

LESSON THREE

Communicating for a Clean Future

Grade Level:

Grades 8 – 12

Subjects:

Art, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Communication, Technology Literacy

Overview:

This activity introduces students to the concept of community service and public education as they develop public education materials to raise the school's or community's awareness of the marine debris problem. The students will research, write, and create materials to educate the community about marine debris – its sources, impacts, and solutions. Students will share their research by creating a web site, newspaper, podcast, or television show (depending on the resources available at your school). This public education effort can be used in conjunction with an actual community litter cleanup day, a beach cleanup, a storm sewer stenciling activity, or other community event.

Objectives:

- To integrate technology with the creation of materials that will educate the community on marine debris, the threat it poses to ocean fisheries, and how to prevent the problem.
- To review the lessons of the “Turning the Tide on Trash” curriculum, and to spread the word about marine debris and the solutions being developed to reduce or prevent ocean pollution.

Vocabulary:

awareness, public education

Materials:

Will vary with activity

Learning Skills:

Analyzing, Collecting Data, Decision Making, Interviewing, Researching, Visualizing, Working in Small Groups, Reading, Writing, Language Arts, Science, Social Science, Technology Literacy

Duration:

This project could be done in conjunction with several different subject areas, and could take anywhere from several weeks to a full semester.

Activity

1. Introduce the concept of a public education campaign by having the students share examples of public education campaigns they have seen. What have they learned from these public education campaigns that has changed their behavior?
2. Explain that they will be researching and creating a public education campaign focused on the issue of marine debris. The campaign's goals will be to educate the audience about:
 - types and sources of debris;
 - the impact of marine debris on wildlife, humans, and habitat; and actions people can take to reduce marine

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debris and be part of the solution.

- Depending on the resources available at your school, students will be creating a web site, podcast, a newspaper, or TV show. All projects will start with research and writing.

3. As a class, decide whether the campaign will be directed at the school's faculty, staff, and students or all the members of the community. (Note: Most of the projects can be tailored for either the school or the entire community.) If possible, use the campaign to promote an actual beach cleanup, community cleanup campaign, recycling campaign, or other related event.

4. Divide the students into groups and assign to each group one of the following topics:

- Types and sources of marine debris;
- Effects of marine debris on wildlife, habitats, and humans; or
- Solutions to reduce the amount of marine debris.

5. Students should research their topic using the Internet, scientific journals, magazines, newspaper articles, and interviews with local people (fishermen, marina owners, government employees who work on these issues, aquariums, etc.) Within each group, the students will be responsible for writing and critiquing each other's articles. This portion of the project can be incorporated into several different subject areas, including writing, social sciences, etc.

6. After each group has researched and written its contribution, the class should start to work on the finished product (a web site, podcasts, a newspaper, or TV show). Consult your school's advisor on technology literacy to coordinate use of



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your school's technology, or to gain access to resources in the community.

For web site and newspaper projects: Remind students that in addition to the written portion of the project, there should be graphic contributions that illustrate the stories or stand on their own. The web site or newspaper can be illustrated with photographs, drawings, charts, graphs, and cartoons.

7. After the campaign is over, discuss with the class how well it worked. Have the students think about how much or how little people seemed to know about marine debris. Ask them to consider how changing people's attitudes can be effective in the effort to reduce marine debris.

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EXTENSIONS

Write an article for the school newspaper. Ask the class to compose an article about the marine debris education campaign for the school newspaper. The article should include what students have done and what they hope to achieve, as well as discuss what their schoolmates can do to help. Or, invite a reporter from the school newspaper to a press conference where the class can give a presentation on marine debris. The reporter can then write an article on the campaign.

Write newspaper articles/letters to the editor. Have the class write a **press release** on the campaign for the local paper that discusses what students have accomplished. A reporter from the paper could also be invited to talk to the class. Alternatively, have each student compose a letter to the editor briefly explaining the effects of marine debris, what their class

is doing to prevent it, and steps that people in the community can take to support the campaign.

Make a class video advertising the campaign or illustrating some of the ways marine debris could adversely affect the community. The video also should demonstrate ways that people can prevent ocean pollution. The videotape could be shown in school and then placed in the library for members of the community to borrow.

Research how to make an effective Public Service Announcement (PSA) for radio stations, then develop a PSA in conjunction with a local radio station or community access television/local cable television channel advertising the campaign.

LESSON FOUR

Taking Action

Grade Level:
Grades 5-12

Subjects:
Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies

Overview:
This lesson is designed to increase students' awareness of volunteer activities they and their families can participate in that will promote cleaner, healthier oceans and waterways. Students will learn about the efforts of private organizations and individuals, both locally and nationally, to prevent marine debris and take steps to become involved in a stewardship activity.

Objectives:

- Identify volunteer activities in the community that assist with preventing marine debris.
- Participate in one of these events or programs.
- Reflect on the experience.

Vocabulary:
civic and environmental organization, stewardship, volunteerism

Materials:
Varies based on the activity selected.

Learning Skills:
Public Speaking and other skills (based on the activity selected)

Duration:
Varies (based on the activity selected)

SAFETY & REGULATIONS

Varies (based on the activity selected)

Activity

Students investigate environmental groups, local governments, business and industry, and other civic and private organizations to learn what they are doing to prevent marine debris. Students learn about local volunteer stewardship events, participate in the event, and present an oral report on their activity. The class then writes a letter asking a representative of one of these groups to come to the school to discuss the group's efforts.

1. Tell the students that they will be researching local, state, and national groups and government agencies and learning about events and activities that involve volunteers in either preventing marine debris or cleaning up litter and debris. This research can be done on the Internet, by looking in the local telephone book, or by contacting your local conservation district (see sidebar).

The students can obtain much of this information from the Internet, or they can contact the organizations directly and request that literature be sent to the students by mail. In addition, students can call or visit local officials who are responsible for public health or environmental issues, asking them for more information about their organizations. Students can also contact their municipal or county government employees to learn if there are local Keep America Beautiful or Clean Community programs.