



MOVE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE: CONSERVATION THROUGH DANCE
Grade Band: 9-12
Content Focus: Dance & Science



LEARNING DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students explore the power of creative expression to raise awareness about environmental issues by creating a short TikTok dance that communicates a conservation message. After analyzing examples of social media campaigns and TikToks that promote sustainability, students select an environmental issue, research its causes and impacts, and plan a movement-based message designed to educate and inspire their audience. Through collaborative or individual work, students choreograph and record a TikTok dance incorporating creativity, clear communication, and accurate scientific content. They then explain how their performance addresses the issue and reflects key environmental concepts and reflect on how art and media can influence public awareness and action.

LEARNING TARGETS

Essential Questions	"I Can" Statements
How can movement and creativity inspire others to take action on environmental issues?	<p>I can explain an environmental issue and its impact on Earth's systems.</p> <p>I can design a creative message that raises awareness about conservation.</p>

	<p>I can use movement and performance to communicate an environmental message effectively.</p> <p>I can reflect on how creative media can inspire change and evaluate others' messages constructively.</p>
--	--

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>DHSDC.CR.2 Demonstrate an understanding of dance as a form of communication.</p> <p>DHSDC.RE.1 Demonstrate critical and creative thinking in all aspects of dance. DHSDC.RE.1.f Engage in self-reflection and self-assessment as a creator and performer.</p> <p>DHSDC.CN.3 Demonstrate an understanding of dance as it relates to other areas of knowledge.</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 use movement exploration to discover and create artistic ideas and works.</p> <p>Anchor Standard 2: I can choreograph a dance.</p> <p>Anchor Standard 3: I can perform movements using the dance elements.</p> <p>Anchor Standard 5: I can describe, analyze, and evaluate a dance.</p> <p>Anchor Standard 7: I can relate dance to other arts disciplines, content areas, 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>Conservation</u> — Protecting and managing natural resources sustainably ● <u>Biodiversity</u> — Variety of life in a particular habitat or ecosystem ● <u>Sustainability</u> — Meeting current needs without compromising future generations ● <u>Carbon footprint</u> — Total greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly ● <u>Deforestation</u> — Removal of trees from an area, often reducing biodiversity and increasing CO₂ ● <u>Pollution</u> — Introduction of harmful materials into the environment ● <u>Ecosystem services</u> — Benefits humans gain from ecosystems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Energy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Percussive</u> — Sharp, sudden movements with strong stops and starts; like staccato jabs ○ <u>Suspended</u> — A moment where the dancer seems to hang in the air, resisting gravity, like at the top of a jump ○ <u>Sustained</u> — Smooth, continuous movement without obvious start or stop; flowing energy ○ <u>Swinging</u> — Movements that fall and recover, gaining and losing momentum like a swinging pendulum ○ <u>Vibratory</u> — Fast, jittery, repeated movements, like a shiver or quick shake ● Space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Level</u> — The height at which the movement happens: high, middle, or low ○ <u>Pathway</u> — The design made as a dancer moves across the floor or traces shapes in the air ○ <u>Shape</u> — The way the dancer's body or a group's bodies are arranged to create a visual design; can be curved or angular, symmetrical or not ● Time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Beat</u> — The main accent or pulse in the music or movement ○ <u>Rhythm</u> — A repeating pattern of beats, movements, or sounds ○ <u>Tempo</u> — The speed or pace of the movement

- Choreography — The sequence of movements and steps designed for a dance piece
- Choreographer — The person who creates and arranges the dance
- Locomotor — Movements that travel through space (like walking, leaping, sliding)
- Non-locomotor — Movements performed in place without traveling (like bending, twisting, swaying)

MATERIALS

- Projector or large display to show TikTok/video examples
- Speakers for audio playback of videos and music
- Internet access for research and viewing TikToks
- Devices with camera and TikTok (or similar recording app) for each group
- Printed [dance vocabulary sheets](#) for each student (or projected on screen)
- [Student planning worksheet](#) – one copy for each student
- Chart or template for peer feedback (optional: sticky notes or digital form)
- Platform to upload and view videos (e.g., Padlet, Canvas, etc.)
- Open space for students to rehearse and record their dances

