



WILD CLASSROOM

Greenprints for the Future

Student Project Plan activity

Grades 6-12

OVERVIEW: In this activity, learners will explore the many benefits nature provides them and consider what life might be like without it. Applying this knowledge, they will then identify a local environmental issue in their school or community—an area where nature needs support. To culminate the activity, learners will design a step-by-step action campaign to address the issue and propose practical solutions to help protect and restore the natural world.

HOW TO USE: Educators may choose to complete all parts of the activity or select only those that best align with their students' background knowledge and learning goals.

Only the ACT step is required to be considered for the funding opportunity, which includes the upload of one Student Project Plan with your [application](#).

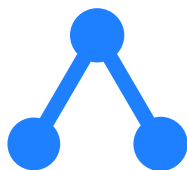
The other parts of the activity are optional and designed to support deeper learning and engagement.

- **Learn:** Review concepts surrounding the importance of biodiversity and the meaning of sustainability.
- **Connect:** Understand the benefits humans get from nature and how our daily lives would be affected without it.
- **Investigate:** Explore areas surrounding the school or community where there is evidence of unsustainable behaviors and where nature could use support to identify an environmental issue.
- **ACT:** Develop an action plan to help reduce the impact of the threat or issue identified.

Learn



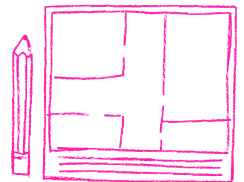
Connect



Investigate



ACT





Biodiversity means having many different kinds of life, including plants, animals, fungi, and bacteria. All these living things work together to help nature give us what we need to live—things like food, clean water, medicine, and fresh air. Ensuring a healthy and diverse natural world keeps everything in balance, from cleaning the air and water to protecting us from storms and helping plants grow. Tiny helpers like bees and butterflies are part of biodiversity and help grow the fruits and vegetables we eat. Nature also helps us feel happy, calm, and healthy when we spend time outside. That's why taking care of all the living things on Earth is so important!

To keep nature healthy, we need to be careful with how we use the things that come from it—like water, energy, and materials. When we use these things in a responsible way so they don't run out, it's called being sustainable.

ACTIVITY



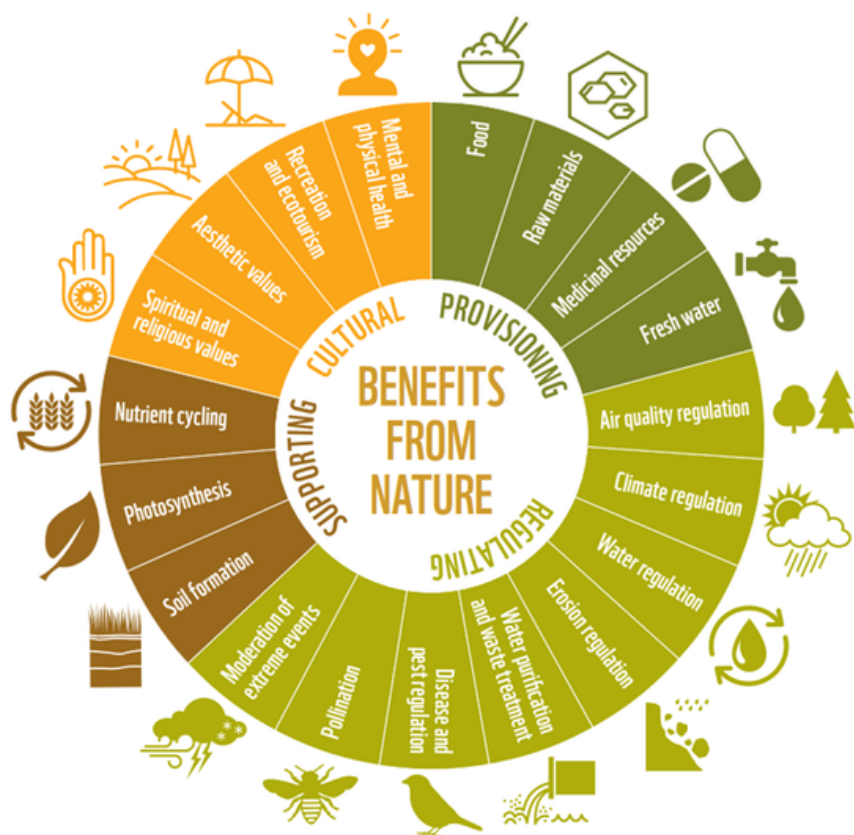
- Guide students in reflecting on nature and their role in caring for it. To begin, have them play [this Kahoot!](#) (QR code included) to assess their current understanding of nature's benefits and their perceived responsibilities in protecting it.
- Next, use the [biodiversity classroom presentation](#) to introduce learners to biodiversity and how it supports everything in nature that we need to survive. You may also show the [What is biodiversity? video](#) and use the [corresponding student handout](#) to assess understanding.
- Review the three principles of sustainability—economic (is cost-effective with long-term benefits), environmental (uses resources at a rate they can be naturally replenished), and social (supports a stable, healthy, and fair society). Then use the examples below for students to analyze and determine whether each practice is sustainable, using the three principles to explain their reasoning (adapted from the [Sharks: Overfished and Under Pressure](#) activity).
 - a coffee shop that allows customers to bring their own cups
 - school cafeterias serving lunch on single-use Styrofoam™ trays
 - college credit for university students who provide free tutoring in subjects including math and science for K–12 children from low-income families
 - producing more food by plowing up native grasslands



Nature is a big part of our everyday lives, even in ways we don't always notice. The food we eat, the water we drink, and many things we use—like paper, clothes, and toys—all come from nature. Things like chocolate, chewing gum, and rubber balls start with plants and trees. When we brush our teeth, write with a pencil, or eat lunch, we're using something that nature helped make.

