

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 2019 Edition

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

Empowers: Youth by nurturing self-efficacy and by teaching foundational civics concepts and skills 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.

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ad hoc focus group of retired teachers of King County, WA
Sunnyside Environmental School grades 6–8 (2015–2016)
Young Voices on Climate Change

Contributors

occasional gifts from those able to pay it forward
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www.ultimatecivics.org



***“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.



If students are to write a paper, they are taught to create an outline. If students are to move ideas into action, they should be able to create an efficient action plan. This basic tool of civic engagement is a critical skill set for citizens in a democracy.

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. They must believe in their ability to take effective action.

“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 in their ability to effect change.

Young voices are often catalysts for change in society, as youth can focus adults on important issues and help shape everyone’s future – as the current gun control awareness demonstrates.

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.

“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



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.

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. If we want our citizens to be the change, we need to prepare youth for that role.

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.)

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

**"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

Essential Questions

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

Learning Objectives

Students can:

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



Materials & Preparation

Lesson 1

Lesson introduces a basic tool of civic engagement: how to organize a game-changing action plan. 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 PowerPoint slides.

Materials

- PowerPoint notes and slides
- 1 pocket copy per student of Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution
 - » Bulk discounts available: www.nccs.net/pc
- 18 single-sided copies (3 per table group) of “Core and Support Vocabulary”
- 4 double-sided, ½-sheet copies per student of ACTIVITY, “Analyzing SMART Action Plans”
- 4 *Young Voices for the Planet* films
 - » Slide 3, *Save Tomorrow*
www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com/youth-climate-videos/save-tomorrow
 - » Slide 10, *Plant for the Planet*
www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com/youth-climate-videos/plant-for-planet
 - » Slide 12, *Dreaming in Green*
www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com/youth-climate-videos/dreaming-in-green
 - » Slide 14, *Olivia’s Birds and the Oil Spill*
www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com/youth-climate-videos/olivia-oil-spill
- Exit ticket: 1 single-sided copy per student of ACTIVITY, “Moving Ideas into Action”

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

Preparation

- Review lesson materials: PowerPoint notes and slides, films, film guides, student activity sheets, vocabulary, and resources
- Download or cue for viewing
 - » Slide 3 – *Save Tomorrow*
 - » Slide 10 – *Plant for the Planet*
 - » Slide 12 – *Dreaming in Green*
 - » Slide 14 – *Olivia’s Birds and the Oil Spill*
- Slide 9: Find page number for 1st Amendment in classroom Constitutions and write the number in the notes for this slide.



- Arrange desks in 6 table groups
- Place on each set of desks:
 - » pencils
 - » enough ACTIVITY sheets for 4 per student in the group
 - » 3 copies of vocabulary sheets
 - » 1 Constitution per student
- Clear white board behind screen where slides will be projected
- On a different part of the white board or poster paper write:
 - » Vocabulary
 action plan
 goal
 strategy
 tactic
 activist
 game changer
 civic engagement
 - » Examples of strategies
 direct action
 education
 fundraising
 media
 outreach
 political

**“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**

“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
www.oasis-earth.com**



PowerPoint 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 in their world of school, church, community, or society.

These moments are a call to action. But you have to answer the call. Engaged citizens are the ones who chose to act 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>

2. Essential questions

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* – an outline of how to move ideas into action to achieve a goal. This is core vocab.

Our essential questions are:

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

3. Youth leaders: *Save Tomorrow*

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

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

RESOURCES

Young Voices for the Planet
Inspirational films highlighting
stories of youth leaders, ages 9-16
www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com

Brower Youth Awards, Earth Island
Institute
Inspirational films highlighting
stories of youth leaders, ages 12-21
www.broweryouthawards.org



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4. Analyzing SMART action plans: S = Specific

Let's identify the basic parts of a SMART action plan. These are all core vocab.

"S" is for "SPECIFIC" – a specific goal, strategies, and tactics.

<CLICK>

"Goal" is a dream with a deadline. It's something that a person wants to get done.

- What was the girls' first goal?
 - » See Film Guide.
 - » Ask students to take 1 activity sheet, "Analyzing SMART Action Plans."
 - » Instruct to fill out activity sheet during discussion.
- Why is this specific?
 - » It is a focused goal with a set of plans or methods to achieve it.
 - » An unfocused goal, like "help stop climate change," leaves one wondering, "how?"



5. Strategy & Tactics

Strategy and tactics go together. **"Strategy"** is a plan or method to achieve the goal.

"Tactics" are action steps to carry out a strategy.

