

WoodSongs WS6 MIDDLE Lesson Plan



April Ballard, M.Ed, BS

Title: There has to be a better way

Subject: Mountain Top Removal

Connections: Science, Language Arts, Music (Arts & Humanities), Critical Thinking

Length of Lesson: three class periods

Grade Level: 7th & 8th

The topic of this lesson is mountain top removal and dismantling the Appalachian Mountains. This is such a powerful episode of WoodSongs and, in turn, a powerful lesson plan. The episode focuses on the wonder and the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains and the devastation caused by mountain top removal. This is such an important topic that is underexplored. Emmylou Harris is featured on this episode and she states, "The Appalachians are at the sacred ground of the music that so many of us love". This is so true and we hope that the students realize this and the beauty and importance of these mountains.

In order to begin this lesson, discussion is very important. Students may have never heard of mountain top removal. As discussed in the episode, it's not getting enough publicity or covered nearly enough in the news. To begin the lesson, ask students questions regarding the environment. This will prompt them to begin thinking about the dangers of human behaviors and actions on the earth and how it impacts so many aspects of life. This will also access prior knowledge because it will allow the teacher to get an idea of what the students know about harmful actions to the environment. The teacher may then ask the students if they understand what mountain top removal is and all of the many devastating results of it. This is not an anti-coal campaign, it's about finding a better way. Within this episode, Emmylou Harris discusses what mountain top removal and is the devastation it creates. It is blowing the tops off of mountains that took thousands of years to evolve, destroying plants, desecrating the mountains for coal that can be extracted in another way. Over 500 mountains have been destroyed, 2000 streams have been obliterated and a process of the mining creates sludge which poisons our environment. There is something better, A BETTER WAY, to save the mountains, homelands, and communities.

Emmylou Harris states that she hopes that tonight's show is another way to communicate to others and spread awareness to stop mountain top removal. The mountain is lost, the culture, the community, the waters are polluted and it's a horrible devastation. People's lives are being disrupted. Again, this will not end our way to get coal, but there are other ways. Mountain top removal needs to be stopped and A BETTER WAY. These mountains are precious and beautiful and that's the thought process we are encouraging within this episode of WoodSongs.

The activity in this lesson has students create their own newsletter to depict the ways that mountain top removal devastates the environment and the lives of so many. The newsletter

will allow students to portray their message creatively by writing their own poems, short stories, ballads and/or including art work and/or photography that will share and symbolize their message. The newsletter will be informative as well and this will allow students the opportunity to understand various ways to present information. The newsletter will be distributed to all teachers via email and they will have the opportunity to share this with all students, which will encourage awareness throughout the entire school. This will also allow the students to really feel that their work is being viewed by their teachers and peers. In addition, the project could be extended to include the newsletter and/or portions of it, such as poetry, being read on local radio stations or in the local paper to raise awareness.

Connection to English Language Arts Standards:

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text
- Formulate inferences from textual material
- Cite resources that support analysis of a text
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas
- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone
- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words
- Analyze the effects of various
- medium techniques on written text: stories, dramas, poems
- Determine similarities of text (story, drama, poem) to media (audio, film, stage, multimedia)
- Comprehend independently in literary text: key ideas and details craft and structure integration of knowledge and idea
- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text
- Analyze how meaning and tone are impacted by specific word choice
- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words
- Describe similarities of various media portrayals of subjects (texts, audio, video, multimedia) Describe differences of various media portrayals of subjects (texts, audio, video, multimedia) Analyze how the: audio, video, multimedia version of various text portrays the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words
- Define relevant evidence sufficient evidence sound reasoning
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take
- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence
- Identify accurate, credible sources
- Organize reasons and evidence logically
- Produce an argument to support claims, which introduces claims acknowledges opposing or alternate claims is logically organized supports claims with logical reasoning and relevant evidence cites credible and accurate sources of information

- Write an informative/explanatory text to: examine a topic, convey ideas, concepts and information through: text selection, organization and analysis of relevant content
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach
- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation

Connection to Music Standards:

