

Activating My Democracy

- MIDDLE SCHOOL -

LESSON
1

What can we do now?

How to move ideas
into action

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Activating My Democracy

Civics lessons and resources for grades 6–8
Third Edition, 2018

Explores how to: (1) Move ideas into action; (2) Understand values and liberties (3) Understand rights, privileges, and the balance of power; (4) Trace the historic roots of the democracy crisis in current events; (5) Repair a democracy and protect our liberties; and (6) Exercise our rights to defend what we love.

Empowers: Youth by nurturing self-efficacy and teaching skills and strategies to take control of their destiny.

Engages: Youth as change agents to define their roles as global citizens during a critical time in human history.

Special thanks to

ad hoc focus group of retired teachers of King County, WA
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Young Voices on Climate Change

Contributors

those able to pay it forward
and the Jane Smith Turner Foundation

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Ultimate Civics, a project of Earth Island Institute

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***“Tengo el poder de actuar.”
I have the power to act.***

**~ Erica Fernandez
2007 Brower Youth Award winner**

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What can we do?

How to move ideas into action

Rationale

In teaching about current issues, students often ask, “What can we do?” Students are passionate about many issues, but they lack the skills to move ideas into action. This lesson teaches how to create an efficient action plan, as a framework and critical skill set, for students to move their own ideas into action.



For democracy to work, citizens – human persons – must believe that their voices and their participation matters. They must believe in the power of one, the power of working as a team, and the power of organizing as a movement.

“Self-efficacy” is the belief in one’s ability to make change in one’s own life and in the world at large. Self-efficacy underpins a democratic system. When youth believe in their ability to take control of their destiny, they are free to define their role as global citizens.

To children, the world can often seem daunting and full of challenges. But in a nurturing and affirming environment, young people can gain confidence and even come to realize that they can effect change in their own lives

and in the world at large. Young voices can focus adults on important issues and help to shape everyone’s future.

This lesson features exceptional short films to highlight the role that young citizens can play in creating a more sustainable and democratic society. In the film series *Young Voices for the Planet*, young people demonstrate their ability to recognize problems and design strategies to achieve important changes.

At first viewing, these empowered youth may seem exceptional. But, in reality, most kids can master the civic virtues, skills, and strategies that are used by the young people in the films; and these practices can be shared with young people everywhere.

“I realized there was nothing different between me and the kids on those screens – and I could be doing what they were doing.”

~ Lily in *Save Tomorrow*, a *Young Voices for the Planet* film



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Peer learning is a proven active learning pedagogy that enhances critical thinking. This lesson plan uses films as peer-learning tools to inspire and engage youth in exercising their power and responsibilities as citizens to promote constructive social change.

In the film *Save Tomorrow*, the 11-year-old protagonists talk about how, before seeing the films, it didn't occur to them that they could make a difference. But after, the friends helped overturn a town law prohibiting solar panels on public buildings, *Save Tomorrow* star Lily said, "We did that... what can we do now?"

Ultimate Civics' Lesson 1, *What Can We Do Now?*, assists youth in awakening to their own power and teaches them how to use their power as responsible citizens to promote the common good.

Enduring Understanding for Civics Grades 6-8*

- Awaken to the power of one. (D2.Civ.1.)
- Develop a robust belief in their ability to create change in their community and world. (D2.Civ.2.)
- Describe the roles of political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives. (D2.Civ.6.)
- How to apply civic virtues and democratic principles in a community setting. (D3.Civ.7.)
- Ability to explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civic society. (D3.Civ.10.)

* C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards
<http://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf>

Essential Questions

- Do you believe that you have the power to change the world?
- What is a game-changing action plan?

Learning Objectives

Students can:

- Understand the concept and basic elements of SMART action plans.
- Create and implement SMART action plans.
- Understand how participation in civic life can help a citizen attain personal and public goals.

"If adults don't do enough,
we have to do it because
we will live on Earth for
another 80 to 90 years
and our children will live
even longer."

~ Felix in *Plant for the
Planet*, a *Young Voices for
the Planet* film



What can we do?

