

Endangered Animals: Example Lesson Plan

Unit Overview

Grade Level: 5th

Unit Title & Description: Protecting Endangered Species

This unit introduces students to the topic of endangered species, exploring the causes of endangerment and real-world conservation efforts. Through a mix of reading, research, class discussions, multimedia resources, and hands-on activities, students will investigate various endangered animals from around the world. They will read example essays, identify key language features, and collaboratively write texts with their teachers and peers. They will write about how human actions influence wildlife and what steps can be taken to protect vulnerable species.

End of Unit Assessment

Students will research one endangered species of their choice and write an essay that identifies why the species is at risk and proposes a solution to help protect it.

Science Content Standard

Students will be able to argue from evidence to justify the best solution to a problem.

WIDA English Language Development Standard: ELD-SC-4-5.Argue.Expressive

Construct scientific arguments that signal logical relationships among reasoning, relevant evidence, data, and/or a model when making a claim through

- Connectors to signal causality
- Reference devices to create cohesion across a text

Sample Lesson Plan

Lesson Objective

Students will be able to collaboratively write an argumentative paragraph using language to signal causality (as a result, when . . . , . . .).

Transition From Previous Lesson

Say: Yesterday, we spent time learning all about manatees, including their habitats and the threats they face to survive.

Use a Mentor Text to Notice Language Feature

Say: Writers often learn by looking at examples. Before you write your own texts next week, we're going to read part of one written by another writer. As we read, we'll look closely at how the writer connects ideas.

Teacher Actions

1. Read the following paragraph aloud with the students.
2. Re-read the paragraph and call attention to different ways the writer shows causality.
3. Create an anchor chart with the class to save examples of causal language.

One big threat to manatees is boat strikes. According to World Wide Fund for Nature, boat strikes are **one of the most common causes** of manatee deaths. Manatees swim slowly and often near the surface of the water. **As a result**, they can get hit by fast boats or caught in the boat's propellers. According to the National Wildlife Federation, nearly all manatees have been hit by a boat at least once. **When** manatees are hit by boats, it can cause them pain and stop them from being able to swim normally. Being hit by boats can badly injure or even kill manatees, so it's important for humans to take action to prevent manatees from being harmed in the future.

Sample Anchor Chart

Example	Sentence Frame	What This Shows
According to World Wide Fund for Nature, boat strikes are one of the most common causes of manatee deaths.	According to (source), (a cause) is one of the most common causes of (effect).	Uses evidence to explain a cause of a problem
As a result , they can get hit by fast boats or caught in the boat's propellers.	(Something that happens). As a result, (what happens next).	Shows what happens because of something that came before
When manatees are hit by boats, they experience pain and injuries that stop them from being able to swim normally.	When (something happens), (what can happen as a result).	Explains how one action leads to a certain consequence

Say: Let's try writing our own paragraph about manatees. We learned about how boats can cause harm to manatees, but we also learned about other threats manatees face. Does anyone remember another threat?

Say: Let's look at the evidence we read yesterday from the National Wildlife Federation (n.d.):

Runoff of pollutants into the Gulf of Mexico has been causing repeat Red Tide events. Red Tides are characterized by huge blooms of a specific neurotoxic algae (*Karenia brevis*) that can poison manatees, making them seize and drown. This contributed to the record-breaking manatee mortality count in 2021.

Write a paragraph with students, following the structure of the example paragraph. Elicit student responses to build a paragraph. Integrate language from the anchor chart as it fits in.

Teaching Tips

As you go, model that writing is not a linear process. You may do this by crossing out ideas, adding words, and rearranging ideas. You may even revisit a text in a future lesson to make improvements, modeling how good writers revise their work.

Here are some possible questions to ask:

- How should we start our text?
- What word could we use here?
- How could we expand on that idea?
- How could we connect these ideas?
- Why is that information important for this text?
- Is that clear to the reader?

Wrap-Up

To conclude the lesson, chorally read the paragraph aloud and notice how they wrote a paragraph that really makes a reader care about the problems that manatees are facing.

Additional Notes

The subsequent lessons in this unit would continue to build content and language needed for students to achieve the unit goals.

Subsequent lessons may include the following:

- Reading and viewing resources about other endangered animals
- Researching endangered animals in English and home language
- Engaging in discussions and debates about the best solutions for protecting endangered animals
- Co-writing texts as a class to practice the language and style of the final writing task
- Co-writing texts in pairs to practice the language and style of the final writing task
- Engaging in peer revision activities

This lesson may be broken into smaller chunks for small-group, pull-out English language development instruction. The lesson may also be done with a whole class because all students benefit from seeing models of texts and explicit language instruction.

This lesson plan is just one example of integrating content and language into a writing-focused lesson. Lessons should always be adapted and adjusted to meet the unique needs of individual students.

References

National Wildlife Federation. (n.d.). Protecting Manatees. National Wildlife Federation. <https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Manatee>

World Wide Fund for Nature: Mesoamerica. (n.d.). Manatees. <https://www.wwfca.org/en/species/manatees/>