynn Sadler was an illustrator and a fine artist who focused on depicting the cultures, lives, and stories of peoples of African descent. Her book, *Seeds of Change*, earned her a Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent. Her unique style drew inspiration from quilts and employed a variety of techniques and mediums—from watercolor to scratchboard. She passed away in September 2013.

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.

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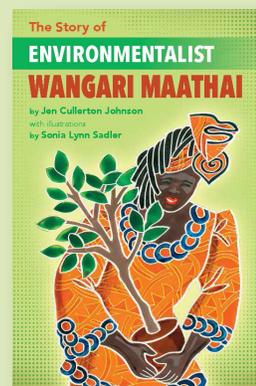
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Book Information for

The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai



\$8.95, PAPERBACK

9781643790121

64 pages, 5-1/2 X 8-1/4

*Reading Level: Grade 6

Interest Level: Grades 3–8

Guided Reading Level: V

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

THEMES: African/African American Interest, Animal/Biodiversity/Plant Adaptations, Biography/Memoir, Empathy/Compassion, Environment/Nature, Human Impact On Environment/Environmental Sustainability, Nonfiction, Occupations, Respect/Citizenship, Women's History

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

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All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.