



The Open  
Canopy



*Slowing down, sharing stories, making connections:  
A free online learning program for youth around the world*

## Core Learning Journey 1: The Present and the Local

In this curriculum, students engage in 6 different footsteps  
to explore their everyday lives and local communities.

|                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Footstep 1:<br/>Setting Off</b>                         | Students introduce themselves and explain their choice of avatar. They start a conversation about the underlying themes of the Out of Eden Walk.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Footstep 2:<br/>Creating<br/>Neighborhood Maps</b>      | Students create visual representations of their local area, as seen through their eyes, and share a related story.                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Footstep 3:<br/>Taking Neighborhood<br/>Walks</b>       | Students go for a walk in their local area and observe their surroundings carefully; they take photos to share with other participants.                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Footstep 4:<br/>Listening to<br/>Neighbors' Stories</b> | Students interview an adult to learn about someone else's experiences and memories of their local area.                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Footstep 5:<br/>Documenting the<br/>Everyday</b>        | Students carefully observe a place they know or something that people in their community do as part of their everyday lives. They create a short video, slideshow, illustrated guide, or vivid description to share with other students.                                          |
| <b>Footstep 6:<br/>Looking Ahead</b>                       | Students plan a walk they would like to take to try to understand more about the world and/or themselves. Or, they research a place that Out of Eden Walk journalist Paul Salopek could walk to from his current location and suggest the kinds of stories he should try to tell. |

*This iteration of Out of Eden Learn Core Learning Journey 1: The Present and the Local was published in September 2024.*

# **CORE LEARNING JOURNEY 1:** **THE PRESENT AND THE LOCAL**

## **FOOTSTEP 1: SETTING OFF**

### **GET INSPIRED**

Welcome! We are so happy to have you join us for a learning journey!

Let's begin by finding out about journalist Paul Salopek and his Out of Eden Walk. To get started, please do the following:

- **Listen** to Paul's welcome message to you and other students on YouTube [here](#), which he recorded from Kyrgyzstan in December of 2016. (He set off from Ethiopia in January 2013.)
- **Watch** a [short video](#) in which Paul explains why he is taking a seven-year walk around the world.
- **Read** *Classroom Planet*, a piece by Paul.
- **Review** the [Dialogue Toolkit](#).

### **DO AN ACTIVITY**

Now it's time for you to do your first post! We invite you to introduce yourself and begin talking about Paul's walk. This is a great opportunity to learn about your walking partners who you will be interacting with for the next six weeks. It is also an opportunity to have your walking partners learn more about you and for you to share parts of yourself you find meaningful.

- First, write a paragraph about yourself introducing and describing yourself to your walking partners. What are some things you enjoy doing? What are some things you are interested in or passionate about? What would you like your walking partners to know about you?
- Then, upload an avatar if you have not already done so. (Click on the picture of the cheetah cub, choose "Edit profile" and then upload an image which is not a photo or picture of you). Share why you chose your avatar.
- Next, think back to what you've learned about the Out of Eden Walk. What do you think about the idea of walking around the world and slowing down to notice hidden stories? Can you make any personal connections to these ideas?

***Please note that for all activities we recommend that you save your work somewhere else before uploading it to our website: if there is a connectivity issue, the work you have typed directly into our website may be lost.***

## INTERACT WITH YOUR WALKING PARTNERS

An important and fun part of your learning journey will be making connections with other young people. Start getting to know who is in your walking party!

- **Read** at least 3 to 4 posts from other young people in your walking party.
- **Write** detailed comments and questions for two students, including *at least one student who is not in your class or program*. Use the following dialogue tools:
  - **PROBE** for more details. Ask questions that might help give you a better sense of the students' ideas and interests. Use these "Creative Question Starters" to help you think of interesting questions:
    - "Tell me more about..."
    - "I wonder if..."
    - "Help me understand..."
  - **CONNECT:** Do you feel a connection with anything another student shared about themselves?
- **Respond** to any comments or questions students have left for you.

## FOOTSTEP 2: CREATING NEIGHBORHOOD MAPS

### GET INSPIRED

Welcome back for Footstep 2! We hope that you are enjoying this learning journey so far. We kick things off this week by inviting you to explore where Paul has walked so far since setting off on January 10, 2013.