- Students speak using appropriate forms, conventions, and styles to communicate ideas and information to different audiences for different purposes
- Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with the visual arts
- Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with music
- Students make sense of and communicate ideas with movement
- Students analyze their own and others' artistic products and performances using accepted standards
- The arts fulfill a variety of purposes in society (e.g., to present issues and ideas, to entertain, to teach or persuade, to design, plan and beautify)
- The arts have value and significance for daily life. They provide personal fulfillment, whether in career settings, avocational pursuits, or leisure
- The arts provide forms of nonverbal communication that can strengthen the presentation of ideas and emotions
- Compare and explain purposes for which music is created to fulfill (ceremonial, recreational, artistic expression)
- create new, listen to, choose and perform music to fulfil a variety of specific purposes
- the elements of music, dance and drama are intentionally applied in creating and performing
- identify and analyze the use of elements of art (e.g., line, shape, color properties, color schemes/groups, form, texture, space, value) and principles of design (e.g., repetition, emphasis, pattern, balance, contrast, rhythm, proportion, movement in a variety of two and three dimensional artworks
- the arts are powerful tools for understanding human experiences both past and present
- the arts help us understand others' (often very different) ways of thinking, working, and expressing ourselves
- the arts play a major role in the creation and defining of cultures and building civilizations
- create or write new, observe, choose and perform dramatic works to fulfill a variety of specific purposes

Connection to Science Standards:

- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to the precise details of explanations or descriptions
- Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research

Vocabulary & terms within the lesson: mountain top removal, National Resource Defense Council, Eco-System,

Reference: <http://earthjustice.org/features/campaigns/what-is-mountaintop-removal-mining>

Reference: <http://www.epa.gov/sciencematters/august2010/mountaintop.htm>

Mountain top removal: Mountaintop removal mining is a controversial practice in which mining companies do exactly what the name implies: they remove the tops of mountains to get at the coal buried underneath, leaving the land forever changed. (Discussed very thoroughly within the episode.

National Resource Defense Council was founded by John Adams in 1970, which was the first year mountain top removal began. As stated within the show, Rolling Stone Magazine said, "If Mother Earth had a lawyer, it would be this guy." The Council has over one million members. John says, "We stand for mountains, we stand for forests, and we stand for citizen action. John Adams is a protector of the earth and the environment.

Eco-system: a system, or a group of interconnected elements, formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their environment

Description of Lesson/Activities & Procedures:

This lesson is so important in many aspects. The goal is to for students to realize that our mountains are being destroyed which in turn destroys the communities and lives of so many. We want the students to realize there is a BETTER WAY and that mountain top removal needs to stop. This lesson encompasses many subjects. Science is incorporated as students learn about the process of mountain top removal and the devastating results of it. Many aspects of language arts and arts and humanities are also incorporated as students create a newsletter to explain and raise awareness of mountain top removal. Both critical and creative thinking are encouraged and incorporated as students explore the various approaches to present their information. Students are encouraged to incorporate several different approaches within the newsletter. Students may present their information in the form of information text, poetry/ballad, short story, dramatic/theatrical piece to accompany the newsletter, and artistically such as symbolic illustrations and photography. Students are encouraged to think about the many ways that mountain top removal devastates the lives of so many, entire communities, streams and ecosystems. All of the guests of this episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour discuss finding a BETTER WAY and stopping mountain top removal. We must not sacrifice the earth for quick energy. The mountains are actually removed, the trees cut down, and the soil is removed and pushed over into the springs. John Adams (as discussed in the introduction of the plans) founded the National Resource Defense Council in 1970. His wife Patricia is an author and she and John have been together for over 40 years working for the environment. Students are encouraged, as the show discusses, to unite together so that their voices are heard. Fossil fuels and coal can be extracted from the earth but there has to be a better way that doesn't sacrifice our earth. We can get energy from lots of sources and we can get energy from coal in better ways. We need to look at renewable energy such as solar and wind. John Adams states, "We don't need to go to the ends of the earth for energy." We have to find a better way. This is the message that students are encouraged to relay through various art forms. Discussion should prompt students to reflect upon the musicians and artists within the show and their various art form to relay the message of the show.

