



Learning Activity:

This Just In

Activity Type	Research and journalism
Focus Area	Language arts
Time Required	45-60 minutes

● Overview

Using statistics from the [Biodiversity Educator’s Resource Guide](#), students will deliver a mock newscast, informing audiences of the current state of our planet and the urgent need for individual as well as collective action. Students will conduct research on the decline of biodiversity, and on how attention-getting communication techniques can help shape their delivery of the information. Like any good news report, the presentation should reflect on why this news is important and how the viewers can get involved. Students will become advocates for restoring nature and biodiversity by using effective communication skills to spread a message among their peers.

● Objective

At the completion of the activity, students should be able to:

- Speak knowledgeably about the current status of biodiversity on Earth.
- Use creativity to record a news report containing critical information and statistics about threatened species and habitats.
- Effectively inform and inspire their peers to advance the message of why biodiversity is important and what we can do to help protect it.



Iceberg, Ilulissat, Greenland.



● Subject and Standards

Common Core Standards: English Language Arts and Literacy in Science

- L. 6.1/7.1/8.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- L. 6.3/7.3/8.3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- RST. 6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts.
- RST. 6-8.8: Distinguish among facts, reasoned judgement based on research findings, and speculation in a text.
- SL. 6.1/7.1/8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partner on grade 6/7/8 topics and texts, building on others' ideas, and expressing their own clearly.
- SL. 8.2: Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
- SL. 8.4: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- SL. 8.5: Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
- SL. 6.6/7.6/8.6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when indicated or appropriate.

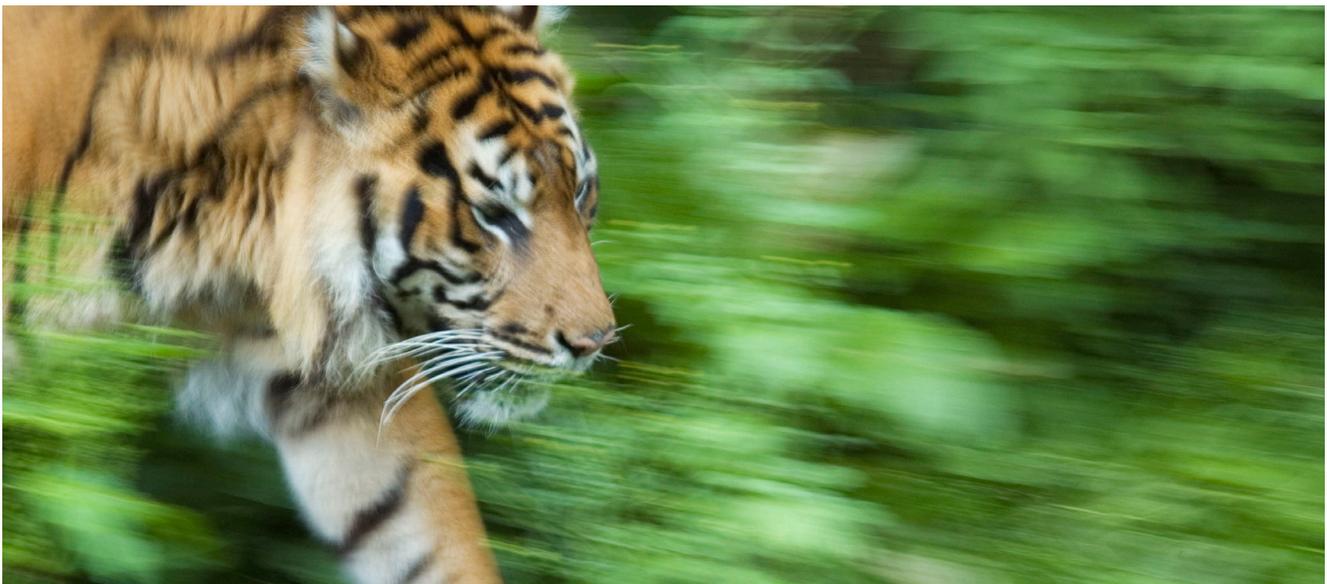


● Materials Needed

- [Biodiversity Educator's Resource Guide](#)
- Internet access for additional research (if available)
- Video recording devices (mobile phone or tablet)
- Mock news production set of your own design (table, chairs, backdrop)

● Vocabulary

- **Biodiversity:** all of the different kinds of life you will find in one area, including animals, plants, fungi, bacteria, and genetic material
- **Ecosystem:** the living (plants, animals, other organisms) and nonliving (air, water, soil) components of an area that interact with each other in an interconnected way
- **Habitat:** a natural environment in which plants and animals live, breed, and get their food, water, and shelter
- **Sustainable:** of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a natural resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged; an effective and innovative way to efficiently use natural resources and ensure their continued supply



Sumatran tiger.



