



Earth Day Lesson Plan High School

Objective: To engage high school students in critical thinking about global environmental challenges, exploring solutions, and encouraging active participation in sustainability efforts.

Materials Needed:

- Projector or SmartBoard for presentations
- YouTube Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQYgCxu988s>
- "[The Challenges That Face Mother Earth](#)" Slides
- Access to laptop and internet for research purposes
- Poster Board (optional)
- Worksheet: "Earth Day: A Call to Environmental Action"

Time:

1 hour & 5 minutes + multiple days of optional extension activities

Vocabulary:

- **Fast Fashion**
 - **Textile Waste**
 - **Climate Change**
 - **Deforestation**
 - **Acidification**
 - **Degradation**
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Introduction & Discussion (15-20 minutes):

1. **Engagement** - Begin the lesson by dimming the lights and playing a powerful video montage showcasing the beauty of Earth's landscapes, but also highlighting environmental destruction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change. Choose a video that evokes emotions and sets the tone for the discussion.

Example: **One Earth, Environmental Short Film** (4 min 26 sec):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQYgCxu988s>



Example: **Nature is Speaking** (1 min 58 seconds):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmVLcj-XKnM>

- 2. Reflection:** After the video, lead a brief reflection session, asking students to share their immediate thoughts and feelings. Encourage them to consider the significance of Earth Day in light of the challenges our planet faces.
 - 3. Discussion:** Pose a thought-provoking question to spark discussion, such as: "As inhabitants of this planet, what responsibility do we have to protect and preserve it for future generations?" Encourage students to share their perspectives and insights.
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Presentation & Discussion (15 minutes):

4. Present the slides "[The Challenges That Face Mother Earth](#)" that delve deeper into specific environmental issues. Encourage critical thinking by pointing out the Bin Buddy questions (one on each slide) and facilitate an open discussion about potential causes and effects of these problems.

Interactive Activity & Research (5 minute prep; Research time will vary by student group):

- 5.** Divide students into groups and assign each group an environmental issue that was presented in the slides. The group will research this topic in depth. Provide resources and encourage them to explore various perspectives and solutions.
 - 6.** Each group will prepare a short presentation summarizing their findings, including the causes, effects, and proposed solutions to their assigned issue. They may present their findings through a digital presentation or create a dynamic poster board.
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Supplemental Reading & Analysis (15-20 minutes):



7. Provide excerpts from scholarly articles or essays discussing environmental policies, activism, or innovations in sustainability. Guide students in analyzing and critically discussing these texts, focusing on feasibility and potential impact.

- For a brief history of Earth Day and accompanying discussion questions, use the Planet Aid worksheet: "**Earth Day: A Call to Environmental Action**"
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Action Plan & Conclusion (5 minutes):

8. Encourage students to develop actionable plans or initiatives that can be implemented within the school or local community. Emphasize the importance of collective action and individual responsibility in creating change.

9. Conclude the lesson by reiterating the significance of Earth Day beyond a single day and the ongoing efforts required for sustainable living.

Extension Activities (for multiple days):

- **Sustainability Project:** Engage students in a long-term sustainability project, such as implementing recycling programs, organizing awareness campaigns, or creating community gardens.
- **Individual Research Paper or Presentation:** Assign students a research paper or presentation focusing on a specific environmental issue, its complexities, and potential solutions, encouraging critical analysis and presentation skills. They may use their notes and resources from the group activity on Day 1.
- **Field Trip or Guest Speaker:** Organize a field trip to a local environmental organization or invite a guest speaker who specializes in environmental advocacy or sustainability. Ideas include environmental non-profits, recycling centers, and local farms or gardens.
- **Community Art Project:** Ask your students to create a classroom collage using recycled paper from around the school. The design should be simple, such as an image of Earth. Students can collect used paper from around their school and their homes to bring in for the project. As the students collect the paper, ask them to take note of where they see the most waste. They can brainstorm ways to reduce waste in those areas.



Adapting the lesson to include real-world examples, current events, and opportunities for student-led initiatives can help high schoolers understand the global impact of environmental issues and empower them to take meaningful action.