

**LAUSD Instructional Guide Performance Task  
(adapted from the Chapter Challenge)**

**Standard Groups: One and Two – all standards**

**The Task: Create an Eco-traveler Tour Guide**

**Background/Situation:** You are an environmental scientist / park ranger at \_\_\_\_\_ National Park in \_\_\_\_\_. The League of Concerned Voters in your area has commissioned you to prepare a booklet to inform the local citizens and visitors about the park. The information that you provide in the booklet should introduce the scientific facts behind the current environmental, economic, and social issues that are affecting the use and operation of the park. The League of Concerned Voters wants local citizens to have the information they need (ecological and financial) to make good decisions as voters to protect and support the operation of the park. They also want all visitors to the park to enjoy and appreciate the natural scenic beauty of the area and to understand how it is maintained. They want all people to treat the park with respect.

**Directions to the Student -** As you plan for producing your booklet, you should keep the following in mind:

- Your booklet will include the following four distinct sections: 1) biotic and abiotic factors, 2) natural history of the area, 3) characteristics that make the park appealing to visitors, and 4) a description of how human activity impacts the park in positive and negative ways.
- Your booklet should be easily understood your audience.
- The design and layout of the booklet should be appealing, colorful, and have graphics and pictures.
- Since you will be gathering information from many sources, it is expected that you will have footnote and bibliography pages.

**Clear Expectations for Performance – Requirements -** You should use the following checklist to guide the development of your booklet (Note: Sections may appear in any order):

**Section I – Biotic and Abiotic Factors**

- Description of park climate including climatograph
- Topographic map highlighting areas of geographic importance, longitude/latitude, elevation
- Description of the ecosystem (type of biome): identify predominant flora and fauna (biodiversity)
- Food web depicting flora and fauna interactions

**Section II – Natural History**

- Timeline of park existence
- Fossil record of area providing evidence for what changes have occurred

**Section III – Visitor Appeal**

- Recreational activities (camping, hiking, skiing, fishing)
- Monuments and specific sites of interest
- Use of park for scientific study

#### **Section IV – Park Management**

- Funding sources
- Governing body
- How to seek employment at the park
- Use of park natural resources (logging, water rights, hunting, fishing)
- Impact of human activities on park (economics, biodiversity, pollution)

#### **Materials:**

#### **Scoring Criteria:**

- Originality and Design
- Organization (supported with details and examples)
- Sense of Audience
- Descriptive/Academic Language
- Conventions

#### **Student Evaluation Questions:**

- Is my title original and engaging?
- Is the design of my booklet creative; does it include interesting visuals?
- Do I clearly address my target audience and their expectations?
- Do I use precise, descriptive academic language?
- Have I checked for spelling and grammar errors?

#### **Student Reflection – Use a +/Δ chart to reflect on the following aspects of your team’s product:**

- Design protocol
- Language learning
- Writing skill enhancement
- Group interaction
- Inquiry skill improvement

#### **Instructional Scaffolding – In addition to all unit instructional activities:**

- Creating an effective group work protocol
- Examining/analyzing brochures
- Surveying design features
- Researching on the Internet
- Finding/designing visuals
- Making citations
- Making a draft/mock booklet
- Editing
- Other

**Text Connections:** Integrated Coordinated Science (for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) – Chapters 9 and 10

**Other Resources:** Specific National Park Information Bureau and the Internet

**LAUSD Instructional Guide Performance Task  
(adapted from the Chapter Challenge – extension)**

**Standard Groups: One and Two – all standards**

**The Task: Write a persuasive letter regarding an environmental issue**

**Background or Situation:** Based on their “Eco-Traveler” studies, students (individually or in a group with specifically assigned tasks of parts of the letter) will use various aspects/components/elements of the brochure and analyze, evaluate, the impact of human activity in that particular ecosystem. They will address the issues and possible solutions by writing a letter to an elected official who is in a position to affect change or bring the issue to the attention of a local newspaper.

