



WILD CLASSROOM

Greenprints for the Future

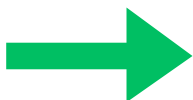
Student Project Plan activity Grades K-5

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.

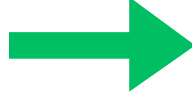
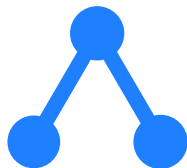
HOW TO USE: Educators may choose to complete all parts of the activity or select only those that best align with their students' background knowledge and learning goals. **Only the ACT step is required to be considered for the funding opportunity, which includes the upload of one Student Project Plan 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



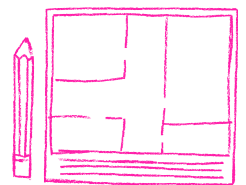
Connect



Investigate



ACT





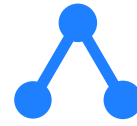
Biodiversity means having many different kinds of life, including plants, animals, fungi, and bacteria. All these living things work together to help nature give us what we need to live—things like food, clean water, medicine, and fresh air. Ensuring a healthy and diverse natural world keeps everything 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



- Begin the lesson with a nature reflection activity. Have your students play [this Kahoot!](#) (QR code included) to prompt them to think about their feelings toward nature and explore ways they can help take care of it.
- Next, introduce students to nature and the importance of biodiversity using activities such as our [biodiversity mosaic craft](#) or playing any of our [Kahoot! quizzes](#) within our biodiversity course.
- Have students practice differentiating responsible, sustainable choices from irresponsible, unsustainable choices, using the examples below (S = sustainable; U = unsustainable). Challenge students to explain what resource is being saved or wasted in each example.
 - leaving the lights on in a room when nobody is in it (U)
 - walking instead of driving a car (S)
 - bringing a reusable bag to the grocery store instead of getting a plastic bag (S)
 - leaving the refrigerator door open and walking away (U)
 - having the faucet running the whole time you're brushing your teeth (U)



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

- Start by using our [Picture It: A World Without Forests](#) activity page to help learners make fun and meaningful connections between the things they use every day and where they come from in nature.
- If time allows, you can also lead a version of the [Trees and Tigers activity](#), a scavenger hunt that challenges students to explore their surroundings and identify items that come from nature.



- For reflection, ask students to imagine what life would be like without nature. Besides not having important natural resources, what other everyday things they use or enjoy would be missing?
- Collect student responses and create a word cloud or another type of visual brainstorm to showcase the variety of items.



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.

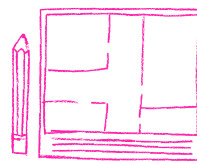


ACTIVITY

- Follow the steps below with your learners to help them identify an environmental problem.
 - Look Around—Take a nature walk around your school or neighborhood. Do you see litter on the ground? Are there very few bees or butterflies? Are trees missing where shade is needed? Pay attention to what doesn't look healthy.
 - Ask Questions—Talk with classmates or teachers. Ask: What might be causing the problem? Who or what is being hurt by it? Has it always been this way, or is it getting worse?
 - Learn More—Read books or websites or ask adults to help you learn more about the issue. Has anyone talked about it before?
 - Collect Information—Take photos, draw pictures, or write in a journal to keep track of what you've noticed.
- Use our [Green Club Guide](#) for ideas and tips to help students explore local environmental issues and 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: Choose a local problem in nature.

Working on their own or in small groups, ask students to think about a problem in nature they care about—something they've seen at school or in their neighborhood. Help them start coming up with ideas to help. Try asking: What could we do to fix the problem without hurting nature? Could we plant something, clean up an area, or teach others how to help?



Step 2: Make a plan.

Using the handout provided, guide students in thinking through the steps they would need to take to make their idea happen.



Step 3: Pick one project to submit.

Once students have finished their project plans, choose one to submit for the funding opportunity. You can select it yourself or let students vote on which one they think will make the biggest difference.

Projects will be selected for funding based on how well they

- match the goals of the Greenprints for the Future program
- help solve an environmental problem at school or in the community
- show creativity and original thinking
- make a lasting impact—even for people not directly involved



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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Greenprints for the Future

Student Project Plan

Grades K-5 handout (page 1 of 2)

The local environmental issue that I care about and want to change is:



Why did you pick this issue? How does it make you feel?

How is it connected to your everyday life?



My idea for a solution is...



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Greenprints for the Future

Student Project Plan

Grades K-5 handout (page 2 of 2)

WHAT

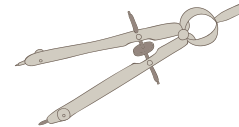
materials would be needed for this project?

WHO

will we need to talk to and work with?

WHERE

will the project take place?



WHEN

can each step of the project take place? List the steps in order.

WHY

is this project important to my school or community?

HOW

will the project keep helping nature after it's finished?