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 Film Guide to facilitate dialogue.
- What did we see the girls doing?
 - » Testifying at a city council meeting.
 - » Teacher skips first strategy/tactics grouping and writes "testify at city council meeting" as tactic in second strategy/tactics grouping.

- What did the girls have to learn about first in order to testify?
 - » How a city council works
 - » The rules for public testimony
 - » Why solar panels might be better than whatever the solar panels replace
 - » What specific law needs to change

As students list tactics, write tactics in first strategy/tactics grouping and have students fill out their activity sheet, like this:

How city council works
Rules for public testimony
Benefits of solar panels
What laws need to change

- What strategy on our list best fits these tactics? Why?
 - » Check the support vocabulary.
 - » An *"education strategy"* is used to learn about an issue and to gather evidence to support a position.
 - » Teacher writes "EDUCATION" above the line and over the tactics, as students fill in activity sheets.

Now let's focus on what the girls wanted to change by testifying at the city council meeting.

- What had to change so solar panels could be used on public buildings?
 - » A local law had to change.
 - » A majority of city council members had to vote in favor of the change.
- What strategy on our list best fits this tactic? Why?
 - » Check the support vocabulary: Political
 - » Teacher writes "POLITICAL" in second strategy/tactics grouping above "testifying," as students fill in activity sheets.



Film 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
- Talk with city councilors
- Testify at city council meeting

Strategy ~ Outreach (recruit allies)

Tactics

- Invite allies to city council meeting
- Talk with people, use social media
- Share with friends, family, local businesses

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

Opponents ~ 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



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

- Preparing a testimony means writing a short position paper and delivering it as a public speech. How would you do that?
 - » Research benefits of solar panels over existing energy source.
 - » Learn the opposing arguments and prepare counter-arguments.
 - » Write your testimony and practice public speaking.
 - » Add these tactics under “testifying.”
- Since city council members are the ones to vote on an issue, what might you consider doing in the weeks before you testify?
 - » Talk or meet with city council members to learn their positions on the issue – and share yours.
 - » Since these are elected officials, this is part of a political strategy, not outreach.
 - » Add this tactic under POLITICAL.

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. That’s because people who care about an issue take time to educate and inform people in the community about the issue to build support for their position.

- What strategy on our list best fits this description? Why?
 - » Check the support vocabulary: outreach.
 - » An “outreach strategy” is about building a support network by getting people informed and involved.

- » Write OUTREACH on white board next to other strategies, as students fill in activity sheets.

- What tactics might be used to recruit allies to support your issue?
 - » Talk with people, use social media.
 - » Share with friends, family, local businesses, and other community members or groups.
 - » Invite allies to the city council meeting.
- Pull down screen and continue with slides.

6. Analyzing the 3 “Ts”

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

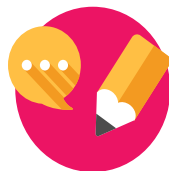
“**Targets**” are key players.

“Allies” are people who support your position.

“Opponents” are people who oppose your position.

“Decision-makers” are people who decide issues or have a final say over a step in a process.

Instructions, continued



- Work at your tables to identify examples of these key players in *Save Tomorrow*.
- After a minute or so, ask what they found.
- Use Film Guide to frame questions if students need help.

“**Talking points**” are the key messages to “pitch” to people.

- What were some of the messages you heard in *Save Tomorrow*? See Film Guide.



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 would have to schedule the research, prepare their testimony, and practice 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.

7. The “M.A.R.T.” Part

Ask students to turn over their activity sheet.

“M.A.R.T.” stands for four things: Measurable, Achievable, Rewarding, and Timely.

Instructions



- In this section, ask students to work at table groups or with a partner to fill in activity sheets.
- Then use Film Guide to prompt or guide class discussion of each point.

<CLICK>

“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 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.

- How were these actions fun or rewarding 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 changers*.” They change the way we think and act in the world. Game-changing action plans lead to system change. This is core vocab.

- 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.
 - » Yes. Girls realized they had power to direct their future.
- 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.

8. How did they do it?

Now let’s construct an action plan for the girls’ second goal.

Instructions



- Students work in small groups or with a partner 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 Film Guide for *Save Tomorrow* (woods).

When done, guide a broader discussion.

- Was the second action a game changer? Why or why not?
 - » No, because the girls saved only one woods.
 - » Yes, because it made the girls feel even more confident about their ability to problem-solve and effect change.

- How might it have become a game-changing action?
 - » Map all of the woods in the city; identify critical wildlife habitat; protect these areas to create more wildlife corridors

9. 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. This is core vocab.

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 ____ of the Constitution.
- 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 greenhouse gas emissions

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.



