

RESOURCE LIBRARY
LESSON

Slowing Extinction

Students explore the varying roles people can play to save endangered species. Students create an eco-artist social media profile sharing information about artists who encourage conservation through their work. This lesson is part of the [Engaging in the Fight Against Extinction](#) unit.

GRADES

6 - 8

SUBJECTS

Arts and Music, Biology, Ecology, Conservation, English Language Arts, Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography, Social Studies, Civics, Storytelling, Photography

CONTENTS

2 Activities

In collaboration with



ACTIVITY 1: INSPIRING CONSERVATION THROUGH ART | 50 MINS

DIRECTIONS

Engaging In The Fight Against Extinction Unit Driving Question: *How can we, as planetary stewards, take an active role in saving species from extinction?*

Slowing Extinction Lesson Driving Question: *How can we inspire others to protect natural habitats and save endangered species from extinction?*

1. Introduce students to the influence that visual artists can have in conservation efforts through video and discussion.

- Play the video on Joel Sartore's project, [*The Photo Ark*](#) (2:56), for the class.
- After watching the video, conduct a class discussion by asking students:
 - *How has Joel Sartore inspired action?*
 - *How does he make others care about endangered species and their contributions to species' extinction?*
 - *How can we use Sartore's work as a model of how to advocate and fight for endangered species?*

2. Guide students through the investigation of an eco-artist and the development of a social media profile to highlight their values and work.

- Distribute copies of the [*Eco-Artist Social Media Profile*](#) handout to each student.
- Have students choose one eco-artist from the handout, read about their work, and look at examples of their art to identify how their art brings awareness or inspires action.
- Instruct students to develop a Twitter-inspired social media profile that provides an image of their chosen eco-artist, their name, an imaginary handle (i.e., @JoelsArkNGS), a description of who they are, and write three to five mock tweets that illustrate what they believe in. Have students use the *Eco-Artist Social Media Profile* handout for full directions and guidance.
- After students are finished, hang the completed profiles around the room and allow students to participate in a gallery walk, during which they will leave a "comment" on the artists' tweets using sticky notes.
- Debrief the activity with a class discussion. Ask students to use their focal eco-artists to inform their responses:
 - *How have eco-artists inspired action?*
 - *How do eco-artists inspire others to care about endangered species and their contributions to species' extinction?*
 - *How can we use eco-artists as an example of how to advocate and fight for endangered species?*

Informal Assessment

Eco-Artist Social Media Profile: During the gallery walk, check on students' understanding of how the artist represents their beliefs and hopes for inspiring action.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

- Arts and Music

Biology

- Ecology
- Conservation
- English Language Arts

Geography

- Human Geography
- Physical Geography

Social Studies

- Civics

Storytelling

- Photography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Explore ways eco-activists use art to raise awareness of environmental issues.
- Create social media profiles to showcase the goals and tools of eco-activists.

Teaching Approach

- Project-based learning

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning
- Multimedia instruction

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
 - Information, Media, and Technology Skills
 - Information Literacy
 - Information, Communications, and Technology Literacy
 - Media Literacy
 - Learning and Innovation Skills
 - Communication and Collaboration
 - Creativity and Innovation
 - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Analyzing
 - Applying
 - Creating
 - Understanding

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1:**

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on Grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- **WHST.6-8.4:**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

THE COLLEGE, CAREER & CIVIC LIFE (C3) FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

- D2.Civ.10.6-8:

Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.

- D4.7.6-8:

Assess their individual and collective capacities to take action to address local, regional, and global problems, taking into account a range of possible levers of power, strategies, and potential outcomes.

Preparation

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

It is common practice for visual and literary artists to use their medium as a platform for activism. One type of activist art is environmental art. It gained popularity in the 1960s and '70s, but still thrives today. Environmental art is created by artists who are concerned with both local and global environmental circumstances. Since these artists are concerned about the environment, their art often improves an area environmentally or brings awareness to a specific environmental issue. Poetry, painting, performance, photography, murals, graffiti, music, sculpture, upcycling, and many other art forms have frequently been employed as artists advocate for their causes.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- Causes and Effects of Extinction
- Endangered Species and Their Biomes
- Mass Extinctions Over Time
- Promoting Actions to Prevent Extinction
- The Impacts of the Anthropocene Epoch
- Understanding Keystone Species

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
citizen	noun	member of a country, state, or town who shares responsibilities for the area and benefits from being a member.
conservation	noun	management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect.
ecology	noun	branch of biology that studies the relationship between living organisms and their environment.
endangered species	noun	organism threatened with extinction.
public policy	noun	course of actions, beliefs, and laws taken by a government having to do with a specific issue or concern.
stewardship	noun	responsible management to ensure benefits are passed on to future generations.

ACTIVITY 2: SPREADING THE MESSAGE OF CONSERVATION | 1 HR 40 MINS

DIRECTIONS

Engaging In The Fight Against Extinction Unit Driving Question: *How can we, as planetary stewards, take an active role in saving species from extinction?*

Slowing Extinction Lesson Driving Question: *How can we inspire others to protect natural habitats and save endangered species from extinction?*

1. Prepare student teams to design mockups of their trifold conservation pamphlets based on clear artistic and action-driven objectives.

