

The 21st Century Save Our Animals Project

Lesson Title: *Endangered Species 1: Why Are Species Endangered?*
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Introduction

Your class has been chosen by a confederation of wildlife organizations to help in their global 21st century campaign promoting greater awareness about the growing threat to endangered species, the environment, and to human beings around the world.

Task

In teams of three, you are to find an endangered animal that you would like to work towards saving and create a colorful, interesting, and informative poster that could be placed in parks, schools, and communities to draw attention to environmental issues and your animal's threat of extinction.

Before you can create the posters, you will need to develop a better understanding of the threat to endangered species, particularly the problems, causes, potential solutions, and potentially disastrous effects to the world and humanity if this species were to die off and leave the world forever.

To do this, you will first need to do general research on the topic of endangered species and then select an animal species that you would like to help. As part of this process, you will have to fill out an **Endangered Species Profile** student sheet on the animal and present it with your completed poster to the class. When all posters are finished, the class can decide whether to post them in the community or to send them as a group to a wildlife organization for possible use in its worldwide publicity campaigns. These profiles should include basic information about the animal, important facts and statistics about its status, and recommendations on effective ways to get the world's attention about this dying species.

Process & Resources

1. Read over your **Endangered Species Profile** student sheet to determine what kind of information your team will be required to find about the animal you choose.

Consider the "Art" of Advertising:

Since posters are a form of advertising, it is important to approach your project thinking about what will be the *most interesting, persuasive, enlightening, and effective way* to reveal your endangered animal to the public. Since the endangered species problem is essentially about life and death and the ongoing deterioration of the world, you may want your posters and profiles to include eye-opening statistics and other related scientific data. You may also decide to simply appeal to your audience's emotions by presenting some sad or affecting aspects about your special animal. Though presenting basic facts and statistics is effective, it seems that gaining the public's often-distracted attention about this very serious and dangerous matter calls for more creative approaches.

2. Go to the E-Sheet, **Save Our Animals** (<http://www.sciencenetlinks.com/Esheet.cfm?DocID=58>) and research the two primary websites for this project. The first, **Endangered Species: Why Are Species At Risk?** (<http://www.cbc4kids.cbc.ca/general/the-lab/endangered/whyatrisk.html>), is a Canadian-based resource that will provide you with a broader and more detailed look at endangered species problem in general. Read this to become better informed about the causes and consider ideas on how to best tell the story of your animal in your posters and profiles.

The second resource, **Animal Info - World's Rarest Mammals** (<http://www.animalinfo.org/rarest.htm>), is a list of over 30 endangered mammals. Come up with a list of 3 or 4 mammals you would like to help. Your teacher will help you choose one mammal for your poster and profile. This website should be your primary source of information for your profiles, posters, and presentations.

Optional Research:

Depending on class time and Internet availability, you may wish to inquire with your teacher about doing broader research on your species.

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3. To create the poster, your team will need a large sheet of paper, pencils, markers, tape, and other related materials. The posters must present the following information:
- Both common and scientific names of animal
 - Brief description of its habitat
 - Description of the main reason why the animal is endangered
 - Drawing or pictures of the animal

Depending on team preferences, you may adorn your posters with: printout copies of downloaded photos from the **Animal Info** website, a drawing or drawings of the species based on the photos, or both photos and drawings.

The Importance of Teamwork:

Your team will need to decide which members work on which aspects of the project. It is recommended that all members participate in the general reading and animal selection process. Then one member primarily should handle one of the following tasks: (a) research and animal profile, (b) advertising approach, or (c) poster creation. Since all the areas are dependent on the other, it is important that team members work well together in exchanging ideas and developing the most informative and effective posters and animal profiles.

4. Upon completion, your team will present its poster before the class, using its animal's **Endangered Species Profile** as a basis for its presentation. Be prepared to answer questions about your selected mammal.

Evaluations

Teams will be graded by their teacher on the following areas (10 points each):

In the area of Teamwork:

- Effort
- Cooperation
- Preparation

In the area of Poster Development:

- Layout and Design
- Message and Clarity
- Overall Audience Impact

In the area of Animal Species Profile and Presentation:

- Quality of Research
- Quality of Ideas and Solutions to Save the Species
- Questions and Answers
- Overall Focus and Ability to Complete the Project

Conclusion

One of the purposes of your research and posters is to help you understand why species are endangered. Many hard, realistic issues are involved in trying to save defenseless animal and plants species worldwide. You should now have a greater understanding of the real, mostly human, causes of the globe's ongoing endangerment. Through this project, you have researched the topic of endangered species and used it to help a special mammal that is currently dying off and will likely be forever lost to the world. Like the posters you created and the campaign itself, use this experience to gain a broader outlook on the world.