Lesson 1

Students analyze and discuss film stories to identify basic elements of SMART action plans created and implemented by their peers. Peer learning and interactive exercises nurture self-efficacy and support the role of young citizens in creating a more sustainable and democratic society.

Time

Approximately 50 minutes: interactive exercises supported by films and power point slides.

Materials

- Power point notes and slides
- 1 pocket copy per student of Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution
- 3 double-sided, ½-sheet copies per student of ACTIVITY, “Analyzing SMART Action Plans”
- 4 Young Voices *for the Planet* films
 - » *Save Tomorrow*
<http://www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com/youth-climate-videos/save-tomorrow/>
 - » *Plant for the Planet*
<http://www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com/youth-climate-videos/plant-for-planet/>
 - » *Dreaming in Green*
<http://www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com/youth-climate-videos/dreaming-in-green/>
 - » *Olivia’s Birds and the Oil Spill*
<http://www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com/youth-climate-videos/olivia-oil-spill/>

Analyzing SMART Action Plans	
Specific	3 Ts
GOAL	Targets (key players)
Strategy Tactics	Allies
	Oppose
	Decision-Makers
Strategy Tactics	Talking points
Strategy Tactics	Timeline
	Calendar: Who is doing what? When?

Preparation

- Review lesson materials: power point notes and slides, films, teacher guides, student activity sheets, and vocabulary
- Download or cue for viewing *Save Tomorrow* and one of the other three films
 - » Slide 2 – *Save Tomorrow*
 - » Slide 9 – *Plant for the Planet*
 - » Slide 11 – *Dreaming in Green*
 - » Slide 13 – *Olivia’s Birds and the Oil Spill*
- Find and mark page number in your classroom’s pocket Constitutions for: Activity on slide 7, 1st Amendment on page ____.



- Arrange desks in groups of 4 to 6 students
- Place on each set of desks:
 - » pencils
 - » enough ACTIVITY sheets for 3 per student in the group
- Clear white board behind screen where slides will be projected
- On a different part of the white board or poster paper write:
 - » Essential questions
Do you believe that you have the power to change the world?
What is a game-changing action plan?
 - » Vocabulary
action plan
goal
strategy
tactic
game changer
civic engagement
 - » Examples of strategies
education
outreach
political
direct action
fundraising
media

**“Seeing that we do have power
and we really can make a change
in the world, it’s really inspiring!
It really changes you. So –
Find your team.
Find your passion.
Find your power!”
~ Mari in *Save Tomorrow, a Young
Voices for the Planet* film**

- Arrange desks in groups of 4 to 6 students
- Provide writing utensils and ½ sheet of blank paper for each student in each group
- Place on each set of desks:
 - » writing utensils
 - » enough ACTIVITY sheets for 3 per student in the group
- Provide enough ACTIVITY in the groups for at least 3 per student

“We can’t simply call ourselves a democracy—we have to wake every morning and be a democracy. We know well how to do this, and how not to do this. Democracy requires constant vigilance and reexamination of everything our governments do and don’t do. It requires open criticism of government, and openness on the part of government to accept criticism from its citizens. And it requires transparent conduct in government and industry.

This will require nothing short of revolution in the truest sense – a revolution not of bullets and bombs, but of ideals, passions, and commitment to real social progress through the reform of the existing dysfunctional status quo in government and industry.”

**~ Rick Steiner, October 23, 2003
retired professor, University of Alaska
<http://www.oasis-earth.com/>**



Power Point Notes

Lesson 1

1. Ultimate Civics COVER SLIDE

Everyone has a story.

Every citizen has an “awakening” – an “ah-hah” moment when they realized something’s not right. These moments are a call to action. But you have to answer the call. Engaged citizens are the ones who chose to take action to fix what they care about.

Suggested instruction for teacher

- ADD your “ah-hah” moment and your decision point as a 1-minute story to set this lesson.

<YOUR STORY HERE>

Today we will look at ways that young people – young citizens – are taking control of their destiny and changing the world. They all start with a clear vision of what they want to do – and they create an action plan.

If you are going to write a paper, you create an outline. If you want to do an action, you create an action plan – a way to move ideas into action.