- Distribute the *Focal Species Pamphlet Design Template* and the *Focal Species Pamphlet: Checklist and Rubric* handouts to students.
- As a class, discuss the objectives of the project. The first objective is for students to make their readers care. The second objective to inspire their readers to take action now.
- Review the requirements for the final pamphlet that are listed on the *Focal Species Pamphlet Design Template* handout. Student pamphlets should include:
 - At least one image of their focal species
 - Data and/or graphics inspired by and developed from previous activities in this unit

- Three to four concrete steps that any individual can readily take to help save this animal from extinction
- Information about at least three organizations that support the survival of the endangered focal species, including the name and contact information for the organizations
- Citation for all images, data, quotes, and information taken from a source

2. Have teams brainstorm conservation pamphlet mockup ideas for each required portion of the pamphlet.

- Once the rough draft is complete, provide feedback to students as well as have another team provide feedback to the group using the rubric for guidance.
- Instruct teams to divide the final trifold pamphlet responsibilities among team members.

3. Provide time for student teams to complete work on the final published trifold pamphlets.

4. Have student teams present their final projects and presentations to the class.

- Provide access to a document camera so the audience can easily see individual elements of the pamphlet.
- Have students summarize the main points of their pamphlet and their favorite elements of the document.

5. Engage students in a reflection of their learning through the unit.

- Distribute the [Focal Species Pamphlet Reflection](#) handout to each student and have them complete the reflection.
- Have students self assess using the *Focal Species Pamphlet: Checklist and Rubric*.

6. Facilitate a class discussion to determine ways to spread the word to the community beyond the classroom.

- Have student volunteers share their responses to the third reflection question: *What are some next steps I can take to spread the message of this project beyond my classroom?*
- As a class, revisit the chart paper from [The Impacts of the Anthropocene Epoch](#) activity that had student responses to the following questions posted on sticky notes:

- *What do you want Earth to look like in the future? To what parts of our planet do we need to be paying attention?*
- *What changes do you think humans will need to make in order to have that future?*
- Students create one last sticky note that they add to the chart pledging to take action that will help achieve their goals for the future of the planet.
- Students create a plan for displaying their trifolds in their school community.

Tip

Step 4: You may want to prepare students to summarize their points by having them prepare a note card from which to speak. This can prevent them from reading the pamphlet aloud to the class word for word.

Modification

Step 3: If digital storage of the pamphlet is not a possibility, a physical hard copy of the pamphlet may be duplicated on a copy machine if you need a copy to review for assessment purposes or to share with others while the original pamphlets are on display for the school community or abroad.

Tip

Step 5: You may want students to engage in reflection of their group collaboration using the [Cooperative Learning Rubric](#). Students evaluate their group members using the Cooperative Learning Rubric, and the teacher evaluates each student using the rubric.

Rubric

[Focal Species Pamphlet: Project Checklist and Rubric](#): Students evaluate their own work against the rubric, and the teacher uses it to assess final work.

Extending the Learning

- As a class, devise a cohesive, multi-step “Spread the Word!” campaign that includes classroom visits and a Planetary Stewardship Gallery. Class visits offer teams the chance to explain their advocacy efforts, answer questions, and recruit activists to their cause. The creation of a Planetary Stewardship Gallery, designed by all teams, provides a hub where all

projects are placed on display to raise awareness, elicit emotional responses, and inspire citizen action across the student body.

- Have student teams carry out their conservation action plans within their own community, educating and engaging with other local actors, dividing responsibilities, urging action on behalf of a vulnerable regional species with the help of knowledgeable and influential sponsors such as zoos, aquariums, and nonprofits.
- Have students transform trifolds into a public service announcement and publish short promotional videos that include their trifold work.
- Have students identify an environmental activist or influencer who is connected to preserving endangered species within their animal's ecosystem. Teams send copies of their completed trifold to them along with a short letter of intent.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

- Conservation
Social Studies
Storytelling

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Create a trifold conservation pamphlet to educate others about endangered species and their biomes.

Teaching Approach

- Project-based learning

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning
- Reflection

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
 - Information, Media, and Technology Skills
 - Information Literacy
 - Information, Communications, and Technology Literacy
 - Media Literacy
 - Learning and Innovation Skills
 - Communication and Collaboration
 - Creativity and Innovation
 - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
 - Life and Career Skills
 - Leadership and Responsibility
 - Productivity and Accountability
- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Applying
 - Creating
 - Evaluating
 - Remembering

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7:**

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1:**

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on Grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- **WHST.6-8.4:**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

THE COLLEGE, CAREER & CIVIC LIFE (C3) FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

• D4.7.6-8:

Assess their individual and collective capacities to take action to address local, regional, and global problems, taking into account a range of possible levers of power, strategies, and potential outcomes.

Preparation

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Planetary stewardship is necessary, even urgent, if we are to radically redefine our relationship with the planet. As planetary stewards, it is our responsibility to ensure stakeholders are well informed about how global changes will inevitably impact the quality or even the existence of life on the planet. Planetary stewardship requires nothing less than intense engagement and a willingness to take and advocate for immediate action. There's no time to lose.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- Causes and Effects of Extinction
- Endangered Species and Their Biomes
- Inspiring Conservation Through Art
- Mass Extinctions Over Time
- Promoting Actions to Prevent Extinction
- The Impacts of the Anthropocene Epoch
- Understanding Keystone Species

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
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endangered species	<i>noun</i>	organism threatened with extinction.
public policy	<i>noun</i>	course of actions, beliefs, and laws taken by a government having to do with a specific issue or concern.
stewardship	<i>noun</i>	responsible management to ensure benefits are passed on to future generations.



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