



Design School Lesson Plan

Biodiversity Matters

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TITLE OF LESSON

Biodiversity Matters

ACHIEVABLES

- Students will learn more about the important role that biodiversity plays in a healthy ecosystem.
- Students will recognize the impact that humans are having on unique habitats around the world.
- Students will develop graphics designed to encourage others to care about biodiversity.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE FOR TEACHERS

Biodiversity – habitats with a wide variety of plant and animal species – is essential to the survival of our planet, our economy and ourselves. Areas with high rates of biodiversity can provide humans with more natural resources to draw from and take advantage of. Areas with high rates of biodiversity area also better able to survive and thrive in the face of unexpected ecological challenges.

Sadly, our ecosystems and habitats are becoming less diverse. In fact, every day, nearly 100 species disappears from the planet. One of the causes of biodiversity loss is the impact that humans have on the environment around them. As we expand cities and “modernize” rural areas, plant and animal species that have survived for millions of years are destroyed. Protecting habitats, then, starts by educating others about the importance of biodiversity and of the challenge that individual species are facing as a result of the actions of humans.

PREPARATION

For this lesson, students will need access to the Internet to explore several websites. This can be done by students working alone, in small groups, or as a whole class depending on the number of devices that you have available to you. For the best results, consider having students work in groups of three.

SUGGESTED LESSON FLOW

1. To get a sense for what your students already know about biodiversity and habitat loss, ask the following yes/no questions:
 - I think that the habitats and environments on earth are generally healthy and thriving.
 - I think that humans have generally made the earth a better place to live.
 - I think that some plant and animal species are more important than others.
 - I think that governments should spend more money protecting the environment even if it means that my family has to pay higher taxes.
 - I can tell you all about the different plants and animals that live in the habitats around our school.
2. Introduce the notion of biodiversity and habitat loss [by showing this video](#).
3. After watching the video, ask students to reconsider their answers to the yes/no questions introduced in step one based on the information shared by experts in the video clip. Emphasize that human impact on the environment really is having a negative impact on the habitats that we depend on for our survival.
4. Lead a classroom conversation around the following questions:
 - Do you think the people in your community realize that biodiversity and habitat loss is something that we should be concerned about?
 - If you were to rate the awareness levels of your parents, your neighbors and your friends about biodiversity and habitat loss on a scale from “very aware” to “pretty darn clueless,” what would your ratings be?
 - What explains your ratings? Why is it that the average person shows relatively no interest in the plant and animal species around them?
 - What can we do to change people’s perceptions? How can we help to build awareness about the importance of protecting species and habitats? What audiences are we the best suited to influence – and what content are we the best suited to create?

5. Explain to students that one simple way to build awareness and to drive change is to create stunning visuals that share convincing statistics or quotations from experts about the impact that biodiversity and habitat loss is having on our planet. Because visual content is easy to consume and engaging, campaigns built around provocative pictures paired with persuasive evidence are often influential.
6. Introduce students to Patagonia's [Vote the Environment campaign](#) as an example of an effort to use provocative visuals to start conversations and to change minds.
7. Ask students if they would like to use Canva to start their own Biodiversity Matters campaign designed to raise awareness of the important role that biodiversity plays in the health of our planet. Share the Biodiversity Matters example graphic to spark their thinking about what a provocative graphic communicating an important message can look like.
8. Have students gather statistics and quotes to use in their Biodiversity Matters campaign from [this curated collection](#) of articles and sources on biodiversity or [this Global Issues collection](#) on biodiversity loss and extinctions.
9. After choosing a provocative quote or statistic related to biodiversity or habitat loss, have students use Canva to create a Biodiversity Matters graphic.

Graphic Design Notes (Use [Quick Tips for Great Design](#))

Before students start designing, run through the Quick Tips for Great Design one-page reference guide. This includes five important tips for creating an effective design.

10. Consider publishing final products to a dedicated classroom blog or wiki page. Have students share the link to your classroom blog in their social networks. Advertise your project with local news agencies. Explain to students that raising awareness depends on their ability to draw attention to their work.

HOMEWORK/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Ask students to begin to investigate solutions that are being tried around the world to address the challenge of biodiversity and habitat loss. Encourage them to use the Rating Potential Solutions Rubric to evaluate any solutions that they explore. Ask students to make a recommendation about a solution for addressing biodiversity challenges in your local area that they think is likely to succeed based on their research.