



Human Impact on the Environment

By: Amanda Martin

Elementary school music teacher; M.A.Ed. In Curriculum and Instruction

Social Studies
Grades 9–12



Introduction

Is there human impact on the environment? Most of us know the answer to that question, but in this lesson, students will dig a little deeper to better understand how human activity affects the physical world around us.

Learning Objectives

Students will understand how human actions modify the physical environment. ([NSS-G.K-12.5](#))

Materials Needed

- Notebooks/journals/notebook paper
- Web chart paper (optional)
- Laptops/computer
- Access to PowerPoint or Google Slides

Procedure

1. Ask students to brainstorm on the following question: Do humans affect the world? If so, how? Allow students to pair and share with those sitting close to them (or in a small group) for roughly 5 minutes. While discussing, students should write down their ideas in a web chart on notebook paper/journals. When time is up, lead a discussion from student responses.
2. Discuss, in greater detail, how human activities affect the physical environment around us. Show students [this video](#) about the effects of dams on the environment, and at its conclusion, discuss the causes and effects of dam constructions on the earth.
3. Now, students will research a specific human activity that impacts and affects the physical environment of the earth. (Some examples include: the building of dams, hydroelectric energy, mining, pipelines, etc.) Divide students into groups of 2 or 3. Each group will need a laptop and/or computer with access to PowerPoint or Google Slides. Assign each group a specific human activity to research and create a PowerPoint and/or Google Slide presentation to show the class. Presentations must include the following criteria:
 - Use of color and graphics
 - Explain the human activity in detail
 - List the pros of the human activity
 - List the cons of the human activity

Continued on page 2



Human Impact on the Environment

By: Amanda Martin
Elementary school music teacher; M.A.Ed. In Curriculum and Instruction

Social Studies
Grades 9–12



Continued from page 1

- Discuss how the human activity directly impacts the environment
- Discuss if or how the negative impacts can be improved and detail potential methods for doing so
- Includes a title slide
- Includes at least 10 slides with adequate information

Groups may use the remainder of the class period to research. Groups may also complete the project as homework and/or during the next class period. Once group presentations are finished, allow each group time to present their digital presentation to the class.

Evaluation

Student learning will be evaluated through the completion of a group activity. Groups will research a specific human activity and identify its effects on the environment in a presentation. Please grade student presentations with the following rubric.

Group Members:	Excellent 5	Okay 3	Needs Improvement 1
Presentation uses color and graphics.			
Groups thoroughly explain the human activity.			
Groups list the pros and cons of the human activity.			
Groups detail how the human activity negatively impacts the environment.			
Groups outline methods for reducing the activity's negative impact on the environment.			
Presentation includes a title slide.			
Presentation includes at least 10 slides with an adequate amount of information on each.			