

## Grade 3 Narrative

### A Backyard Story

Joe awoke early because he was excited about this day. He had been waiting all week for this day to come. He had images in his mind of all the animals he would see on a nature walk with his family. He quickly dressed and raced down the stairs. He could not believe what he saw outside. Joe was greeted by dark clouds and rain showers. As he looked out the kitchen window, he began to think that today was going to be a boring day.

Joe joined his parents who were sitting at the table. "It's not fair!" he said. "I wanted to go on the nature walk. Now I am stuck inside."

"Joe, I understand you are upset," Mom said, "but let's eat breakfast and then decide what we will do today."

Joe poured cereal into a bowl and splashed some milk on top. He saw a bright red bird eating seeds at the bird feeder outside.

"What kind of bird is that?" asked Joe.

"That's a cardinal. The bright red ones are males," said Dad.

Joe ate breakfast while watching the cardinal. When he was finished eating, he stood in front of the window. The cardinal flew away. Joe was sorry to see the bird leave.

Joe's parents had an idea after seeing that Joe was fascinated by the cardinal. "We do not have to go on a nature walk to see animals. We can see animals from our window. Let's spend the morning seeing how many different animals we can identify in our backyard," Mom suggested to Joe.

Joe liked the idea. Joe found the perfect spot to see the whole backyard. He saw that the cardinal was at the feeder again with another bird. The two birds ate seeds from the bird feeder. They drank some water from the birdbath. Afterward, the birds flew to another part of the yard to nest in the bushes.

Dad spotted another bird in the yard. A gray sparrow flew across the green grass and disappeared through a tiny hole in the birdhouse attached to the fence. Dad had built that house when he installed the fence. He was happy to know that the birdhouse was inhabited.

Next, a black crow flew down and grabbed a piece of fruit from the compost bin. The crow flew up to the top of the trees and shared it with other crows. Then several of the crows flew to the compost bin and feasted on the fruit.

Mom's gaze rested on a deer near the trees in the backyard. The deer had found some seeds and corn to nibble on. Mom was surprised to see a deer so close to their house.

"I can't believe all these animals live in our backyard," said Joe. He found some paper and began to draw the animals he had seen. Then he wrote a story about them. He titled it "A Backyard Story."

## Grade 3 Informational

### The Web of Life

Did you know that almost all living things depend on other living things to stay alive? The plants and animals in our world need each other. This is sometimes called the "web of life."

A good place to study this is your neighborhood park. The sun helps the grass to grow. Grass is a meal for grasshoppers. Then birds and frogs eat grasshoppers. If there are snakes in the park, they might eat birds and frogs. Owls might eat some snakes and some frogs. When an owl grows old and dies, its body becomes part of the soil. Grass grows in the soil. The whole chain of events starts over again.

However, it's not quite as simple as that. Some animals eat both plants and other animals. Some plants even eat animals! Sometimes, plants get old and die before they are eaten by animals. Then they feed the soil, too. They all need each other to live.

Think about a spider's web. All of its threads work to hold the web together. If just a few of them begin to break, the whole web might fall apart unless the spider repairs it with new threads. That's how a web of life works, too. If one part goes missing, everyone could be in trouble.

Imagine that the grass in the neighborhood park becomes sick and starts to die. If the grasshoppers can't find something else to eat, the birds and frogs will be out of a meal. Then the snakes may go hungry. The whole web might be broken. But maybe the grasshoppers *will* find a different plant to eat. Then they will continue to grow. The birds, frogs, snakes, and owls will be fine. Sometimes the web of life changes, but it keeps going on and on.