Our essential questions are:

- Do you believe that you have the power to change the world?
- What is a game-changing action plan?

2. Youth leaders: *Save Tomorrow*

Let’s start by watching a short film called *Save Tomorrow* with Alice, Lily, and Mari.



Their story shows how to get started with a SMART action plan. After watching the film, we will analyze it together. Then we’ll watch a couple more films and analyze them in table teams.



SHOW FILM

3. Analyzing SMART action plans: **S = Specific**

Let’s explore the basic parts of a SMART action plan – the roadmap that helps move ideas into action.

“S” is SPECIFIC.

A SMART action plan is focused with a SPECIFIC goal, strategies, tactics and something called the three “Ts.”

“Goal” is a dream with a deadline. It’s something that a person wants to get done.

- What was the girls’ first goal?
- Why is this specific?
 - » Focused goal: Put solar panels on public buildings in their community to help stop climate change.
 - » Unfocused goal, example: Help stop climate change.

4. Strategy & Tactics

“Strategy” is a plan or method to achieve the goal. **“Tactics”** are action steps to carry out a strategy. Strategy and tactics go together.

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Teaching Guide for *Save Tomorrow* (solar)

SPECIFIC

Goal ~ Help stop climate change by putting solar panels on public buildings

Strategy ~ Education (gather evidence)

Tactics

- Learn how city council functions, when it meets & rules for testifying
- Build argument: benefits of solar panels
- Research laws: what needs to change?

Strategy ~ Political (law change)

Tactics

- Prepare & practice testimony
- Testify at town meeting
- Follow up: make sure law is implemented

Strategy ~ Outreach (recruit allies)

Tactics

- Invite allies to city council meeting

MEASURABLE

Outside ~ laws changed to allow & install solar panels; probably cost savings to city

Inside ~ now believe in their ability to change society; empowered to “change the world!”

ACHIEVABLE

Obstacles

- Greed, love of money
- Overcome feelings of despair, sadness, fear, self-doubt
- Town laws that did not allow solar panels

REWARDING

Fun ~ teamwork (more fun together)

Fulfilling ~ they felt like they made a measurable difference; empowered for a lifetime civic engagement

TIMELY

Yes, the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is urgent.

The 3 Ts

Targets (key players)

Allies ~ Friends, parents, adults who helped write new articles (laws) to add solar panels to public buildings; solar panel businesses

Oppose ~ Fossil fuel companies

Decision-makers ~

Lexington City Council

Talking points

- Protect our future
- Help stop climate change
- Put solar panels on public buildings

Timeline

Implied: several months



Let's figure out the strategies and tactics for the girls' first goal.

Instructions



- Roll up screen to project and write directly on white board.
- Use Teaching Guide to facilitate dialogue as students fill out ACTIVITY sheets.

- What did we see the girls doing?
 - » Testifying in support of solar panels on public buildings at a city council meeting.
- What did the girls have to learn about to do this?
If students need help, use GUIDE for more focused questions like:
 - » What are the benefits of solar panels?
 - » What energy source would solar panels replace?
 - » How does a city council work? What are the meeting rules?
 - » How are local laws made or changed?
- Students should fill in ACTIVITY sheet as teacher writes on white board.
- What strategy on our list best fits these tactics?
 - » Education
 - » Teacher writes "EDUCATION" above these tactics, like a title for a list.

An education strategy is used to learn about an issue and to gather evidence to support a position.

- Now let's focus on why the girls were preparing a testimony. What had to happen so that solar panels could be used on public buildings?
 - » The local law had to change.

- What strategy on our list best fits this tactic?
 - » Political
 - » Teacher writes "POLITICAL" next to education strategy, as students fill in ACTIVITY sheet during discussion.

A political strategy is used to pass new laws or to change existing laws.

- What are at least three actions that the girls had to do to achieve their political strategy?
 - » Preparing a testimony means writing a short position paper and delivering it as a public speech. How would you do that?
 - » Learn what the opposing arguments are to using solar panels and prepare counter-arguments.
 - » Learn about the city council members to see who supports or might support use of solar panels.
 - » Follow up to make sure the city actually carries out the new law.

