FORESTS OF THE FUTURE?

by Meghan Kelly, urban gardens educator

PURPOSE
Help students learning English as a second language practice their skills and gain vocabulary by writing about a future scenario regarding Earth's forests and what we can do now to protect our forest ecosystems.

GRADERS
7-12

TIME
2 class periods

MATERIALS
- scenario slips
- paper, writing utensils
- information about forests and deforestation, if needed

SUBJECT AREAS
Language Arts, Science and Social Studies/History

COMMON CORE STANDARDS
Forthcoming
PROCEEDURE

Part 1

Note: If you're doing this activity out of the context of a larger unit on forests and deforestation, be sure to first read a sampling of articles and essays about deforestation, the importance of forests to people, animals and the earth, and what others are doing to help renew and protect forests.

1. Have students choose one of the scenarios and write a one page story responding to the questions.

Scenario A: Imagine a future scenario, in 500 years, in which the world has regained most of its forests. There are thriving ecosystems on every continent. What happened? How and why did the forests regrow? Write a one page story. Describe the forests in the present tense. Describe what happened in the past tense.

Scenario B: Imagine a future scenario, in 500 years, in which the world has lost most of its forests. Many ecosystems have been lost forever.
What happened? How and why did the forests disappear? Write a one page story. Describe the landscape in the present tense. Describe what happened in the past tense.

Part 2 (ideally done another day)

1. Have each student read the story of a fellow classmate and then have them answer the following questions:

A. If you lived in this world, how would you feel? Why?

If I lived in this world, I would feel _______________ because __________________.

B. If you lived in this world, what would you do? How would you act? What choices would you make?

C. In this story, were the previous generations responsible? What, if anything, do you think they should have done differently?

D. What can you do now in the present to help ensure that we have thriving forests and ecosystems 500 years from now?