



Deforestation: Encouraging Active Communication through Debate

Imagine: In the depths of the Amazon rainforest an indigenous people meet a group of loggers to decide whether they should allow their land to be bought for industry.

Your pupils' imagination is stimulated with this thought provoking topic encouraging creative communication through drama.

Through group research (we have suggested a few web sites to help you and your pupils get started) your class can role play the part of the many parties affected by deforestation. One group could represent the loggers who themselves need the income from cutting down trees to earn money to pay for food for their families. Another group could represent the fast-food restaurant owner who sees demand for their product far outweighing their supply. Where do they find the land to rear the cattle that go into the burgers? And then there is the Government who own the land the rainforest sits in. This is a poor country and the money the Government would get from selling the rainforest land would help it improve services for the people. There are many sides to this debate including those of the indigenous people who could loose their homes, their land and their whole way of life!

This is a debate guaranteed to raise the classroom temperature to tropical levels!

Why not record the debate using a dictaphone or other similar device to encourage peer and self assessment within your class?

At a glance, you will need:

- Access to the internet, books or leaflets (we have a number of suggestions to get you started!).
- A Dictaphone (if available) or other recording device for assessment.

Workshop	Activity	Pre/Post	Suggested CfE Stage
Journey Into the Tropical Rainforest	Deforestation: Encouraging Active Communication through Debate	Post	Second/Third/Fourth



Learning Intention

- We are learning about deforestation and its consequences.
- We are learning to express informed opinions.
- We are learning to research a specific topic.

Task

We are going to research the reasons behind deforestation, respecting the viewpoints of others and deliver our findings in an informed, creative and effective way.

Success Criteria

- Pupils will gain a greater appreciation of the complexity of the issues surrounding deforestation including the long term impact of this on the planet as a whole.
- Pupils will gain valuable experience debating controversial issues with their peers.
- Pupils will gain an appreciation of the skills involved in effective debating, including clear oration and good eye contact.
- Pupils will gain skills in accessing and discriminating information.

Evidence ideas

- Peer assessment marking sheet including 'best bits' and 'ideas for improvements' section.
- Peer and self assessment through recording the debate and analysing their own and other group activities.

CfE Capacities

Successful Learners:

- with enthusiasm and motivation for learning resulting from directing their own research
- with openness to new thinking and ideas
- able to use literacy and communication skills, technology for learning and creative thinking.

Effective Contributors;

- able to work in partnership and in teams
- able to apply critical thinking in new contexts and communicate in different ways.

Responsible Citizens;

- with respect for others and able to make informed choices and decisions
- able to evaluate environmental and scientific issues
- able to develop informed, ethical views on complex issues.

Confident Individuals;

- with self respect and able to achieve success across science and expressive arts disciplines.

CfE Outcomes

Science - Planet Earth (Processes of the planet)

I can explain some of the processes which contribute to climate change and discuss the possible impact of atmospheric change on the survival of living things. SCN 3-05b

Social Studies – People, past events and societies

I can evaluate conflicting sources of evidence to sustain a line of argument. SOC 4-01a

Social Studies – People, place and environment

I can consider the advantages and disadvantages of a proposed land use development and discuss the impact this may have on the community. SOC 2-08b



I can identify the possible consequences of an environmental issue and make informed suggestions about ways to manage the impact. SOC 3-08a

I can discuss the sustainability of key natural resources and analyse the possible implications for human activity. SOC 4-08a

Literacy and English – Listening and Talking

When I engage with others, I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion. I can respond in ways appropriate to my role and use contributions to reflect on, clarify or adapt thinking. LIT 3-02a

Description

Working in groups, pupils will discover more about deforestation, considering the arguments for and against this controversial issue.

Pupils should have an understanding of where tropical rainforests occur and the current rate of deforestation. They should have a perception of the consequences of deforestation on both a local and global scale including an understanding of habitat loss and reduction in species diversity. There are some great web-sites that can provide background information should you want to refresh this prior to arranging the debate. We have listed these below. Once the scene is set the debate can begin!

Pupils can be split into groups and given a 'character' to research. You may want to have just a few opposing viewpoints or many. Set each team off with a statement to help facilitate and direct their research for example:

1. Logger

"It's my job to cut down trees. If we stop cutting down trees I'm out of a job and I will have no money to feed my family."

2. Conservationist

"Rainforests are home to over half of all known plants and animal species on Earth. If we cut the trees down, these creatures will disappear."

3. Fast-food restaurant owner

"Millions of customers worldwide eat burgers from fast-food restaurants every day. I need the land to rear enough cattle to meet this demand."

4. Indigenous people of the rainforest (e.g. Matis people of the Amazon)

"The rainforest is our home and the trees provide us with our food, medicine and shelter. Without the rainforest, our way of life will be lost forever."

5. Government

"Ours is a poor country and we will get a lot of money from selling the land. If countries like the UK can clear all their forested land, why can't we?"

6. Environmental Manager

"Rainforests are 'carbon sinks'. The trees take in CO₂ during the day, this is a greenhouse gas and something we are very concerned about. Loosing the rainforest on such a large scale will contribute to global warming."

7. Pharmacist

"Rainforests around the equator affect our wellbeing even here in the UK! A quarter of Western pharmaceuticals contain ingredients originally derived from rainforest plants. With many more species still to be discovered in the rainforest, we could loose valuable treatments before we even find them!"

There are many ways for the drama to be enacted. Maybe your pupils are part of a public meeting in a village in the Amazon Rainforest. A timber company (one group of pupils) is offering a considerable amount of money to local people for the use of their land; an environmental group (another group of pupils) is lobbying for its protection. What will the local people (the rest of the class) decide to do when faced with the arguments put before them?



You could have many groups acting out the part of a number of interested parties, each group getting a chance to put their case to the others with an opportunity for debate afterwards. Alternatively, it could be up to the 'Government' to decide after listening to all arguments?

At the end of the activity, peer review could take place with pupils offering structured feedback. We would recommend groups being offered two pieces of good feedback for every suggestion for improvement.

Self evaluation could be encouraged through the use of videoing the debate or the use of a dictaphone to record the commentary.

Web Resources

****Important information on web searches on this topic****

The sites we have recommended we have done so because of the valuable information we feel they provide however we cannot be responsible for the content of sites out with our control. Due to the controversial and emotive nature of this topic we strongly recommend you review the web sites before recommending them to pupils. You may prefer to select the pages of interest and copy them into a 'research folder' for pupils to view.

General information on deforestation:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_3540000/newsid_3546300/3546395.stm
<http://kids.mongabay.com/>
<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/Deforestation/>
<http://www.mongabay.com/brazil.html>
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/eye/deforestation/effect.html>

Information on suggested characters:

1. Logger

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/releases/congo-report>
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn8189>

2. Conservationist

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/17975>
http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/find_out/guides/animals/endangered_animals_world/newsid_1614000/1614414.stm

3. Fast-food restaurant owner

<http://www.fao.org/newsroom/EN/news/2005/102924/index.html>
<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/5701>

4. Matis family (indigenous people of the Amazon)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/tribe/tribes/matis/index.shtml>
<http://www.geocities.com/matisindians/>

5. Brazilian government

<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/media/press-releases/brazilian-government-agency-driving-rainforest-destruction-20070821>

6. Environmental manager

<http://www.treesforcities.org/page.php?id=94>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A3556848>

7. Pharmacist

http://www.aalas.org/doc/Sect-2_4.doc