We are missing one really important strategy.

In *Save Tomorrow*, we saw lots of people in the audience, attending the city council meeting.

Often issues are decided before a vote, because people who care about an issue take time to educate and inform decision-makers and other people in the community about the issue to build support.

How did they know that to come to this particular City Council meeting?

- What strategy on our list is about getting people informed and involved?
 - » Outreach strategy
 - » Write on white board next to other to strategies, as students fill in ACTIVITY sheet.

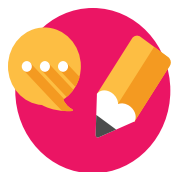


- What tactics might be used for outreach?
 - » meeting or phone calls with people, social media, texting
 - » sharing what you learned with people like parents, grandparents, friends, local businesses, and other community members or organizations
- Pull down screen and continue with slides.
- What were some of the messages you heard in *Save Tomorrow*? Use GUIDE.

5. Analyzing the 3 “Ts”

A SMART action plan also has the “3 Ts” – SPECIFIC Targets, Talking points, and a Timeline.

Instructions, continued



“**Targets**” are key players.

- “Allies” are people who support your position.
- “Oppose” are people who oppose your position.
- “Decision-makers” are people who decide issues or have a final say over a step in a process.
- Who were the allies in *Save Tomorrow*? See GUIDE and frame questions if students need help.
- Who probably opposed solar panels? Follow the money.
 - » Who benefits from using fossil fuels? Fossil fuel industry.
 - » Who benefits from providing fossil fuels to public and private buildings? Utilities.
- Who were the decision-makers?
 - » Lexington City Council

“**Talking points**” are the key messages.

A “**Timeline**” is a schedule of WHO is doing WHAT tactic by WHEN.

Say the girls in *Save Tomorrow* learned that the city council meeting to vote on the solar panel issue was in eight weeks. The girls had schedule the research, prepare their testimony, and practice on a calendar to make sure they had enough preparation time to complete each task.

A timeline is a key part to achieving a goal. It keeps an action plan focused and coordinated – and it helps hold people accountable.

6. The “M.A.R.T.” Part

“M.A.R.T.” stands for four things.

- Ask students to turn over their ACTIVITY sheet.
- Use GUIDE and have students fill in ACTIVITY sheets during discussion.

“M” is MEASURABLE.

Measurable change happens two ways.

1. Something changes **Outside** in the world.
2. Something changes **Inside** a person so that they think or act differently in the world.

A SMART action plan results in both kinds of change.

- In *Save Tomorrow*, what changed in the Outside world?
- What changed Inside for the girls?

<CLICK>

“A” is ACHIEVABLE.

There is always opposition to change. There



Teaching Guide for *Save Tomorrow* (woods)

SPECIFIC

Goal ~ Save wild woods in a public space

Strategy ~ Education (gather evidence)

Tactics

- Identify decision-maker (conservation commission) & learn how it functions
- Build argument: benefits of saving woods
- Research laws: what needs to change?

Strategy ~ Outreach (recruit allies)

Tactics

- Gather signatures for petition

Strategy ~ Political (law change)

Tactics

- Prepare petition
- Deliver signed petition
- Follow up: make sure woods are saved

MEASURABLE

Outside ~ woods saved

Inside ~ further empowered girls to tackle new issues

ACHIEVABLE

Obstacles

- Decision-makers' ignorance of children's needs and other value of woods (social and environmental)

REWARDING

Fun ~ play in woods

Fulfilling ~ created wildlife corridor; protected something they cared about

TIMELY

Yes, protecting forests helps reduce global warming. Trees absorb carbon dioxide from air and act as a carbon sink by storing carbon in leaves, wood and roots.

The 3 Ts

Targets (key players)

Allies ~ Peers (other youth)

Oppose ~ Person who was buying woods

Decision-makers ~
Lexington Conservation
Commission

Talking points

- Stand with us: the children of Lexington
- Save our woods

Timeline

Implied: several months



are usually setbacks. Actions rarely succeed the first try.