Activity 1: Introduction and discussion is very important for this topic. Warm up discussion questions will encourage students to begin thinking about the environment and the many ways

harm to it influences our lives. For instance, ask students what they think of when they think of ways to be kind to our environment. Students are encourage students to reflect upon how they feel it is a chain reaction once damage is done to the environment. Meaning, how does one action influence another and so on and so forth. Empower the students by asking them what they can do to help treat the environment with love and attention and how they may also raise awareness and prevention to stop some of the damaging acts to our environment. This could lead into the discussion of mountain top removal. Also, empower the students by encouraging them to really take an interest and creatively present a newsletter and outreach campaign that promotes a better way and alternatives to mountain top removal. Students are encouraged to demonstrate the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains and importance to stopping this devastation that destroys the mountains. This episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour opens with a beautiful song by Michael Johnathon. Ask students to reflect upon the words of the song, "Appalachian Road" and reflect and write their feelings after having watched the video and listened to the words. Students are encouraged to reflect upon the ways the words and images throughout the video made them feel and also what they learned.

Activity 2: Students are encouraged to raise awareness of mountain top removal through various creative approaches within the newsletter and outreach efforts. Encourage students to reflect upon their audience. Their newsletter may include an Appalachian poem, short story, and/or ballad they write to express their thoughts and feelings on mountain top removal. Students may look to the episode of WoodSongs for guidance and examples. The poem, titled "Heritage" recited in the show is written by an Appalachian poet named James Still. Also, Emmylou Harris performs songs titled, "Green Rolling Hills" and "Bright Morning Stars", which may also be used as inspiration for writing a performance piece to spread awareness. Encourage students to reflect upon the wonder and the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains. Students may also organize a dramatic/theatrical piece if they wish to work outside of class time and perform this to reflect their message to raise awareness and stop mountain top removal. Informational text is also encouraged to introduce the topic with valuable references to support the evidence and information. Then, students are encouraged to incorporate various artistic ways of relaying and expressing their message. Drawings, paintings, and photography to express this message are also strongly encouraged. Ballad/song-writing is strongly encouraged and working outside of class time to complete this project is encouraged as well.

Activity 3: The newsletter will be presented to their peers and teachers. In addition, if students wish to organize this project further and continue to raise awareness, they may wish to contact local radio and newspapers. This will help the students to build communication skills and also feel a part of something that is making an impact on the lives of so many people. It is our hope that the students will feel inspired to collaborate and put together a newsletter and/or campaign that really relays the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains and how essential it is to stop mountain top removal. Students are encouraged to creatively express this message and relay information in their safe and encouraging school environment. The quote at the end of the show by Michael Johnathon is also a great piece to incorporate into their message.. "How much life are we willing to give?"...

Materials/Media Needed:

- Access to computer/iPad to explore informational resources
- Art supplies of their choice to create newsletter

Rubric and Guidelines:

Demonstrates an understanding of artistic and musical expression as it relates to the message of stopping mountain top removal; find a better way	<i>Shows an enriched and strong understanding of the episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour and is able to participate and recount main points from the episode.</i>	<i>Shows an understanding of the information presented within the episode, and understands how music relays this message.</i>	<i>Shows somewhat of an understanding of the information within the episode but main points and connections are not clear.</i>	<i>Does not seem to understand the connections the episode is portraying through music and artistic expression.</i>
Demonstrates an understanding of how their projects will portray the message to stop mountain top removal; understands how music and art express important points.	<i>Understanding is clear of how the arts and music express important points, as demonstrated by the WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour</i>	<i>Is able to somewhat make the connection of information from the episode to designing their own project</i>	<i>Demonstrates an understanding of information and musical and art expression demonstrated in the episode, but not entirely connecting it to their own project design</i>	<i>An understanding of the episode is not evident.</i>
Project clearly expresses the importance to stop mountain top removal and find a better way	<i>Very well</i>	<i>Fairly well</i>	<i>Needs some extra guidance</i>	<i>Exhibits little to none of the desired goal</i>
Stays on Task and works collaboratively while designing project	<i>Stays on task all (100%) of the time.</i>	<i>Stays on task most (99-90%) of the time.</i>	<i>Stays on task some (89%-75%) of the time.</i>	<i>Stays more off task than on task.</i>