

International Mother Earth Day April 22

Overview and Purpose

This lesson is designed to teach children about International Mother Earth Day and the specific right of children highlighted by this UN Day; their right to an education that helps them develop their talents and abilities, that helps them to live peacefully and to protect the environment and respect other people. (CRC Article 29)

Background Information for Teachers

International Mother Earth Day
un.org/en/events/motherearthday/
Earth Day Canada
earthday.ca/pub/

Grades

4 – 8

Materials

Book entitled *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss

Activity One

- Begin by introducing April 22nd as International Mother Earth Day; a UN Day celebrated around the world. Discuss Article 29 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child specifically addressing the right for children to enjoy the environment in which they live.
- Read aloud from the book *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss.
- Create a “Web of Consequences” for *The Once-ler*. (The Once-ler cuts down the Truffula trees, then there is not enough Truffula fruit, then the Brown Bar-ba-loots have no food, so the Brown Bar-ba-loots must move.) Start the web as a whole group and then ask the students to continue the work on their own individual webs. Or, have the students chart the Once-ler’s actions and their corresponding consequences.
- Ask the students to find a partner, share their web and continue with their webs.
- Ask the students to switch partners and share their web again, and then continue to add on more ideas after speaking with their partner.
- Finally, have all the students come together as a group to share their webs. As a class, work together to contribute to the final web on the board.
- Ask the students what they can learn from the web of consequences (that everything is interdependent and interconnected and that every action has a positive or negative reaction).

Activity adapted from the original written by Natalie Williams, an elementary school teacher in Coquitlam British Columbia.

Global Themes

- Interdependence
- Social Justice
- Sustainable Action

Activity Two

- Explain to the students that there has been a lot of discussion about consequences, but it is important to understand that consequences are not always negative. Give the students an opportunity to focus on positive consequences that directly correlate with their behaviour.
- Ask the students to draw or write their own “Web of Consequences” for something that they do (or could do) to help protect the environment.
- Ask the students to share their positive consequences with a partner.

Discussion

We are doing our part today to learn about Earth Day and protect the environment. Who are the others (individuals, communities, NGOs, governments) that have the responsibility to protect the world’s environment, and what are they doing?

How can we advocate for a clean environment in our school, local community, nationally and globally?

Watch [youtube.com/watch?v=xdVvYJ5gS1XQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdVvYJ5gS1XQ) for an inspiring global success story.

Extensions

Building on the concept of consequences, turn the students’ attention to the page showing the factory with the smog and clear-cut forest of Truffula trees. Ask the students to recount what happened to the forest and to all of the creatures that lived there. Turn to the last page of the story where the Once-ler tosses down the last Truffula seed. Ask what must happen for the Truffula forest to grow again. Have the students use recycled materials to create a healthy, thriving forest. Students could develop government policies to protect the forest they’ve created. For Canadian government information on the environment go to nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/sd-dd/index-eng.php.

Write an ending for *The Lorax*. What does the boy do with the seed?

Additional Resources

For more activities for *The Lorax* and Earth Day, visit Seussville’s site: seussville.com/lorax/.

Picture book entitled *Mama Miti* by Donna Jo Napoli

Wangari grew up in the shadow of Mount Kenya listening to the stories about the people and land around her. Though the trees towered over her, she had loved them for as long as she could remember. So strong, so beautiful, how the trees made her smile. Wangari planted trees one by one to refresh her spirit. When the women came to her for help with their families, she told them to do the same. Soon the countryside was filled with trees. Kenya was strong once more. Wangari had changed her country, tree by tree.