

**Environmental Issues Journal**  
**(supports the Environmental Issues course)**  
**Activity Information**

**Grade Appropriate Level:** 5 - 9

**Duration:** Used as a course. Eight classes of 30 minutes.

**Materials:** Duo-tang journal, videos, The Lorax story By Dr. Seuss, usually available at most school or public libraries.

Included with plan: parable called, "Half-a-loaf", and poem called, "The Faceless Ones" Both of these are included with this lesson plan.

**Objective**

- Teach students about environmental issues.
- Students will learn how to address serious world issues, informing and encouraging them to acquire balanced information & take positive action.

**Prescribed learning outcomes**

**Life Science (B.C.'s Living Resources)**

It is expected that students will:

- identify living resources in the local environment
- describe how humans use B.C.'s living resources
- describe the known and potential environmental impacts of using B.C.'s living resources
- devise a strategy for sustaining a living resource

**Life Science (Social Issues)**

It is expected that students will:

- assess different impacts of using renewable and non-renewable natural resources
- compare and contrast the practical, ethical, and economic dimensions of population growth and polluted environments
- relate extraction, harvest of earth's resources to sustainability and reduction of waste

**Skills**

Co-operative learning, critical and creative thinking, research, problem solving, and communication skills.

**Suggested Instructional Strategies**

Potential topics could include: The ocean crisis, i.e. climate impact on fish species, overharvesting of commercial fish, decline in coral reefs, endangered species, the future of our tropical rainforests, basic ecological concepts, and our ecological footprint. **Ecological footprint** is the area of land and water required to support a defined economy or population at a specified standard of living.



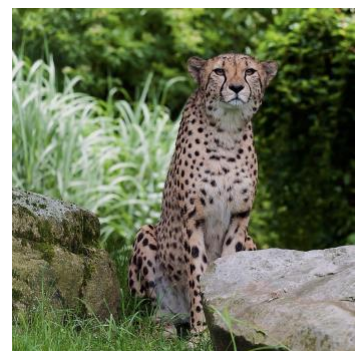
- In the first class we discuss what topics students would like to cover. As well, students design their own criteria for how this course and their journals are going to be evaluated.
- Have students write their reflections weekly on various issues in a journal. They can paste in photos or sketch species etc. This is a time for them to reflect on this course, what they like, don't like, what they have learned, what they think, how they feel etc. and some solutions.
- This is an excellent opportunity for the teacher to see what students are getting out of the course and this lesson, make improvement suggestions and communicate.
- Students are expected to keep a duo- tang journal, (or computer-based) in which they write weekly reflections on a variety of topics, based on their research from a variety of sources and viewpoints, reading etc.
- Encourage students to contact field experts around their topic of study, i.e. wildlife, marine biologists etc. Their journal writings may be based on an activity that we have done, a poem or book read to them, or something they may have watched on tv, or what they have learned etc.



### JOURNAL TOPICS:

1. Why did you sign up for this course? What are your expectations? What would you like to see? How did you like making your own evaluation etc.
2. Reflections on videos about other geographically special places in the world (included), balancing preservation, extraction and other local needs. Here's a link that may help:

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/search?cx=003443374396369277624%3Av3nraqhmeyk&ie=UTF-8&x=hilltop+planting+coffee&sa=#gsc.tab=0&gsc.q=hilltop%20p>



[lanting%20coffee&gsc.page=1](#)

3. Extinction is forever. After they complete a variety of activities (species diversity, how fast our rainforests are disappearing, have them write about their reflections on the activities.

- Debate topics: After participating in a debate on a variety of subjects, they would write down their thoughts. A debate idea: divide students in groups with one being the aboriginals who live in the rainforest and depend on it for food, shelter etc. another group being farmers who want to burn the forest to grow crops, non-human species who live in the forest (animals, birds, insects etc.) and environmentalists who want to preserve the forests forever.
- For gifted students, the teacher may want to suggest they research the role of the global pharmaceutical companies who want to preserve the Amazon forest because it may contain the next cure for cancer... Students can explore the challenges of consensus decision making.
- Caution students to be wary of research and bias from groups that use a crisis as a “fundraising tool” with no interest in solutions, as pointed out by the [B.C. Premier John Horgan](#) recently.
- Can they find a compromise amongst all the many different points of view? Is there a solution? Give students some optimism and room for hope! Some ideas can be found here: <https://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/affective/environment.html>

4. The Lorax. By Dr. Seuss. Have 2 students read aloud the story of the Lorax (it is about forests and resources), and then have students write about what the story said, what was the message?

5. Read the parable called "Half-a-loaf". In this journal, they were asked to reflect on this parable, its meaning, messages, lessons etc. This parable appears below.

6. Students may write poems and add them to the bottom of their journals.

7. A poem called "The Faceless Ones". Read the poem below.

Note: The journals worked really well. Even the students that were weak writers excelled at this task. The topics are endless. The above are just a few ideas. My students wrote at least a page on each topic in their journals. The responses were excellent.

