

5th Grade Lessons in March

Trees and Environmental Activism

1) Introduction to Environmentalism and Greenbelt Movement in Kenya

Objectives:

- Students will define Environmentalism and Activism
- Students will understand that to make a change an activist has to have motivation, strategy, face challenges and make/have an impact.

Students will do a free write and think pair share around the question, how can one person make a big difference in their world. Students are introduced to the terms Environmentalism and Activism. We will come up with a working definition for both terms including the ideas of having passion for the environment and wanting to actively make a change for the better. Students will read *Mama Miti* together as a class. Students will reflect on the story and watch a brief clip of the real Wangari Maathai from a documentary. Students will work in table groups to chart Wangari's motivations, strategies, challenges she faced and the impact she had. The class will review to fill in a class version of the chart to ensure that it is complete. For homework, students will read an article about and selected writings of John Muir an Environmentalist from the United States and complete the same chart for him as they did for Wangari.

2) Comparing two Environmentalists (John Muir and Wangari Maathai)

Objectives:

- Students will be able to compare and contrast the motivations, strategies, challenges and impacts of two different environmentalists.
- Students will interpret how two different environmentalists would approach a new problem based on prior knowledge of them.

Students will use their homework to complete the class chart of motivations, strategy, challenges and impact for John Muir. Students will begin to note the similarities and differences between the two environmentalists. They will then be given a scenario of a hypothetical environmental problem being faced by a city like Philadelphia and pretend that both Wangari and John have been called in as advisers on how the city should proceed in dealing with the problem. Students will work in pairs at their table groups to discuss how either Wangari or John would approach the issue. Then as a full table group students will create a script of what their conversation might be like as they talk over coffee about the issue at hand and how they would approach it.

3) Comparing Environmentalists Continued / Local Activism & Protecting Urban Trees

Objectives:

- Students will interpret how two different environmentalists would approach a new problem based on prior knowledge of them.
- Students will compare and contrast the motivations, strategies, challenges, and impacts of two different environmentalists.
- Students will understand that activism can be on a global, national or local scale
- Students will identify local environmental activist efforts in the city of Philadelphia and discuss their motivation, strategy, challenges and impacts

Students begin class by role playing the scripts created from the previous class featuring the two environmentalists. All groups will perform. Then we will discuss how Wangari was a global activist, John was a national activist and that there are activists right here in Philadelphia that are doing their part to protect the environment and raise awareness of environmental issues here in our city. Each table group will get information on a local group to read and take notes on their motivation, strategy, challenges and impact. Each table group will share out with the class.

4) Urban Trees and Threats to Urban Trees

Objectives:

Students will communicate the benefits of and threats to urban trees

Students will assess the health of an urban tree based on the conditions in a given scenario.

Students will suggest ways that our communities can help protect urban trees.

Students will brainstorm with their table groups the many benefits of trees and specifically urban trees. Then we will collect responses to generate a class list. Unfortunately with all of these benefits our trees are still threatened. Students will start by discussing general threats to trees across the globe (deforestation, land development, global warming, pollution, etc.). In order to get students to think more locally about threats to urban trees students will play out scenarios trying to assess the health of a tree, possible damage or potential stresses/threats. Students will discuss as a class and with a Smartboard presentation the threats/stresses facing urban trees. Then students will write about or draw a city scene that includes at least 3 potential or occurring stresses without being too explicit. They will share their drawings with their table group members to see if they can spot the stresses affecting the tree in their scenario.

5) Getting the Message Out/ Students Raise Awareness Part 1

Objectives:

- Students will communicate the benefits of and threats to urban trees
- Students will suggest ways that our communities can help protect urban trees (take action)
- Students will create a public service announcement to raise awareness about urban tree management

Students will take a clicker quiz on activism, environmentalism and urban trees. Students will brainstorm different ways that they can raise awareness about urban tree management. Students will be introduced to the format of a public service announcement. They will listen to a few and identify what they think makes them successful and persuasive or not. Students will learn what makes for a successful and persuasive message. In their table groups they will work on writing a script for a 2 minute public service announcement for their community in West Philadelphia.

6) Getting the Message Out / Students Raise Awareness Part 2

Objectives:

- Students will communicate the benefits of and threats to urban trees
- Students will suggest ways that our communities can help protect urban trees (take action)
- Students will create a public service announcement to raise awareness about urban tree management

Students will continue to work on their Public Service Announcement scripts and will read the final versions to share them with the class. The class will peer evaluate the PSA's from each group based on the general persuasiveness, the amount of convincing facts and whether they caught our attention.