ACTIVITY

- Review the four categories of ecosystem services with learners, using the visual below (you can find this visual, along with additional information, in [the Living Planet Report 2018](#), adapted from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005.)



- Help students connect these services to their everyday lives by having them reflect on what they use and depend on throughout a typical day—from their meals and clothing to their phones and time spent in nature.
- Guide a class discussion exploring how many of these things are connected to or made possible by nature. Conclude with a conversation about how these natural benefits are increasingly threatened by unsustainable human activities.



To continue supporting nature, we can start by taking care of our local environment. Guide students to begin exploring and identifying which environmental issues are most noticeable, common, or damaging in their own school or community. Encourage them to observe their surroundings, ask questions, and gather clues to uncover what problems might exist nearby.

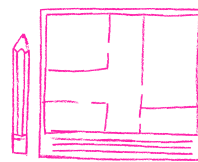


ACTIVITY

- Pose these questions to your learners: What threats are currently affecting the health of local ecosystems and causing them to decline? What ecosystem services are being compromised?
- Allow students time to make observations, conduct research, and collect data and evidence to identify a threat or problem with their local environment. You may advise they investigate local publications, interview community members, and utilize sites such as [EPA's MyEnvironment tool](#) for assessments on local air and water quality, climate, and energy use. Use our [Green Club Guide](#) as an additional resource to help students identify environmental challenges in their community and explore ways they can take action.

For reference, here are some examples of environmental issues:

- Few birds, bees, or butterflies—pollinators and wildlife are disappearing, which can affect plants and food.
- Plants not growing well—flowers, trees, or garden plants look sick or are dying.
- Lots of leftover food thrown away at school—good food ends up in the trash instead of being saved, shared, or composted.
- Snacks and lunches in lots of wrappers—too much packaging creates more trash.
- Lights or electronics are left on when not in use—wasting energy that could be saved.
- Classrooms are too hot or too cold—heating and cooling used in ways that aren't efficient.
- Cars and buses are running for long periods of time—which creates air pollution and wastes fuel.
- Litter on playgrounds, sidewalks, or near water—trash harms the environment and animals.



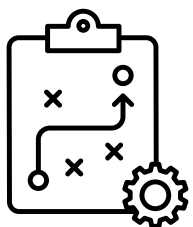
Now that students have identified an issue, it's time to brainstorm a solution and create an action plan.

ACTIVITY



Step 1: Identify a local environmental issue.

Have students work individually or in small groups to brainstorm realistic, sustainable solutions to the issue they've identified. Encourage critical thinking by asking: What actions could make a difference without causing further harm to the environment? Could we reduce waste, raise awareness, improve a space, or partner with others to create change?



Step 2: Develop an action plan.

Using the provided handout, guide students through the process of mapping out clear, realistic steps they could take to bring their solution to life. Encourage them to consider timelines, materials, responsibilities, and potential outcomes.



Step 3: Select and submit one project plan.

After reviewing all student proposals, choose one project plan to submit for the funding opportunity. This can be done by teacher selection or through a class vote based on students' impressions regarding the proposal's impact and feasibility.

Funding recipients will be selected based on how well the project

- aligns with the Greenprints for the Future objectives
- addresses a real environmental issue in their school/community
- demonstrates originality and creativity
- has the potential to make a broad and lasting impact, beyond just the participants



Submit one copy of the selected Student Project Plan (two pages) with your [application](#) to be considered for the funding opportunity.



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Student Project Plan

Grades 6-12 handout (page 1 of 2)

Based on your research, what environmental issue have you identified in your school or community that you'd like to address?

Why do you care about this issue?



Please describe your proposed solution, including how it would benefit nature in a sustainable way.

How will this solution have a positive impact on your school or community over time?

How might it benefit your daily life or the lives of others in the future?



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Student Project Plan

Grades 6-12 handout (page 2 of 2)

How would you implement this solution? Consider these questions as you plan:

WHAT MATERIALS OR RESOURCES WOULD BE NEEDED FOR THIS PROJECT?

Make a list of the supplies or resources your project will require—and how you would go about getting them.

WHO WOULD NEED TO BE INFORMED OR INVOLVED?

Think about teachers, school staff, or community members who would need to give permission for, could help out with, or might be affected by your project.

HOW WOULD THE WORK BE SHARED AND ORGANIZED?

Think about how your group or class could divide responsibilities. What jobs need to be done, and who will be responsible for each task?

HOW WOULD YOU MONITOR THE PROGRESS AND IMPACT?

Think about how you'd measure your project's success—for example, by collecting data, taking photos, keeping a journal, or gathering feedback.



Outline the steps of your action plan: