**SAVE THE EARTH: IT’S EVERYONE’S HOME!**

**LESSON 5: Grades 4-6**

# ENDANGERED ANIMALS NEED YOU!

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:**  1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7

**Knowledge Goals:**  Communication Arts: 1, 3, 4, 6; Science: 3, 4 & 8; Social Studies: 3, 4, 5 & 7;

(if videos are made: Fine Arts: 1 & 4)

**Objectives:** Students will comprehend the concepts of cause and effect and how it relates to environmental issues. Theywill analyze the impact that different human-caused environmental destruction has on the environment and ultimately on animals, especially endangered animals and will work cooperatively to create a brochure that educates others about the effects caused by their actions.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**W.5.7—Conduct short research projects to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.**

**SL.5.1c—Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.**

**SL.5.5—Use visual displays in presentations to support main ideas or themes.**

Encourage students to research animals in grave danger, those on the protected and endangered lists. What environmental factors are affecting their lives? What industries, influences, economy issues or dynamics/circumstances are influencing their welfare and propagations?

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility

Being the guardian of another creature is very important. You hold their welfare in your hands. It is vital that you learn as much as you can about the issues that are affecting the lives of animals, even those a world away. We can make a difference!

**STEM initiatives: Thinking critically in the connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

**3-5-ETS1.1—**Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want that includes a specified criteria for success and constraints on materials, time, or cost.

**ESS3.C—**Human Impacts on Earth Systems: Human activities in agriculture, industry and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space. But individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth’s resources and environments. (E-ESS3-1)

**Materials:**

* Research materials (internet, books, magazines, science journals, etc.)
* Paper
* Computer
* Video camera, props, video tape (optional)

**Method:**

1. Begin by writing the following choices on the board or saying them out loud and ask the students to share what they predict will happen as a result of these choices:
* Not studying for a test=\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Not brushing your teeth every day=\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Choosing not to make your bed=\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Neglecting to water your plant=\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Choosing to eat junk food and not exercising=\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Explain that each one of these is an **action** (whether or not they choose to do or not to do something, it is considered an action) and the result is a **reaction**. This is also called **cause** and e**ffect**. The cause is the choice and the effect is the result of that choice.

2. Ask them to brainstorm some more daily actions/causes and their possible reactions/effects. Write these on the board to help reinforce the concepts.

3. Explain that our daily choices sometimes affect the environment and the animals who share it with us. Because of this, we have animals in this world whom we have impacted to a point that their lives are in danger. This is mostly due to habitat destruction such as deforestation, water pollution, air pollution and the “development” of land. According to the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), 25,000 plant species and more than 1,000 animal species are threatened with **extinction**. Unfortunately there are some animals who no longer exist in this world because every member of their species has died and they are called **extinct**. Ask the students if they can think of any animals that have become extinct and write them on the board (ex: Dinosaurs, Mountain Mist Frog, Dodo Bird, Labrador Duck, Red Colobus Monkey, Wooly Mammoth, etc.).

4. Explain that although nothing can be done to resurrect the lives of those animals that are now extinct, there are currently (today!!) thousands of animals and plants that are on the verge of extinction. These **endangered** animals and plants can still be helped if we act now! Ask students to research endangered animals and to write these on the board (ex: African and Asian Elephants, African Wild Dog, Big Horn Sheep, Black Lemur, Blue Whale, Bottle-Nose Dolphin, European Otter, Cheetah, Indiana Bat, Gray Wolf, Guadalupe Fur Seal, Grevy’s Zebra, Key Largo Cotton Mouse, Mariana Fruit Bat, Ocelot, Muskox, Persian Leopard, Rice Rat, Snow Leopard, Tree Kangaroos, West Indian Manatee, etc.,). \*\*\*For a comprehensive list of endangered and extinct animals, please refer your students to [www.extinctanimal.com](http://www.extinctanimal.com)

5. **Re-emphasize that extinction is forever and endangered creatures still have hope**! Explain that humans, plants and animals need four things to survive: shelter, food, water and living space and all of these make up a **habitat**. As humans, our carelessness is destroying habitats, including our own! What can we do to help the environment and the endangered animals? We can help educate people about the effects of their actions! Most people aren’t aware that their actions have devastating results on animals and if we help them become aware and give them earth-friendly alternatives, they will likely choose them. Together, we can do it!

**Call to Action:** Write the following types of habitat destruction and cause of endangerment on the board and divide the class into five research teams that will become “experts” on their topics. Assign each team to one of the following topics:

1. River, stream and sea pollution

2. Air pollution

3. Deforestation and the fast food industry

4. Purchasing products made of animals (exotic fur industry, for one example)

5. Wild and exotic animals

6. Circuses that use animal acts (ex: elephants and tigers)

Each group will be responsible for finding accurate answers to the following five questions and creating a brochure about their topic that can be distributed to others to help make them aware of the issue at hand.

A. How is the destruction caused?

1. Why?
2. How is it harmful to the habitat, plants and animals?
3. What can YOU do to help?
4. Where can people get more information? (provide your sources here)

Discuss number 6 as an example and explain that you did the research to arrive at the answers. Explain that you can then use the following information to create a brochure.

**Circuses**:

1. Destruction is caused to the environment when wild animals such as elephants, tigers, monkeys, etc. are captured and taken from their natural environments.
2. These wild animals are taken so that circus companies can make money using them for entertainment.
3. This is extremely harmful to the animals (many of which are endangered) because they are taken from their families, kept in unnatural surroundings (cages), spend a significant amount of time traveling to the different locations, are often trained to do unnatural acts through force and abuse, often do not receive the medical care they need, become lonely and depressed and ultimately their minds and freedom are taken away. It also sends a message to people that keeping wild animals for our entertainment is an acceptable thing to do. Wild animals in captivity live much shorter lives than those who live in their natural habitats.
4. You can help by not attending circuses that have animal acts! You can also educate others by telling them what you know and encouraging them not to attend as well. If a circus is coming to your town, you can write a letter to the editor of your local paper educating others about the living conditions of circus animals and encourage people not to attend. If a circus that doesn’t use animal acts comes to your town, write a letter praising them and encouraging people to attend!
5. You can get more information about this topic by contacting the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) at [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org) or People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) at [www.peta.org](http://www.peta.org)

Create and monitor deadlines for the project including editing, copying and distribution. Schools, libraries, community fairs, etc. may be willing to display your brochure.

**You are helping animals and the environment through education which raises community awareness! You are getting others “In the Know and On the Go” to help animals!**

**Follow-Up Activities:**

* Arrange a school assembly where each expert team presents their information.
* Be aware of current events in your community that affect animals and the environment and attend city council meetings to be the voice for animals!
* Make a video that presents your issue and educates others. Be creative and approach community organizations and schools that have editing equipment that may be willing to help you edit and formulate the video. Make copies to sell and donate the money to an organization that works for animals or keep the money to invest in a future project that promotes your cause!

**Reading:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Children’s Literature*** for a comprehensive listing of animal-related books.

**Web sites:**

[www.kidsplanet.org](http://www.kidsplanet.org)

[www.environmentalconcerns.org](http://www.environmentalconcerns.org)

[www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/home.htm](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/home.htm)

[www.epa.gov/kids/](http://www.epa.gov/kids/)

[www.kidsface.org](http://www.kidsface.org)

[www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)

[www.ikecoalition.org](http://www.ikecoalition.org)

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/)

Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Web Links*** for additional animal-related web sites.