Film 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)

Opponents ~ 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



Film 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: plant trees

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

Opponents ~ 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.



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.”

10. 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

11. How did he do it?

Instructions



- You have 10 minutes to analyze the Action Plan.
- There are four strategies. Find the new ones in the support vocab.
- When done, ask what strategies and tactics were used. Work through any confusion, using Film Guide.
- What is one new strategy?
 - » Direct action, planting trees.

“Direct action” is a plan of physical, usually collective, acts to change our circumstances without handing our power to a middle person. Since planting trees involves many steps or tactics to do, it is considered a strategy.

- What did Felix learn about how trees reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere?
 - » Trees act as a “carbon sink.”
 - » Refer to resource discussion box ideas.
- What is the hidden strategy in this action plan?
 - » “*Fundraising*” and donations to support getting trees to plant and to host outings.
- Who was the main target in this action?
 - » Youth in Germany and then other countries
- Was the action a game changer? Ask students to support their answer with evidence from the film.
 - » Yes! Felix recruited youth in other countries to plant 1 million trees in their countries.

RESOURCES

A “carbon sink” is a forest, ocean, or other natural environment that absorbs and stores carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the air and store carbon in leaves, stems, wood, and roots as they grow. A single young tree can absorb about 10 kilograms or 22 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.

How many TONS of carbon dioxide do 1 million young trees absorb a year?
1 ton = 1,000 kilograms (kg)
10 kg CO₂/tree/year x 1,000,000 trees x 1 ton CO₂/1,000 kilograms CO₂ = 10,000 tons of CO₂/year
www.arborenonvironmentalliance.com/carbon-tree-facts.asp



- » He scaled it up by creating Plant for Planet Academies to continue and support this work.
- » Go to website to see the latest count – it's over 15 million!

Felix's Plant for the Planet Academy is an example of how problems in society can be addressed without involving elected officials or governing bodies. It's about people stepping up to identify and address shared concerns within their community or society.

- Can you think of local examples?
 - » Teachers or students might research examples of local nonprofit organizations to share with class.
 - » School clubs with a public service mission are other examples.

12. 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.

Instructions for finishing lesson

- Decide if another class is needed to finish films in this lesson or to view and discuss more films from Resources.
- With either choice, reserve about 15 minutes at the end of class for a Reflection ACTIVITY and completing exit tickets.
- If continuing with films, ask students to get new Action Plan activity sheets.
- Advance slides to the film you wish to show next
 - » *Dreaming in Green* (slides 12-13)
 - » *Olivia's Birds and the Oil Spill* (slides 14-15)

RESOURCES

Legendary tree planters

John Muir's sequoias

www.ancienttreearchive.org/john-muir-sequoia-cloned-by-archangel/

Johnny Appleseed

mentalfloss.com/article/62113/9-facts-tell-true-story-johnny-appleseed

Wangari Maathai, founder of Green Belt Movement

www.greenbeltmovement.org/wangari-maathai

Plant for the Planet

www.plant-for-the-planet.org



SHOW FILM

13. How did they do it?

Instructions



- You have 10 minutes to analyze the Action Plan.
- Look for three strategies in the support vocab.
- When done, ask what strategies and tactics were used. Work through any confusion, using Film Guide.
- What was the direct-action strategy?
 - » Reducing energy use and carbon dioxide emissions.
- Who was the target in this action?
 - » School board, administrators, staff, teachers, and students.



Film 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 supporters)

Tactics

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

Strategy ~ Direct action (power down)

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

Opponents ~ 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



Film 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
- Create 500 different bird paintings
- Complete paintings

Strategy ~ Political (advocate issue)

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 are also timely.

The 3 Ts

Targets (key players)

Allies – Parents, Audubon, President Clinton

Opponents – 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.

- Was the action a game changer? Ask students to support their answer with evidence from the film.
 - » Yes. Youth made their action an ongoing project by making their middle school part of the Green School Network.
 - » Yes. Youth scaled it up. They formed a club to put solar panels on their high school. They researched and presented action plans to Miami International Airport authorities to “green” the airport facilities.
 - » Yes. For the team members, 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!”

The Green School Network is an example of how problems in society can be addressed without involving elected officials or governing bodies. It’s about people stepping up to identify and address shared concerns within their community or society.

- Can you think of local examples?
 - » Teachers or students might research examples of local nonprofit organizations to share with class.
 - » School clubs with a public service mission are other examples.

14. 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.