- What obstacles did the girls have to overcome to achieve their goal? Think: Outside and Inside.
- If the girls had not succeeded on their first try, what might they have done differently before trying again?
 - » More outreach to build more community support among individuals, businesses, and organizations
 - » Meet with individual city councilors to listen to their objections
 - » Gather more evidence to strengthen position about cost savings of solar panels and to address other issues raised by councilors
 - » Prepare and give more testimony
 - » Urge adults to vote for people who support your position

<CLICK>

"R" is REWARDING.

Rewards also happen two ways: **Fun** in the outside world and **Fulfilling** inside like feeling happy or satisfied.

- Describe how these actions were fun or fulfilling for the girls.

<CLICK>

"T" is TIMELY.

Timely means the outcome helps address an urgent issue and makes an immediate difference.

- Was this a timely action?
 - » Yes. Climate recovery is urgent and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are very timely.

Some action plans are game changing. They change the way we think and act in the world. Game-changing action plans lead to system change.

- Did this action change other people's minds or behaviors? Why or why not?
 - » Yes. Adults changed their minds and behaviors to allow solar energy to power town buildings.
- Did this action lead to system change? Why or why not?
 - » Yes. Solar panels on public and other buildings is about rethinking our energy use and our children's future.
 - » The next step would be to look at other ways the city could reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

7. How did they do it?

Now let's construct an action plan for the girls' second goal: saving the woods.

Instructions



- Students work in small groups and fill out a new Action Plan sheet for saving the woods.
- When a group asks for help, ask other groups for answers first.
- If everyone is stuck, facilitate discussion with examples, using the teacher's GUIDE for *Save Tomorrow* film (woods).

When done, guide a broader discussion.

- Was the second action a **game changer**? Why or why not?
 - » Not a game changer, because this was only one woods.)
- How might it have become a game-changing action? (Encourage discussion.)
 - » Map all of the woods in the city;



- identify critical wildlife habitat;
protect these areas to create
more wildlife corridors
- » Make a new rule that public
officials must consider children's
needs in future land use decisions;

8. Civic engagement

"Civic engagement" is one of the responsibilities of a citizen. It means participating in community life to address public matters and help shape the community's future.

Citizens have protected 1st Amendment rights to carry out this responsibility.

<CLICK>

- What 1st Amendment rights are people exercising in this photo?

Instructions



- Read the 1st Amendment on page ____.
- Turn to a partner and discuss.
- Allow about 2 minutes.

Class discussion guide

- Freedom of speech – testifying in public
- Peaceful assembly – at city council meeting
- Petition the government for a remedy of grievances – use solar panels to help reduce climate change

The definition of "activist" is a person who works to bring about social or political change.

<CLICK>

- Does exercising 1st Amendment rights make a citizen an "activist"?
 - » Turn to another person and discuss.



- » Then discuss as a class.

The point of this exercise is to show that "activist" is often used to label a concerned citizen. Civic engagement is a citizen's responsibility in a democratic society. An action plan is a tool to help citizens participate more effectively.

<CLICK>

Thomas Jefferson felt that, "Dissent is the highest form of patriotism."

Instructions

for viewing optional films

- Ask students to get new Action Plan sheets
- Advance slides to the film you wish to show next
 - » *Plant for the Planet* (slides 9–10)
 - » *Dreaming in Green* (slides 11–12)
 - » *Olivia's Birds and the Oil Spill* (slides 13–14)

9. Youth leaders: *Plant for the Planet*

Let's watch another short film. After the film, work in teams to analyze the action plan that supported the dream – the goal.



SHOW FILM

Teaching Guide for *Plant for the Planet*

SPECIFIC

Goal ~ Help stop climate change by planting one million trees worldwide

Strategy ~ Education (gather evidence)

Tactics

- Research climate crisis & what can be done
- Build argument: trees reduce carbon dioxide
- Prepare & practice public speaking

Strategy ~ Outreach (recruit allies)

Tactics

- Form Plant for Planet Academies
- Create certificate with pledge
- Track and measure goals

Strategy ~ Direct action

Tactics

- Organize tree-planting event
- Plant trees
- Celebrate with fun activity

Strategy ~ Fundraising

Tactics

- Find sponsor or funds to buy trees & tools
- Find sponsors to transport kids, trees & tools to & from location

