

Into the Field

Environmental Education

Distance Learning Resources

Issue 3: Lesson Plans and Activities



This third issue is focused on lesson plans and print materials for you and your students. As much as possible, we've included materials that encourage outside learning, and the emphasis here is providing work that can be done without immediate access to the internet. Whatever the mix of learning materials you're providing your students, we hope that these resources will offer lessons, tips, and inspiration for environmental learning in a distance environment.

We've grouped activities by age, but in general, these are suggested guidelines. Many of the activities could be easily adjusted to work with a different age-group, so double-check before you skip a section!

All Ages or Family Activities

[Lorax Activity Book](#)

With many families spending more time in the home, this activity booklet is a fun way to encourage students to think about energy consumption. The EPA and Energy Star have teamed up to create these short worksheets and activities with the goal of students applying their learning to energy-saving conversations and choices at home.

Early Learners

[Sustainable Shapes](#)

Get students outdoors searching for shapes in their environment while practicing key vocabulary and concepts related to spatial math! Although this lesson comes from the UK, the materials are simple, and easily edited to suit your specific learning objectives.

[Bird Sleuth Explorer's Guide](#)

This unit developed by the Cornell Lab gets students curious about birds and engaged in learning through all of their senses. The worksheets could be used out in a park, or for a student looking out a window. Resources for further learning are included at the end. Available in English or Spanish.

[Garden Friend or Foe](#)

This activity was originally created in the UK, but the garden critters can be found in many regions. These cards can be used in a number of ways, using two sets of cards to match photos of wildlife with statements about what they eat. The aim is to show the main interactions between species and how they can help in organic gardening. You'll notice referential language to British standards, but the activity provides quality images and a helpful answer sheet.

Grades 3-5

[Nature Journaling](#)

There are many ways to invite students outside to observe in nature. This succinct lesson guide includes background information, suggested materials, learning outcomes, extensions, and references. Tailor this activity to your student's learning and consider using this activity as a regular learning practice for students. Created by the North Dakota US Fish and Wildlife Services.

[Bats: Maligned or Malicious?](#)

This lesson created by the National Wildlife Federation compares perceptions of bats with known facts. With some misinformation circulation about bats related to the novel coronavirus, this could be a timely analysis of bats.

[The Quest for Less K-8 Curriculum](#)

This is a comprehensive curriculum produced by the EPA. While the amount of material included is daunting, individual lessons are clearly curated and outlined. Outdoor and at home learning are embedded in some of the exercises. Look for your specific grade to see if any of these lessons or units could frame learning for your classroom during this time.

Grades 6-8

[Observation Station](#)

Phenology, the study of seasonal or cyclical occurrences, is a perfect activity to use in spring. Use this simple guide from Nature's Notebook to frame the type of seasonal changes you want students to observe and track. The great thing about this observation station is that it can also be used as a focal point for other kinds of work: writing, reading, or reflection. The activity can be catered for any grade, K-12 depending on your learning objectives.



[Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: ELL Textbook/Workbook](#)

This activity for ELL students was created by the MN Pollution Control Agency. Although dated, the format is accurate, simple, and with translations in 6 languages! Using activities or chapters at a time, students will learn/practice learning the vocabulary of sustainable lifestyle choices in Minnesota. Visit the [website](#) for other editions, resource and background information.

High School

Who Can Live Here?

Designed with a schoolyard habitat in mind, this activity from the National Wildlife Federation asks students to assess the fitness of a local habitat for native species. These worksheets can be used to frame other or additional work in conjunction with exploration of a nearby greenspace.

Name that Indoor Air Quality Hazard

From the [National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences](#), this resource includes several lesson plans. Learning about Indoor Air Quality and Toxicology is particularly relevant in our current time; not only are students spending more time indoors, but also threats from airborne toxins are consuming all our attention due to the current global pandemic. Use this lesson to build academic understanding of environmental health hazards and ways to mitigate them. This activity encourages peer interaction (and could be modified for distance learning). Ideally, the lessons offer students a concrete, scientific way to learn about public health, the environment, and ways we can protect them both.

You can reach us with your comments and questions at
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