- **Look** at this map of [Paul's route](#).
- **Explore** 3 different [Milestones](#) from the Out of Eden Walk website.

### DO AN ACTIVITY

The purpose of this activity is for you to think about your own relationship to a place. It is also a chance for you to share more about yourself!

- Sketch a map of a place you know well, as you see it through your eyes. Your place could be your neighborhood or local area, your school, a place you like to visit, or a route you regularly travel—by foot, by bike, by car, or any other way. This map does not have to be "accurate" or similar to other maps that exist. You can draw this map on paper and then scan it or photograph it to upload to the site. Or, you can draw it electronically – for example, through [Doodle Buddy](#) or [PaintBox](#). **Do not use Google Maps or a similar online mapping service to represent your neighborhood.**
- Write a true story to go with your map. If you like, you can record yourself telling a story and upload an audio file instead of writing it down. Your story could involve:
  - The whole map or one special place that is featured on your map.

- A memory or something that happened to you when you were younger in one of the places on your map.
- A typical day in your life that features places marked on your map.
- A story about your neighborhood that you have heard from someone else – it could be a story that happened before you were born.
- How your neighborhood has changed over time.

## INTERACT WITH YOUR WALKING PARTNERS

Now it's time to explore other people's maps and stories!

- **Read** at least 4 posts from other young people in your walking party.
- **Choose** *one* person who is not from your class or program.
- **Look** at his or her neighborhood map post slowly and carefully. What is interesting or thought provoking about the map and its story? What catches your eye and makes you want to learn more?
- **Write** a comment in which you use the following dialogue tools:
  - **NOTICE:** What stands out to you or catches your eye in this map? What do you notice?
  - **APPRECIATE:** Share what you like, value, or find interesting in the map and story. Be specific.
  - **PROBE:** Ask questions that might help you understand more about the student's map or the story they are trying to tell. Use these "Creative Question Starters" to help you think of interesting questions:
    - "Tell me more about..."
    - "I wonder if..."
    - "Help me understand..."
- **Respond:** Return to your own map and to your Setting Off post. Respond to any comments made by your walking partners. Try to keep the conversation going.

## FOOTSTEP 3: TAKING NEIGHBORHOOD WALKS

### GET INSPIRED

Welcome back for Footstep 3! We hope that you will enjoy this amusing but thoughtful piece by Paul about his tricky camels, Fares and Seema.

- **Read** *Camel-ology*. You can read an annotated version [here](#). Notice how Paul pays careful attention to small details in this piece.
- Now **watch** the accompanying [video](#) (scroll to the bottom of the dispatch). Notice how the video incorporates lots of different angles and perspectives.

### DO AN ACTIVITY

Now it's time for you to do a walk of your own – though one that is a lot shorter than Paul's. Students have told us that they are surprised by what they notice when they slow down to look with fresh eyes at where they live.

- Plan to take a walk in your neighborhood or local area. It may include places on your sketch map. You can walk by yourself or with a classmate, friend, or family member.
  - As you walk in your neighborhood or local area, take photos of things that catch your attention. What do you see, feel, hear, taste, or smell? Try to look at the place and the people who live or work there with fresh eyes. Here are some ideas for different kinds of photos you can take:
    - Photos that capture a whole neighborhood scene, and photos that zoom in on a detail you find interesting.
    - Photos where you're pointing the camera up and photos where you're pointing the camera towards the ground.
    - Photos of things that are common or familiar in your neighborhood, and photos of things that might be unexpected or surprising.
    - Something special that you'd like to share.
  - Post two photos that you took on your walk.
  - Tell the story of why you took these two photos and why you chose to post them. What do you like about the photos you took? What would you like other people in your walking party to notice or understand about them?
    - How, if at all, did taking a walk and/or taking these photos make you think in new or different ways about your neighborhood or local area?

### **INTERACT WITH YOUR WALKING PARTNERS**

And now it's time to find out what other students saw as they walked through their neighborhoods. We hope you enjoy looking at all the different photos!

- **Choose** two posts from other students to look at and respond to.
- **Write** a comment in which you use the following dialogue tools:
  - **NOTICE:** What stands out to you or catches your eye in the photo and story shared here?
  - **APPRECIATE:** Share what you like, value, or found interesting. Be specific.
  - **EXTEND:** Did the post extend your thinking or give you a new perspective? If so, share how.
- **Respond:** Return to your own posts. Respond to anyone who left comments or questions for you. Try to keep the conversation going or join in on other conversations.