● Activity Procedure

Part 1: Introduction and Preparation

- WWF and other leading organizations are continuously studying and assessing the current state of our planet and the threats it faces. Every two years, a report is released called *The Living Planet Report*, which compiles our research findings to evaluate the overall health of our ecosystems and biodiversity. Distribute a handout for students using content from the [Biodiversity Educator's Resource Guide](#). This guide summarizes some of the key findings from recent biodiversity studies as reported in *The Living Planet Report*. The student handout should include statistics and highlights from the “Biodiversity basics,” “Why biodiversity and nature matter,” “Threats to nature and biodiversity,” and “What kids can do” sections of the resource guide.
- Allow students time to read through the information, either individually or as a group, and then summarize and reflect on the content.
 - Through multiple indicators including the Living Planet Index, our latest Living Planet Report tells us the population sizes of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles have seen an alarming average drop of 68% since 1970.
- Have students explain why this is a warning sign for all of us. Biodiversity is the framework for nature; the greater the diversity of organisms, the stronger the ecosystem and the more nature can provide for us (air, water, food, materials, etc.). As populations decrease and species go extinct (primarily from habitat loss and overhunting), the stability of nature surrounding them weakens. If we don't start making real changes in the way we use our natural resources, the future of our planet and our existence on it are at risk.

Part 2: Activity

- Inform students that they will be using information from their handout, along with their own research, to compose an urgent news report. They will work in groups, with each member responsible for a task. Each will contribute to researching the information and statistics, as well as the creativity behind the delivery approach. Tasks related to the actual production of the report (reporting, filming, set design) should be delegated accordingly.



- Provide students with guidelines of what they should include in their newscast:
 - Statistics relating to the current state of biodiversity, including species and habitats
 - Causes of the decline in biodiversity
 - Why it matters/why biodiversity and nature are important
 - What we can all do to help
- Remind students to do the following when planning for the presentation of their newscast:
 - Consider their audience—how can they relate this information so that the audience listens and cares?
 - Use inflection and tones of voice that reflect the urgency and gravity of this information.
 - Be creative—consider news reports, commercials, or any program that they have found interesting. Why did it get their attention?
- Have student groups present their news reports, using recording devices if available.

Part 3: Discussion and Assessment

- Once all of the groups have presented their news reports, have students critique themselves by evaluating which group's communication skills they felt were most effective at getting viewers engaged with the topic.
- Have students reflect on what they learned by defining biodiversity, explaining why it's important, and what these recent research studies have shown us.
- Conclude the activity by encouraging students to select at least one action that they can commit to that will help bring species back from the brink of extinction and restore biodiversity. Some examples include:
 - Recycling more and/or using less plastic, especially single use plastic like straws
 - Turning off electronics when they're not in use
 - Cutting down on food and water waste
 - Spreading the word by raising awareness about biodiversity among friends and family and making suggestions about ways they can help



Extended Learning

- When planning for this activity, talk with your school administration about the possibility of a select group of students broadcasting their news report as a part of the student announcements or school assembly. If permitted, this opportunity can be granted to the student team whose news report is most effective at delivering the intended message.
- For more advanced research, provide students with copies of the [Living Planet Report 2020](#) from which to gather their information.
- Students could explore other means of mass communication to spread the message about biodiversity. If your school or community has a newsletter or newspaper, challenge students to write their own summary of the report's findings in an article format.
- Use a tablet or smartphone (if available) to download the [WWF Together app](#). Encourage students to explore the Planet Earth segment to learn more about how to protect life on our planet.
- Start a class fundraiser to protect biodiversity using WWF's online fundraising tool, Panda Nation. Learn more at [pandanation.org](#).

Additional Background Info

You can use the information found at the links below to enhance your discussion with the class, or you may want to share some links directly with students if you determine they are grade-level appropriate.

- **Report:** [Living Planet Report 2020](#)—published every two years, the Living Planet Report assesses the state of our planet's biodiversity and ecosystem health
- **Report:** [Living Planet Report 2020: Youth Edition](#)—a condensed, young-reader friendly summary of the Living Planet Report 2020
- **Video:** [Our Planet](#)—NETFLIX documentary made in collaboration with WWF that brings you up close and personal with some of nature's most threatened species and habitats
- **Web feature:** [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#)—the International Union for Conservation of Nature's up-to-date data on species and the threats impacting them and their habitats
- **Web story:** [Green tips](#)—additional ways to help the environment
- **Web story:** [What is biodiversity?](#)—explains why biodiversity is important and what is at risk if we don't change our behaviors

For more fun classroom activities with a focus on wild species and conservation, visit [wildclassroom.org](#).