

Activity B: What will people see on the long walk to the water's edge?

Teacher's Note

In this activity, students listen to the story that asks them to imagine that they have spent a lifetime visiting the Great Lakes; they are then asked to draw pictures of or describe the changes they have noticed in the Lakes during their lifetime.

When your grandparents first bought land on the shore of the Great Lakes, it was very beautiful. The forest reached almost to the beach, and ended in some low rolling sand dunes you used to run across with your bare feet flying. From the dunes to the water's edge was barely a skip or two; then your toes could wiggle in the cool water as it swished over the smooth, rounded stones. Along the beach you searched for lucky stones and interesting driftwood to put in the treasure box under your bed.

In the corner of the lot was a low area where some cattails grew, and the water was quiet and warm. Tiny fish swam there, and a green heron came every morning to find a mouthful for breakfast. A big frog once startled you with its lightning leap and a splash into the water when you came too near.

It was great then when the water was so close you could hear it from your open window at night, and the beach seemed only a step away. Whatever your grandparents paid for that place, it was worth it.

So now the old place welcomes you back with your own grandchildren. You've told them stories about how it was; the image is so vivid in their minds as they run toward the beach. Follow them.

On the porch swing that night, your daughter wants to hear what her children saw, and what YOU saw today. Tell her the two stories, and think about how things have changed since the climate got warmer. She might appreciate a picture, your mental photograph of then and now.