MEASURABLE

Outside ~ first year: 290,000 trees planted in Germany & pledges worldwide to plant another 550,000

Inside ~ firm belief in his ability to change society and the world

ACHIEVABLE

Obstacles

- Greed, love of money
- Adults who did not understand climate crisis until they listened to youth
- Ignorance of children's needs and needs of future generation

REWARDING

Fun ~ tree-climbing & swinging, planting trees

Fulfilling ~ felt like his program is making a lasting difference; has friends in many countries

TIMELY

Yes, the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is urgent.

The 3 Ts

Targets (key players)

Allies ~ Students, parents, landowners who agree to planting trees on their property

Oppose ~ People who do not understand climate crisis

Decision-makers ~ all kinds of public officials

Talking points

- Trees for climate justice
- *Plant for the Planet*
- Let's plant one million trees worldwide

Timeline

One year at first became lifetime of civic engagement.



Teaching Guide for *Dreaming in Green*

SPECIFIC

Goal ~ Help stop climate change by creating green schools

Strategy ~ Education (gather evidence)

Tactics

- Learn how energy use at school affects environment
- Conduct energy audit
- Conduct solar audit & cost estimate
- Review school energy bills to calculate savings using solar power

Strategy ~ Outreach (recruit allies)

Tactics

- Recruit allies & decision-makers by sharing information & talking with school teachers, administrators, staff & students
- Build support network

Strategy ~ Direct action

Tactics

- Turn off computers & lights
- Recycle in classrooms, school
- Weather-strip doors & windows
- Turn off AC; open windows
- Paint school roof white

MEASURABLE

Outside ~ used Green-o-meter to see energy savings in real time; their middle school qualified to become part of the Green School National Network

Inside ~ believed in their ability to change society and the world

ACHIEVABLE

Obstacles

- Entrenched attitudes: need to change minds & behaviors
- Adults who did not understand school's role in contributing climate crisis until they listened to youth

REWARDING

Fun ~ working together

Fulfilling ~ felt civic pride, a sense of accomplishment & moral authority; joy feeling that they were making a difference

TIMELY

Yes, the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is urgent.

The 3 Ts

Targets (key players)

Allies ~ school staff, teachers & students, community members

Oppose ~ People who sell or distribute fossil fuels

Decision-makers ~ School board & administrators

Talking points

- Recycle in your classrooms
- Small changes add up to big savings

Timeline

One year became a lifetime of civic engagement



10. How did he do it?

Instructions



- You have 10 minutes to analyze the Action Plan.
- Identify the new strategy. Find it on the list and fill out the tactics.
- When done, ask what strategies and tactics were used. Work through any confusion, using GUIDE for this film.
- What did Felix learn about how trees reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere?
 - » Trees act as a “carbon sink.” Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the air and store carbon in leaves, stems, wood, and roots as they grow. Each tree absorbs 10 kilograms or 22 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.
- Who was the main target in this action?
 - » Youth in Germany and then other countries
- What was the new strategy?
 - » Direct action
 - » Discuss how problems in society can be addressed without involving elected officials or governing bodies.
- What is the hidden strategy in this action plan?
 - » Fundraising and donations to support getting trees to plant and to host outings
- Was the action was a game changer? Ask students to support their answer with evidence from the film.
 - » Recruited youth in other countries to plant 1 million trees in their countries.

- » Scaled it up by creating Plant for Planet Academies to continue and support this work.
- » If one tree absorbs 10 kilograms of carbon dioxide a year, how many TONS of carbon dioxide do 1 million trees absorb a year?
- » Answer: $10 \text{ kg CO}_2/\text{tree}/\text{year} \times 1,000,000 \text{ trees} \times 1 \text{ ton CO}_2/1,000 \text{ kilograms CO}_2 = 10,000 \text{ tons of CO}_2/\text{year}$

Reflections



- About 5 minutes before the end of class, ask students to turn to a partner and discuss the question:
 - » Did this lesson help you believe that you have the power to change the world? Why or why not?
- Allow time for a round of class sharing.

