



STAGE TO SAVE: INSPIRING CHANGE FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES
Grade Band: 9-12
Content Focus: Theatre & Science



LEARNING DESCRIPTION

In this multi-day lesson, students use digital storytelling and theatrical techniques to create a persuasive PSA that raises awareness about an endangered species. Students begin by researching their species’ status, threats, and ecological importance, then they will craft a conservation message designed to inspire action and encourage donations. Using their voice, diction, projection, and creative choices in music and imagery, students will plan, script, and produce a short video PSA. They will incorporate theatre elements like mood, scene design, and cues alongside digital editing tools to engage the audience emotionally and intellectually. Through this project, students deepen their understanding of conservation issues while developing communication, performance, and media production skills to advocate for change.

LEARNING TARGETS

Essential Questions	“I Can” Statements
How can we use theatrical techniques to inspire others to protect endangered species?	<p>I can research and explain the conservation status, threats, and importance of an endangered species.</p> <p>I can design a persuasive conservation message that inspires others to act.</p>



	<p>I can use my voice, music, and imagery to create mood and communicate a clear message.</p> <p>I can plan, script, and produce a digital PSA using theatrical techniques and media tools.</p> <p>I can reflect on how digital storytelling can raise awareness and inspire change.</p>
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GEORGIA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Environmental Science: SEV2. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to construct explanations of stability and change in Earth’s ecosystems. d. Construct an argument to support a claim about the value of biodiversity in ecosystem resilience including keystone, invasive, native, endemic, indicator, and endangered species.</p> <p>SEV4. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to analyze human impact on natural resources. a. Construct and revise a claim based on evidence on the effects of human activities on natural resources.</p>	<p>TAHSFT.CR.2.c Construct and critique elements of dramatic structure, character, and dialogue.</p> <p>TAHSFT.RE.2 Critique various aspects of theatre and other media using appropriate supporting evidence.</p> <p>TAHSFT.CN.1 Explore how theatre connects to life experiences, careers, and other content.</p>

SOUTH CAROLINA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Biology: B-LS2-1. Use mathematical and/or computational representations to support explanations of biotic and abiotic factors that affect carrying capacity of ecosystems at different scales.</p> <p>B-LS2-6. Evaluate claims, evidence, and reasoning that the complex interactions in ecosystems maintain relatively consistent numbers and types of organisms in stable conditions but changing conditions may result in a new ecosystem.</p> <p>B-LS2-7. Design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on biodiversity and ecosystem health.</p>	<p>Anchor Standard 1: I can create scenes and write scripts using story elements and structure.</p> <p>Anchor Standard 2: I can design and use technical elements for improvised scenes and written scripts.</p> <p>Anchor Standard 3: I can act in improvised scenes and written scripts.</p> <p>Anchor Standard 5: I can interpret and evaluate live or recorded dramatic performances as an active audience member.</p> <p>Anchor Standard 8: I can relate theatre to other content areas, arts disciplines, and careers.</p>

B-LS2-8. Evaluate evidence for the role of group behavior on individual and species' chances to survive and reproduce.

Earth & Space Science:

E-ESS3-4. Evaluate or refine a technological solution that reduces impacts of human activities on natural systems.

KEY VOCABULARY

Content Vocabulary	Arts Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Endangered species</u> — A species at risk of extinction because its population is so small or declining rapidly ● <u>Vulnerable</u> — A species that is likely to become endangered if threats to its survival continue ● <u>Critically endangered</u> — A species facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the immediate future ● <u>Near threatened</u> — A species that does not yet qualify as endangered or vulnerable but may soon if threats increase ● <u>Habitat</u> — The natural home or environment where a plant or animal lives and grows ● <u>Conservation</u> — The careful use and protection of natural resources to prevent overuse, destruction, or extinction ● <u>Biodiversity</u> — The variety of living organisms — plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms — in an ecosystem or on Earth as a whole ● <u>Ecosystem</u> — A community of living organisms interacting with each other and their physical environment ● <u>Habitat restoration</u> — The process of repairing damaged ecosystems so they can support healthy populations of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Voice</u> — Actors use their voice to be heard by the audience clearly. Actors must also apply vocal choices such as pitch, tempo, and volume to the character they are dramatizing. ● <u>Audience</u> — The group of spectators, listeners and viewers collectively, in attendance at a theater ● <u>Director</u> — A director oversees the entire process of staging a production ● <u>Lighting/visual design</u> — choosing visuals and effects to convey mood and meaning ● <u>Cue</u> — A signal or prompt that indicates when a specific action or line should take place ● <u>Diction</u> — Using a “crisp & clear” actor voice that can be understood by everyone watching and listening ● <u>Monologue</u> — A long speech by a single character ● <u>Projection</u> — Using a “big” actor voice so that you can be heard in the very back row of a space (classroom, auditorium, theater) ● <u>Scene</u> — A single situation or unit of dialogue in a play (in this lesson, a PSA) ● <u>Mood</u> — The emotional tone created through voice, music, and visuals

plants and animals again

- Human impact — The effects humans have on the environment, including pollution, deforestation, habitat destruction, and climate change
- Conservation program — An organized effort to protect and manage wildlife, habitats, and natural resources for the future