### Cross-Curricular Interests

Math, Science, Information Technology and Social Studies. Environmental science  
Language Arts (Creative writing)

### Suggested Links

<http://www.globalissues.org/EnvIssues/EnvIssues.asp>

<https://seawestnews.com/author/fabian/>

[https://www.worldwildlife.org/media?place\\_id=amazon](https://www.worldwildlife.org/media?place_id=amazon)

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/01/29/sustaining-forests-livelihoods-changing-world>

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### POEM AND PARABLE by Jack Whyte (linked)

#### The Faceless Ones

##### A Reflection.....

When the Exxon Valdez spilled her guts  
Off Alaska's pristine shore  
She belched black shame, spewing bitter blam  
For the Faceless to ignore;  
But the Valdez trull with her single hull  
Wasn't special or unique —  
It was just bad luck that the thing got stuck, To hear the Faceless speak...

Where oil slicks spread the birds are dead —  
Their feathers destroyed by tar;  
The seals are gone; no salmon spawn  
Where the thick, black globules are;  
No whales sound there; no hungry bear  
Will set foot on a black ice floe  
To hunt for food in a sea of crude  
That smothers the life below.

When you drive again through the mountain chain  
That makes B.C. so fair,  
Look up in awe at the Mackinaw made of trees  
That the mountains wear;  
And you might take note that the once-thick coat  
Is showing wear and tear;  
It still looks fine, but the holes are sign  
That the Faceless Ones are there.

When the hills are bare, there'll be no soil there  
For trees to fasten on;  
Just plain, raw rock. The bright woodcock  
Will be vanished; dead and gone.  
There'll be no life there for the grizzly bear;  
Neither cougar nor wolf will prowl;  
No sign of flight through the woods at night  
Will signal the hunting owl.

There's blood in the ooze from the tankers' screws  
There's blood in the chain saw's teeth;  
There's dread in the thread of the steel cat's tread  
The torn earth screams beneath;  
There's the breath of death in the pipeline's path  
And the strip mine's open sore;  
And the pulp mills sweat a cold, poisoned threat  
To our children. we can't ignore!

There's contaminated salmon and poisoned fish  
We've been told are safe to eat,  
And, if caught outside of the grim Red Tide,  
They say mussels can still taste sweet.  
A drop in the ocean is just a drop,  
But its meaning has changed today  
When one toxic drop has the power to stop  
A migrating whale, midway

These are the gifts of the Faceless Ones,  
The ones who will swear, "Not I!"  
As they defend to the tasteless end  
Their plight and their right to ply.  
They'll swear you threaten their livelihood;  
That your ignorance is plain;  
While, all the time, they produce the slime  
That the papers call Acid Rain.

And they'll tell you that Pontius Pilate's dead;  
That his days, and his ways, are gone ...  
Did he wash his hands of the Empire's plans  
For the cedars of Lebanon?  
They cut and they squandered the forests there,  
And they shipped the lumber home,  
And the desert sands of the Arab lands  
Are the legacy of Rome ...

We must take aim at the Faceless Ones  
Though they're always hard to find;  
They take no blame, but they're all the same,  
The blind who lead the blind.  
They sit, in power, in ivory towers  
And decree how we live our lives;  
They throw us bones and honing stones  
But they hold the long, sharp knives.

They'll take no blame for the cancer flames  
That pour through the ozone holes;  
They'll hear no tales about dying whales  
Or ice melting at the Poles;  
They'll disown Bhopal and the Love Canal  
And Chernobyl's grim despair;  
And they'll wash their hands of the blasted lands  
That lie barren, and bleak, and bare.

We must stand up to the Faceless Ones,  
The men who control the winds;  
The winds of power, and the winds of war  
The fiscal, blizzard winds;  
The winds that soar and the winds that roar  
And the winds that destroy the trees;  
We must make them see that the winds of change  
Can be stronger than all of these!

But we might just find that the Faceless kind  
Look a lot like you and me,  
'Though they're ill-defined ... there are none so blind  
As those who will not see ...  
And so, when the trace of the shadowy face  
You're straining to see has grown,  
Don't stand and stare if the features there  
Are very much like your own,

For we, ourselves, are the Faceless Ones  
Though we might find that uncouth ...  
We've grown too fond of the easy life  
In our hunt for Eternal Youth.  
We've grown accustomed to reaching out  
For whatever we want, right now,  
Never stopping to think that you just can't drink  
Fresh milk, once you've killed your cow...

So we cut down the forests and foul the air  
And pour filth in our rivers and streams.  
Polluting the oceans, we go through the motions  
Of calling for grandiose schemes  
To save the rain forests and restore the ozone,  
And put the world back in the pink.  
But the thing we won't do, is admit that it's true  
That we'd all better slow down and think!

### Half a Loaf

By Jon Rye Kinghorn

Once upon a time there was a class and the students expressed disapproval of their teacher. Why should they be concerned with the global interdependency, global problems and what others of the world were thinking and feeling and doing?

And the teacher said she had a dream in which she saw one of her students fifty years from today. The student was angry and said, "Why did I learn so much detail about the past and the administration? of my county and so little about the world?"

He was angry because no one told him that as an adult he would be faced almost daily with the problems of global interdependent nature, be they problems of peace, security, quality of life, food, inflation, or scarcity of natural resources.

The angry student found he was a victim as well as the beneficiary. " Why was I not warned? Why was I not better educated? Why did my teachers not tell me about the problems and help me understand I was a member of the interdependent human race?"  
With even greater anger the student shouted,

"You helped me extend my hands with incredible machines,  
my eyes with telescopes and microscopes,  
my ears with telephones, radios, and sonar. My brain with computers."  
"But you did not help me extend my heart, love, concern to the entire human family.  
You, teacher, gave me half a loaf!"