11. Youth leaders: *Dreaming in Green*

Let's watch another short film. After the film, work in teams to analyze the action plan that supported the dream – the goal.



SHOW FILM

12. How did they do it?

Instructions



- You have 10 minutes to analyze the Action Plan.
- Make sure to identify the new strategy. Find it on the list and fill out the tactics.
- When done, ask what strategies and tactics were used. Work through any confusion, using GUIDE for this film.



Teaching Guide for *Olivia's Birds and the Oil Spill*

SPECIFIC

Goals ~ 1. Raise funds to support rescue activities after 2010 BP oil disaster.
2. Work to transition to clean green energy

Strategy ~ Education (gather evidence)

Tactics

- Learn how the BP oil disaster harmed people, the local economy, the environment & birds
- Find who is rescuing & treating birds
- Decide what she could offer to help
- Contact group to offer your idea

Strategy ~ Direct action (a fundraiser)

Tactics

- Contact Audubon Society with offer
- Complete paintings

Strategy ~ Political

Tactics

- Get informed: solar power & benefits of use
- Identify contacts in governing bodies
- Set up appointments & plan a visit
- Prepare & present information
- Visit & follow up with public officials

Strategy ~ Media

Tactic

- Publicity gained through promotional efforts likely helped complete goal of

500 drawings

- Leveraged media to gain access to congressional delegates and other national leaders

MEASURABLE

Outside ~ Olivia's paintings raised over \$200,000 for Audubon's bird rescue work

Inside ~ solid belief in her ability to change society and the world

ACHIEVABLE

Obstacles

- Feelings of despair, anger, frustration & disempowerment
- Hopelessness – big disaster versus one kid

REWARDING

Fun ~ painting birds, watching birds, playing outdoors in fort and woods

Fulfilling ~ sense that she helped support bird rescue efforts; empowered to support transition to prevent future oil spills, which would help her family & other people

TIMELY

Yes, her funds supported wildlife rescue work during the BP oil disaster. Her next steps to advocate transition off fossil fuels is also timely.

The 3 Ts

Targets (key players)

Allies – Parents, Audubon, President Clinton

Oppose – Mostly internal (see Obstacles)

Decision-makers – herself, congressional delegates, Department of Interior Secretary

Talking points

- Have you ever seen a solar panel break down and destroy a whole ecosystem and a way of life for people and animals?
- Everything that you do for our planet counts.

Timeline

Three weeks became 3 months, then a lifetime of civic engagement.

- Who was the target in this action?
 - » School board, administrators, staff, teachers, students
- What was the new strategy?
 - » Direct action
 - » Discuss how problems in society can be addressed without involving elected officials or governing bodies.
- Was the action was a game changer? Ask students to support their answer with evidence from the film.
 - » Youth made their action an ongoing project by making their middle school part of the Green School Network.
 - » Youth scaled it up. They formed a high school club, Coral Gables Earth, to focus their work. They repeated the project to put solar panels on their high school. They researched and presented action plans to Miami International Airport authorities to “green” the airport facilities.
 - » For the team, the initial action became a life-changing experience. They dream in green.
- Explain how the girls expressed fulfillment about their desire to help protect their city from sea level rise.
 - » They felt civic pride, a sense of accomplishment, and moral authority. “This is right on so many levels!”

Reflections



- About 5 minutes before the end of class, ask students to turn to a partner and discuss the question:
 - » Did this lesson help you believe that you have the power to

change the world? Why or why not?

- Allow time for a round of class sharing.

13. Youth leaders: *Olivia's Birds and the Oil Spill*

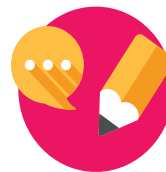
Let's watch another short film. After the film, work in teams to analyze the action plan that supported the dream – the goal.