**Directions to the Student -** Write a typed formal business letter to a politician or letter to the editor regarding a current environmental issue affecting the ecosystem that was presented in your “Eco-Traveler” brochure. In the letter you should:

- Provide relevant data on the issue affecting their particular ecosystem
- Draw attention to areas where data may be lacking as it relates to their issue or problem
- Interpret the data and indicate the limits of the interpretation
- Describe how changes in an ecosystem are determined and how they can be analyzed
- Incorporate other relevant topics as it relates to their specific issues such as discussing the significance of biodiversity, recycling of matter, energy flow, and the roles of various organisms within a food web or food chain, and population fluctuation due to seasonal or human intervention.
- Letters will be turned into your teacher with an unsealed correctly addressed stamped envelope

**Clear Expectations for Performance** – Your letter needs to include:

- Typed Business letter format, (8-1/2”x11”, font size 12, 1” margins, single spaced, minimum of 5 paragraphs)
- Persuasive format with position clearly stated (a persuasive response states and defends a position with evidence and addresses the reader’s concerns, biases, and expectations)
- Standard English with correct spelling, punctuation and grammar
- Must address all bulleted items found in the “directions to student”, and directly linked to performance assessment task
- Completeness and accuracy of the relevant ecological principles as they pertain to the environmental issues
- Envelope must be correctly addressed and stamped
- Only “3” or “4” scored letters will be eligible to mail, all others will be returned for revision
- All researched information must be clearly cited or identified

**Scoring Criteria:**

- Thesis Statement (supported by details and examples)
- Organization
- Sense of Audience (addresses concerns, biases, and expectations)
- Precise Descriptive Academic Language
- Conventions
- States a Position (based on valid scientific information)

**Student Evaluation Questions:**

- Have I supported my thesis statement with details and examples?
- Is my information organized ?
- Have I appropriately addressed all of the concerns of my readers?
- Do I use precise, descriptive, academic language?
- Have I checked for spelling and grammar errors?
- Have I persuasively stated a position that will convince my readers?

**Student Reflection:**

- Read several scored letters other than your own.
- Re-read your own letter.
- Make simple corrections in spelling or grammar.
- List what you could do to raise your score by one mark (e.g. 2→3)
- [Re-write]

**Journal Prompt** - In your reflective journal respond to the following prompt:  
Have you ever written to a politician before? How did you feel writing a letter to a politician? Do you think that you will get a response? How does this letter differ from the letters you normally write in my classroom? Will you continue to write letters like this in the future?

**Instructional Scaffolding – In addition to all unit instructional activities:**

- Practice with rubric assessment (utilized throughout year)
- Concrete exposure to the task (by reading samples of persuasive letters)
- Practice at distinguishing fact from opinion
- Formal letter writing experience
- Computer literacy skills

**Text Connections:**

This activity is designed to follow the Eco-traveler which is a modified version of the chapter challenge from Unit 4, Active Biology, “A Vote for Ecology.”

## Rubric

For a “4” paper

- All bullets above must be addressed in a clear (argument easily understood and has a logical order), complete (all relevant information is included), and consistent (free of errors that conflict with the data) manner
- Persuasive argument that is supported by data and evidence
- Concluding opinions and solutions are logical and supported by the research
- Opinions must be based on valid information
- Citations are included

For a “3” paper

- Bullets are addressed in a clear and consistent manner but argument may be weak
- A few minor errors that do not detract from the overall thesis
- Few mechanical errors that do not detract from presentation
- Concluding opinions and solutions are logical and supported by the research
- Opinions must be based on valid information
- Citations are included

For a “2” paper

- Not ready to mail
- Minor revisions needed in areas of content, or mechanics
- Completes the assignment but argument is unclear or ambiguous
- Concluding opinions are not logical or supported by the research
- Citations incomplete

For a “1” paper

- Attempted to write letter but unclear, incomplete and inconsistent
- Product does not reflect the assignment
- Not ready to mail
- Needs major revisions in areas of content or mechanics