



Earth Day Lesson Plan Middle School

Objective:

To deepen students' understanding of Earth Day, its historical context, global significance, and encourage critical thinking about environmental issues and solutions.

Time:

1 hour & 15 minutes + multiple days of optional extension activities

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard/markers or a projector for presentations
- Printed handouts or digital resources about environmental issues
- Interactive posters/visual aids about climate change, pollution, and conservation efforts
- Videos/documentaries related to environmental issues
- Access to the internet for research (if available)
- Writing materials for students

Vocabulary:

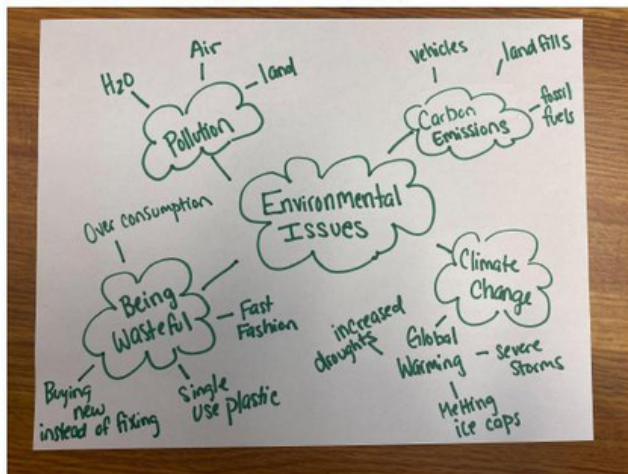
- **Climate change**
- **Stewardship**
- **Advocate**
- **Conservation**
- **Reform**

Introduction (10 minutes)

1. **Engagement:** Show the following video from Conservation International - "Nature is Speaking" (Narrated by Julia Roberts)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmVLcj-XKnM&t=32s>
2. **Ignite prior knowledge:** Ask students about their feelings in regards to the video. Then discuss students' prior knowledge about Earth Day. Ask what they know about its origins and significance.
3. **Introduce the lesson's objective:** "Today, we'll delve deeper into Earth Day, exploring its history, the challenges our planet faces, and what we can do to make a positive impact."

Instruction and Guided Learning

4. **Learn about Earth Day (15 minutes):** Use the "Why Do We Celebrate Earth Day?" worksheet to present a brief history of Earth Day, discussing its origins in the 1970s environmental movement and its impact on global awareness. Read the passage together, as a class. Comprehension questions may be done as a class or independently.
5. **Brainstorm and Discussion(15 minutes):** Using the board, brainstorm different environmental issues that the students are aware of. Create a "Mind Map" on the board to organize their thoughts (example in photo below). Then use the slides, "[The Challenges Facing Mother Earth](#)" to provide visuals that illustrate these challenges.



6. **Interactive Activity (15 minutes):** Split students into groups and assign them different environmental issues. Have each group research and present their findings including causes, effects, and potential solutions. Choose from the following topics:
 - Fast Fashion & Textile Waste
 - Climate change
 - Deforestation
 - Food Waste
 - Biodiversity Loss
 - Melting Ice Caps & Ocean Acidification
 - Overfishing
 - Soil Degradation
 - Water Pollution

Extension Activity



7. Supplemental Reading & Analysis (10 minutes): Provide excerpts from articles or essays discussing environmental activism or success stories related to Earth Day. Guide students in analyzing and discussing these texts, focusing on solutions and inspiring actions taken by individuals or communities.

8. Action Plan & Conclusion (15 minutes): Have students create an action plan individually or in groups. They should outline specific steps they can take to contribute positively to the environment.

Wrap up by encouraging students to implement their action plans and make a difference beyond Earth Day, emphasizing the importance of their role in preserving the planet.

Supplemental Extension Activities (for multiple days):

- **Debate or Panel Discussion:** Organize a debate or panel discussion on a particular environmental issue, encouraging students to take different perspectives.
- **Community Involvement Project:** Plan and execute a project that directly benefits the local environment, such as a park clean-up or planting trees.
- **Research Project:** Assign students a research project on a specific environmental problem, its causes, effects, and proposed solutions.

Tailoring activities to the students' interests and incorporating current events or local environmental issues can further engage middle schoolers in understanding the importance of Earth Day and environmental stewardship.