



lesson detail

LEARNING OBJECTIVES | Review the Community Action and Problem Solving Process used to solve an environmental problem List the indicators of a “quality” Earth Force project.

1> INTRODUCE EARTH FORCE AND EXPLAIN THE EARTH FORCE GOALS.

Explain that the students will get to participate in a special group this year called Earth Force. It is a unique opportunity; not all students in the school or in the community are able to participate. The slogan for Earth Force is “Youth for a Change”. The program will allow them to become actively involved in their community. They will learn a problem solving process that can help them become influential in their communities and learn how to begin solving almost any kind of problem.

Choose a contemporary issue and ask students what they think they could accomplish if they had to solve the issue by themselves. Help them understand that Earth Force involves a group of people who have the same desire to become stewards of the Earth. It takes more than just one to make a difference; it takes the combined force of many people.

The mission of Earth Force is to help individual students learn how they can make a difference in their community by choosing an environmental issue they care deeply about and coming up with a long-term solution to implement. **Introduce students to the Process:**

STEP 1 // INVENTORY

They will observe issues and strengths in their community.

STEP 2 // CRITERIA-BASED DECISION MAKING

They will use democratic decision-making to choose one of their issues to address.

STEP 3 // RESEARCH

They will learn all they can about their issue and come up with a policy or practice related to it that they would like to change.

STEP 4 // CRITERIA-BASED DECISION MAKING

They will choose a strategy that they will implement to address their issue.

STEP 5 // TAKING ACTION

They will create and implement the strategy they’ve chosen.

STEP 6 // LOOKING BACK & AHEAD

They will reflect on the Earth Force process and think about how their project will be maintained.

2> STUDENTS IDENTIFY THE ELEMENTS OF A QUALITY EARTH FORCE PROJECT.

Hand out one copy of Handout LE for every 2-3 students. Explain that a rubric is a tool that describes the characteristics of something and is a measurable way for us to know if quality has

been reached. List and explain each practice and quality indicator listed on the rubric. Discuss what the classroom experience would look like when each practice is at its best. Define unfamiliar terms such as youth voice, reflection, collaborative, perspective, and sustainability.

Working in teams, students should come up with the performance indicators for each row of the rubric. They may need some guidance at first, but the quality indicators should help guide them to think of what exemplary projects might look like.

As a whole group, decide on what the class rubric will be, based on small group answers. Students may need to have some discussion or debate before coming to a consensus. You may use Handout LD as a guide or starting point for discussion.

Keep the class rubric on display throughout the process so that students can come back to it and evaluate their progress in each area.

ALTERNATIVE: You may also choose to make copies of Handout LF and have students cut them out, mix them up, and paste them into the rubric template.

Introduce students to the Earth Force materials that will assist them in the process: the Tips Cards.