## **FOOTSTEP 4: LISTENING TO NEIGHBORS' STORIES**

### **GET INSPIRED**

Welcome to Footstep 4! Let's start this week by thinking about the special effort that Paul makes to listen to other people.

- **Listen** to this [audio message](#) from Paul. In it, he shared advice for talking to and – most importantly – listening to other people.
- **Read** this [annotated excerpt](#) from Camille Bromley’s article *Women Trailblazers* about gender and the Out of Eden Walk. **Notice** the stories and perspectives Camille shares. Who is Camille listening to? Why might this be important?

## DO AN ACTIVITY

Now it’s your turn to try out your skills at listening and to share a new story with your walking partners.

- Your task this week is to talk and listen to an adult who lives or works in your local area. This person could be someone you have never spoken to before or someone you already know. It does not need to be someone who has lived in the area for a long time.
- Ask the person for a story or memory about your local area. For example, some questions you might ask are:
  - *How did you come to be in this place?*
  - *How have you seen the area change over time?*
  - *What are some of your memories about the area?*
  - *Do any particular events in the area stand out in your mind?*
  - *Are there things you would like to see more of—or less of—in the future?*
- Write up the highlights of your conversation or recreate a story that they told you. Include a short description of the person you talked with – for example, how you know them, the setting where you talked, what they look like, and what they were wearing. Alternatively, you can upload an audio file of you retelling their story in your own words

## INTERACT WITH YOUR WALKING PARTNERS

And now we invite you to appreciate someone else’s work – in ways that involve you slowing down to listen carefully to what someone else has shared and then giving them some thoughtful feedback. We really look forward to reading your comments.

- **Read** one post from a student in your walking party.
- **Write** a comment using the following tools:
  - **SNIP:** Cut and paste a phrase or sentence from the post into your comment. Ask a question about it or say what you find interesting or important about what’s being said.
  - **EXTEND:** Did the post extend your thinking or give you a new perspective? If so, share how.
- **Respond:** Return to your own posts. Respond to anyone who left comments or questions for you. Try to keep the conversation or join in on other conversations.

## FOOTSTEP 5: DOCUMENTING THE EVERYDAY

### GET INSPIRED

Welcome to Footstep 5! We are especially excited to see what you will do with this footstep: as always, feel free to get creative!

- First, **listen** to Paul talking about “The River of Culture” [here](#) – an audio he created especially for Out of Eden Learn.
- Then, **look** at two or more of the following examples of Paul’s work in which he captures details of everyday life:
  - [The Prophet’s Mosque](#): watch a short video at the end of the dispatch of Muslim pilgrims breaking their fast at Medina during the holy month of Ramadan.
  - [Milestone 18: Displaced](#), a short video shot at a small Syrian refugee camp in Jordan. This video is one of a series of [Glances](#) that Paul creates at each of his [Milestones](#).
  - [Milestone 19: Refuel](#), a short video shot at a gas station in Jenin, in the West Bank.
  - [Trail Notes: Coffea Arabica](#): scroll to the bottom of the dispatch to watch a short video that shows how the Bedouins of Saudi Arabia prepare coffee.
  - [Awad’s Refrigerator](#), a slideshow that explains how his walking guide made a water cooler from discarded materials.

### DO AN ACTIVITY

There are aspects of our everyday life that might be very interesting to other people but which might seem very “normal” to us. There may also be parts of our everyday lives that we usually don’t find time to notice. This is your chance to notice some new things and to share your observations with other people.

- Choose to focus on one of the following:
  - PLACE: Document everyday life in a place that you know.
  - PROCESS: Document how people in your community do something as part of their everyday lives. For example, you could focus on how a type of food or drink is prepared, how an object is made or repaired, or how someone goes about another kind of daily task or activity.
- Choose one of the following formats\*:
  - A short video in the style of Paul’s [Glances](#) that does not feature your voice. Try to use the camera to draw attention to small details. Write a short description to explain what you were trying to show in the video.
  - A short video that is similar in format to Paul’s [Glances](#) but includes you talking about what you observe.
  - A slideshow that includes photos of what you observed. You may add text to annotate your slides.
  - Alternatively, you could upload your photos directly to our website and add text.
  - Use drawings, photos, and/or text to create a step-by-step guide to a process you observed, perhaps similar to Paul’s piece about [Awad’s Refrigerator](#). You could scan and upload your document or copy and paste your content directly onto our website.