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Opening/Activating Strategy

- Teacher introduces the driving question and objectives.
- Teacher asks students how TikToks might be used to help raise awareness for an issue and how it can be a powerful tool for positive change.
- Teacher asks students for examples of how dance was used in the students' favorite TikToks (could allow a couple of volunteers to perform).
- Teacher presents dance vocabulary - energy, space, time, choreography - and asks volunteers to show examples of these terms in action. Alternatively, teacher can demonstrate and have students copy his/her movements.
 - Teacher allows students to practice by calling out terms and having them create a movement. Have students create movements simultaneously to make it a low-stakes activity.
- Watch two to three environmental TikTok examples and discuss:
 - What was the message?
 - Which dance elements were used (energy–percussive, suspended, etc.; space–pathways, levels, etc.)?
 - How did the movements enhance the message?

Work Session

- Students (individually or in groups) pick an environmental issue they are passionate about. The teacher provides examples for any students struggling to choose a topic.
- Students research facts about the issue. Teacher provides guiding questions for their research, such as:
 - What is the cause of this environmental issue?
 - Why is this issue cause for concern?
 - What is the current status of the issue and the impending dangers if change doesn't happen?
 - What are the proposed solutions to the issue, and how can people act?
- Teacher explains the assignment and reviews the rubric expectations. Teacher reminds students to keep the message clear and creative and relate the content of the TikTok back to the environmental issue.
- Students plan their TikTok using the Student Planning Worksheet:
 - What is the specific message you want your TikTok to convey?
 - Which dance elements and movements will you use to convey it? Why?
- Once students have completed their research and planning, they will rehearse and record their TikTok dances.
- Groups should co-construct their artists' statement—a well-constructed statement that communicates what the environmental issue is, why it's a concern, and how their dance/music choices helped them to raise awareness and inspire change.
- Groups upload their videos to the class platform (ex. Padlet, Canvas, etc.) along with their artists' statements. Alternatively, groups perform live for the class and share their artists' statements.

Closing/Reflection

- Class viewing party: Watch each TikTok.
- Peer feedback: Each student provides one compliment and one suggestion for growth per group.
- Exit Ticket: Students reflect on what they learned and how dance can inspire change (see Student Planning Worksheet).

ASSESSMENTS

Formative

- Observations
- Questioning
- Peer feedback

Summative

- TikTok Dance
- Completed planning sheet (see rubric on page 1)

DIFFERENTIATION

Acceleration: Create an additional TikTok targeting a different audience or adding statistical overlays.

Remediation: Provide sentence starters for explanations, example movements.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Sample TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@judzcuevas_/video/7087042954577087771
- Flash mob: [WWF Climate Action Animal Dance Flash Mob](#)
- World Water Day: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=351647737222393>
- Music possibilities for TikToks:
 - [Trouble In The Water - Official Video](#)
 - [Will.I.Am - S.O.S. \(Mother Nature\)](#)
 - [Lil Dicky - Earth \(Official Music Video\)](#)
 - [Michael Jackson - Earth Song \(Official Video\)](#)
 - [Peter Gabriel - Down To Earth \(W/ LYRICS\) Wall-E Soundtrack](#)
 - [The Landscape Is Changing](#)
 - [Marvin Gaye - Mercy Mercy Me \(The Ecology\) \(Visualizer\)](#)
 - [Our Planet | Ellie Goulding & Steven Price - In This Together | Music Video | Netflix](#)
 - <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/earth-day-songs-151780/beach-boy-s-dont-go-near-water-64687/>

**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.*

Ideas contributed by: Kearsten Jones, Melissa Joy, Gretchen Hollingsworth

Revised and copyright: January 2026 @ ArtsNOW