

## TEACHER GUIDE: Letter 2: Western Fence Lizard

### CONCEPTS COVERED

#### Plant Community—Chaparral

Characteristics

“Elfin forest”

Water sources

People/Animal trails

Invention of chaps

#### Representative animal—Western fence lizard

Characteristics

Food

Water sources

Habits

Enemies

Carnivore: Insectivore

Camouflage

Geology—Igneous rocks

Staying safe on the Reserve

Always let the adult docent lead the way

Don't put your hands or feet where you can't see

### CONTENT VOCABULARY

- basalt—a type of igneous rock formed from cooled lava with few or no crystals
- bask—to sit or lie back lazily in the warmth of the sun
- boulder—any large, rounded rock lying on the ground or embedded in the soil
- camouflage—special coloring and shape that helps an animal blend in with its surroundings
- carnivore—a plant or animal that eats only animals
- chaparral—a community of plants which grows together characterized by short, shrubby plants with smallish leaves; most common plant community in California
- chaps—a cowboy's leather leggings worn over the pants as protection for the front of the legs
- condensation—to change from a gas or vapor into a liquid or solid through cooling
- crystal—the solid form of a mineral, sometimes with many flat surfaces
- dew—water vapor in the air which condenses into small drops on plants, and other cool surfaces at night
- docent—a knowledgeable person who leads a tour

- elfin forest—nickname given to chaparral
- granite—a kind of rough igneous rock that is gray, brown, or pink in color; made up of crystals of the minerals quartz, feldspar and mica
- insectivore—an animal that eats only insects; a type of carnivore
- lava—hot, melted rock that reaches the surface of Earth
- magma—hot, liquid rock that stays beneath Earth’s surface
- mineral—an inorganic, solid substance found in nature that has a uniform chemical composition, a regular crystal form, and a characteristic hardness and color
- threat display—body language that says “Stay away!”

#### OTHER WORDS TO KNOW

dinosaur	push-ups	shelter	survive
pounce	roam	slither	tunnel
protect	scaly skin	surroundings	

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- How can you tell when you are in the chaparral community?
- The plants in this community grow in areas where the sun is hot and there is not much water. How are they able to do this?
- Why do some people call this plant community the “elfin forest”?
- Name one plant that grows in the chaparral community.
- What did cowboys wear to protect their legs when they rode through chaparral?
- Can you think of at least 3 things you learned about the Western fence lizard?
- What do carnivores eat? Why are insectivores a special kind of carnivore?
- Name ways that animals protect themselves from predators?
- What is one predator that hunts in the chaparral?
- There are many rocks along the trail. What kind are they? How were they formed?
- How are magma and lava different? How are the rocks they form different?
- What are two things to remember to stay safe when hiking on the Reserve?

#### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS

Try an experiment in condensation. You will need some very cold ice water. Add a little food coloring. Pour water and ice into a clear plastic glass. Watch the outside of the glass to see what happens. Where did the water come from? Why did it form on the outside of the cup? What process is at work here? Look at it later. What changes do you see? Why? (Works best on a day with some humidity or late in the school day when the room is warm and steamy.)