SHOW FILM

14. How did she do it?

Instructions



- You have 10 minutes to analyze the Action Plan.
- Make sure to identify the new strategy. Find it on the list and fill out the tactics.
- When done, ask what strategies and tactics were used. Work through any confusion, using GUIDE for this film.
- What is the new strategy?
 - » Direct action, a fundraiser
 - » The fundraiser was conducted as a direct action.
- In this film, Olivia herself is a decision-maker. Why?
 - » She had to decide what she wanted to do, figure out how to do it, and do it – all pretty much on her own.
- What is the hidden strategy?
 - » Hint: all the media clips and stories
 Answer: Media



- How do you think the media found out what Olivia was doing?
 - » Hint: Who benefitted financially if Olivia met her goal?
Answer: Audubon
 - » So Audubon likely developed a media strategy to help Olivia achieve her goal.

The point is that media can be used to advance a goal, if the media is informed about the action. Olivia turned the media attention to her advantage to gain an audience with federal and state public officials.

- Discuss how problems in society can be addressed using multiple targets such as nonprofit organizations and government officials.
 - » Some organizations like Audubon have members, which mean voters to a politician. Audubon likely used the media attention to help Olivia get appointments with government officials.
- Was the action a game changer? Ask students to support their answer with evidence from the film.
 - » Yes, for Olivia. She stepped it up from supporting bird rescue efforts during one oil disaster to a lifetime of working on transition from fossil fuels to clean safe energy.

Reflections



- About 5 minutes before the end of class, ask students to turn to a partner and discuss the question:
 - » Did this lesson help you believe that you have the power to change the world? Why or why not?
- Allow time for a round of class sharing.



15. *Ultimate Civics* COVER SLIDE

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

~ Margaret Mead

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

action plan: a detailed plan outlining actions to reach a goal

activist: a person who works to bring about social or political change

citizen: a human person who resides in a city, state, or country and is entitled to the rights and privileges of a free person

civic engagement: participating in community life to address public matters and help shape the community's future

game changer: an idea or event that changes people's minds and/or behaviors and can lead to systemic change

goal: an aim or desired result; a dream with a deadline; something you want and can DO

strategy: a plan or method to achieve a goal

tactic: an action step to help achieve a goal

Support Vocabulary

article: part of a law or legal document that deals with a particular point

energy audit: analysis of the energy needs and efficiency of a building and grounds to determine how to reduce long-term costs by conserving and reducing energy use, and/or replacing energy sources

city council: elected officials who govern a city and have legislative and administrative powers such as passing ordinances and funding projects

commission: a group of people that is officially put in charge of something or asked to find out about something

legislation: a law or set of laws made by a government

ordinance: a law passed by a local government like a city

testify: to make a statement in a public building before elected officials about something that you saw, know, or experienced



Resources

To support youth who want to create and conduct their own action plan

- **Brower Youth Awards, Earth Island Institute**
Inspirational films highlighting stories of youth leaders, ages 12 to 21.
<http://www.broweryouthawards.org/article.php?list=type&type=54>
- **Climate Change Cohort, Sunnyside Environmental School**
Middle school students produce science film as independent project.
<http://www.sespts.org/uncategorized/from-the-8th-grade-climate-change-cohort/>
- **Earth Guardians**
 - » Young activists, artists, and musicians take direct action to stop climate change.
<http://www.earthguardians.org/>
 - » **Be the Change** (short film)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yx1-VltmYbg>
- **Our Children's Trust, Youth Climate Action Now (YouCAN)**
 - » Extracurricular program to engage youth in civic participation with local government to support science-based action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
<http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/grassroots-legal-actions>
 - » Short films of Climate Kids.
<http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/short-films>
- **Ta’Kaiya Blaney**
Inspirational First Nations youth leader
<http://www.takaiyablaney.com/>
 - » Original song that inspired a nation to action
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEj25xY5YJo>
- ***The Young Activist's Guide to Building a Green Movement and Changing the World.***
Sharon Smith (Ten Speed Press, Random House: New York, 2011). Written by young activists for young activists.
<http://www.earthisland.org/index.php/bya/building>
- **Ultimate Civics:** Set of six (6) lesson plans and support materials for civic engagement, understanding fundamental democratic principles and values, and moving ideas into action for middle school and high school students
www.ultimatecivics.org/
- **Young Voices for the Planet:** Inspirational films highlighting stories of youth leaders, ages 9 to 16. <http://www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com/>