MATERIALS

- Student access to the Internet
- Digital devices with video editing tools (WeVideo, iMovie, Canva, Adobe Express, etc.).
- Sample endangered species PSAs.
- [Student packet](#) for each student, which includes a research planning worksheet, storyboard template, and rubric.
- Images, music, and sound effects (royalty-free resources recommended)
- [Video](#) of tips for creating an effective video PSA

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Opening/Activating Strategy

- Discuss what a public service announcement is and watch examples. Discuss what techniques the PSA used to make the audience understand and care about the issue.
 - Ask students: How were voice, music, and imagery used effectively? How could they be improved?
- Introduce the driving question, objectives, and vocabulary.

Work Session

- Teacher gives students approximately 10 minutes to research endangered species and add examples to a list on the board. *Teacher approves species added to the list as potential research choices.*
- Students choose an endangered species to research for their PSA.
- As students research their chosen endangered species, they should complete the Research Planning Sheet in the student packet (see materials) using guiding questions.
- Students use Research Sheet Part 2 in the student packet (see materials) to help them write their conservation message for their PSA and brainstorm how to encourage realistic fundraising for their cause.
- Review PSA structure: Beginning (problem), Middle (evidence and emotional hook), End (solution and call-to-action).
 - Teacher may want to show the following [video](#) of tips for creating an effective video PSA (voiceover PSA begins at the 2:19 mark).
 - Discuss how the actor doing the voiceover uses diction and projection to communicate the message.
- Students should use their research and intended message/solution to help them create their Storyboard Template located in the student packet (see materials).

- Students should provide detail on the scenes, visuals, narration/dialogue, cues, and music/sound.
- Review examples of PSAs as a class. Discuss how a PSA uses voice, mood, and visuals to connect with the audience.
- Teacher guides students on choosing visuals, music, and sounds to help them create the appropriate mood/tone for their PSA.
- Students should use the Internet to select and edit imagery, music, and video clips.
- As students gather their elements for their PSA, they should begin assembling their digital PSA.
- Before students record their voice-overs for their PSAs, discuss key theatre/media concepts: voice, diction, projection, mood. Teacher may want to go back to an example PSA to provide examples of each.
- Students practice speaking clearly and expressively (diction and projection) as they rehearse their voiceovers. Teacher circulates and provides feedback.

Closing/Reflection

- Set expectations for being a respectful audience.
- Discuss how to give constructive feedback.
- Students take turns sharing their PSAs with the class (via projector or shared folder).
- Classmates provide compliments and suggestions on feedback forms, sticky notes, or verbally.
- Students complete the reflection in the student packet.

ASSESSMENTS

Formative

- Research notes and planning sheets
- Storyboard drafts and rehearsals

Summative

- Final PSA video (see rubric in student packet)
- Written or recorded reflection

DIFFERENTIATION

Acceleration: Create a PSA targeting a specific audience (e.g., children, lawmakers), or add subtitles, graphics, or a more elaborate script.

Remediation: Provide sentence starters, audio recording help, and royalty-free media resources.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample PSAs:

- Black footed Ferret <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqruCkAroyU>
- Endangered Species <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iva6-HzIBYw>
- Pandas <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulrnS7mG4bQ>
- Marine Animals

<https://videos.fisheries.noaa.gov/detail/videos/species-in-the-spotlight/video/6193465652001/species-in-the-spotlight:-saving-the-most-endangered-marine-animals?autoStart=true>

- Giant Manta Rays

<https://videos.fisheries.noaa.gov/detail/videos/sharks-rays/video/6289820769001/get-to-know-your-pacific-islands-threatened-species:-giant-manta-rays?autoStart=true>

- Hawksbill Sea Turtles

<https://videos.fisheries.noaa.gov/detail/videos/sea-turtles/video/6289823290001/get-to-know-your-pacific-islands-endangered-species:-hawksbill-sea-turtles?autoStart=true>

**This integrated lesson provides differentiated ideas and activities for educators that are aligned to a sampling of standards. Standards referenced at the time of publishing may differ based on each state's adoption of new standards.*

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