- Write a story or memory of something you observed that means a lot to you – for example, something that you remember playing or making when you were younger, or a place you know well. Write about the place or process in detail, including sounds, sights, smells, flavors and/or textures you can remember.

*\*Please note: at present you **cannot** upload videos or PowerPoint presentations directly to our website. You can only share a video or PowerPoint if you, your teacher, or a parent upload your video or PowerPoint to Google Drive and post the link so that members in your walking party can access it (the email account details will remain private). You need to be 13 years or older to have a Gmail account. If you do not have your own Gmail account, please check that someone is willing to post your video or PowerPoint before you choose this option. For participants in countries where access to Google Drive is an issue, please be in touch with us. Dropbox, for example, could be a good alternative. **Whatever the format, please do not include identifiable images of you and/or other people.***

## **INTERACT WITH YOUR WALKING PARTNERS**

We hope you are getting comfortable with our toolkit and that you find it useful. Please follow the instructions below. We look forward to reading the conversations that unfold.

- **Read:** Choose *one* other student's post to read and comment on.
- **Write** a comment using the following tools.
  - **CONNECT:** Do you feel a connection with anything the student shared about themselves and their everyday life? Share your thoughts.
  - **EXTEND:** Did the post extend your thinking or give you a new perspective? If so, share how.
- **Respond:** If you receive a comment this week, including a question, please be sure to respond! Also, respond to any comments on your posts from previous weeks and make sure that you completed all the parts of the earlier footsteps.

## **FOOTSTEP 6: LOOKING AHEAD**

### **GET INSPIRED**

You have reached the final footstep of this learning journey! We hope you will enjoy this concluding footstep.

- **Read** *Electronic Oasis* by Paul. You can read an annotated version [here](#).
- **Review** the [Dialogue Toolkit](#).

### **DO AN ACTIVITY**

As a concluding activity, we are giving you two rather different options. Read on and pick the one that most appeals to you.

#### OPTION 1:

- Describe a walk that you would like to take to try to understand more about the world and/or about yourself. It might be:
  - A long walk like Paul's or a much shorter one.
  - Somewhere you already know or somewhere you have never visited.
  - A walk that involves looking at things slowly and up close or one that is more about taking in a bigger picture.
- What would you hope to learn by taking this walk?
- Here are some ideas for how you might develop and present your ideas:
  - A sketch map of your route with an accompanying explanation.
  - A written itinerary of your route with details of what you hope to see and why.

#### OPTION 2:

- Find out where Paul is right now. Do some research about a place that Paul could walk to from his current location. What would be interesting for Paul to visit or observe? Do you have any specific ideas about people he should try to talk with or questions he should ask them? What or whose stories should he be trying to tell and why?
- We will select some of your suggestions and share them with Paul. For these suggestions to be helpful to him, they should be as specific as possible and backed up by some research. Try to include historical, geographic, political, economic, cultural, and/or religious details about the place in your suggestion.

### **INTERACT WITH YOUR WALKING PARTNERS**

Nearly at the end! Be as thoughtful as you can in your final set of interactions with fellow participants. Once you have completed the instructions below, please complete a private reflection and survey to unlock a special thank you message from Paul. We really value your thoughts and feedback. Thank you so much for taking part in Out of Eden Learn.

- **Read:** Choose at least one post to read and comment on.
- **Write** a comment using at least two of the following dialogue tools:
  - **SNIP:** Cut and paste a phrase or sentence from the post into your comment. Ask a question about it or say what you find interesting or important about what is being said.
  - **APPRECIATE:** Share what you like, value, or found interesting in the map and story. Be specific.
  - **PROBE:** Ask questions that help you understand more about another student's ideas. Use these "Creative Question Starters" to help you think of interesting questions:
    - "Tell me more about..."
    - "I wonder if..."
    - "Help me understand..."
- **Respond:** Return to your own posts. Respond to anyone who left comments or questions for you. Please make sure that you completed all the earlier INTERACT instructions.



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