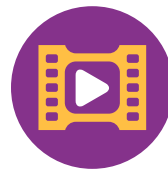


RESOURCES

Green School National Network
www.greenschoolsnationalnetwork.org

Schools Under 2°C
www.schoolsunder2c.org

Carbon offsets to reduce poverty
www.cotap.org



SHOW FILM

15. How did she do it?

Instructions



- You have 10 minutes to analyze the Action Plan.
- Look for four strategies in the support vocab.
- When done, ask what strategies and tactics were used. Work through any confusion, using Film Guide.
- What was the direct-action strategy?
 - » A fundraiser.
 - » Since a fundraiser involves many steps or tactics to do, it is considered a strategy.
- 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.

- Who do you think set up the meetings for Olivia with elected officials and staff?
 - » Hint: who might benefit for this exposure?
 - » Some organizations like Audubon have members. Members mean voters to a politician.
 - » Audubon likely used the media attention to set up appointments for Olivia 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.

"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

Reflections



- About 15 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.

16. *Ultimate Civics* COVER SLIDE

Instructions

- Hand out exit tickets 10 minutes before the end of class.
- Collect as students exit.
- If time permits, consider asking students to share their "take-aways."

Find the Exit Ticket Guide after the vocabulary section.

RESOURCES

Audubon, birds, and climate
climate.audubon.org/article/audubon-report-glance

Audubon interactive flyway maps
climate.audubon.org/geographical-search



Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

action plan: an outline of how to move ideas into action to achieve a goal

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

strategy: a plan or method to help achieve a goal

tactic: an action step to help achieve a goal

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

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

Support Vocabulary

strategies, types of

direct action: plan of physical, usually collective, acts to change our circumstances without handing our power to a middle person

education: plan of physical action to research an issue and gather evidence to support a position

fundraising: plan of physical action to seek financial support for a cause

media: plan of physical action to create a media mix to help reach a goal

outreach: plan of physical action to get people informed and involved in a cause and to build a network of allies to support that cause

political: plan of physical action to pass new laws or to change existing laws

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



Vocabulary from Films

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



Exit Ticket Guide

1. What are the basic elements of a SMART action plan?

<u>Specific</u>	<u>Measurable</u>	<u>Achievable</u>	<u>Rewarding</u>	<u>Timely</u>
Goal	Outside	Overcome	Fun	Urgent need
Strategies	Inside	obstacles	Fulfilling	
Tactics				
3 Ts –				
Targets				
Talking points				
Timeline				

2. Match strategies with tactics like example.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Tactics</u>
E = education	<u>P</u> testify before city council
	<u>M</u> write a letter to editor of local newspaper
O = outreach	<u>E</u> research an issue
	<u>M</u> media interview
P = political	<u>D</u> plant trees
	<u>O</u> share pitch with friends
D = direct action	<u>F</u> find sponsors to support work
	<u>O</u> write a pitch to share
F = fundraising	<u>E</u> create an action plan
	<u>D</u> energy audit
M = media	<u>P</u> get petition signatures

3. What are some of the obstacles that the youth leaders overcame?

Self-doubt	Get adults to listen to kids
Ignorance of issue	Change minds & behaviors

4. What is a game-changing action plan?

A plan to move ideas into action that will result in system change.

5. Do you believe you have the power to change the world? Explain.

6. What was your favorite part of this lesson?



Resources – Lesson 1

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

Short films

Young Voices for the Planet

Inspirational films highlighting stories of youth leaders, ages 9 to 16

www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com

Brower Youth Awards, Earth Island Institute

Inspirational films highlighting stories of youth leaders, ages 12 to 21

www.broweryouthawards.org

Earth Guardians, Youth hip hop artists and activists

www.earthguardians.org

“Be the Change”

www.youtube.com/watch?v=yx1-VltmYbg

Sunnyside Environmental School, 8th grade Climate Change Cohort

“LNG: Just Another Dirty Fossil Fuel” (Jan. 2016)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8CQ9Qrei3c

Support

Our Children’s Trust, Classroom toolkit

docs.google.com/document/d/1xE2LEQvC39GG2is96ZreXRyGVQ0Y9tQjf84nyWt9PXs/edit

Legendary tree planters

John Muir’s sequoias

www.ancienttreearchive.org/john-muir-sequoia-cloned-by-archangel

Johnny Appleseed

mentalfloss.com/article/62113/9-facts-tell-true-story-johnny-appleseed

Wangari Maathai, founder of Green Belt Movement

www.greenbeltmovement.org/wangari-maathai

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Green School National Network: www.greenschoolsnationalnetwork.org

Schools Under 2°C: www.schoolsunder2c.org

Carbon offsets to reduce poverty: www.cotap.org

Audubon, birds, and climate

climate.audubon.org/article/audubon-report-glance

Interactive flyway maps: climate.audubon.org/geographical-search

