



Acting for Nature



Objectives:

- Introduce the book *Acting for Nature* to classrooms.
- Encourage children to become more aware of nature and the environment.
- Encourage children to take up environmental activities.

Important concepts for students to understand about the environment:

- Clean air and water are vital to human existence. Both are becoming increasingly polluted.
- Natural resources upon which humans depend are becoming depleted – e.g. coal, oil, wood, even food production is threatened.
- Thousands of species are becoming extinct due to human activities.
- It is every person's right to experience the wonder of nature, to enjoy natural beauty, and to marvel at the great variety of plants and wildlife.
- Environmental understanding and protection is a worldwide concern that affects all human beings everywhere.



Engage students by reading and discussing stories in *Acting for Nature*. Encourage students to develop their own environmental activities and action plans, as individuals or in groups. It is important to examine and design solutions to problems.

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY

Adjust activities to the student's age. Read the chapters to the very young. Paintings and other artwork can reflect the stories. Assign older children written, artistic and oral reports after they have read from their own books. Encourage the older children to do library and computer research and compile a report on local environmental issues. In order to inform others in the community about local issues and possible solutions, send well-researched and documented reports to local newspapers, TV stations and/or government leaders.

SUGGESTED OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Plant a Small Garden Plant flowers that attract birds or butterflies around a school, home, city park, or in containers. Volunteer with the local park department to coordinate planting days.

Clean up the Playground Clean up the playground of the school and make signs asking that others help keep the playground clean, or paint large metal garbage cans with an ecological theme.

Clean up a Local Park Organize a Saturday cleaning party with the cooperation of the local Parks and Recreation Department. Investigate to see if your community offers playground, stream, beach, trail, or marsh clean up activities.

Compile a Plant Inventory Make a report on the varieties and health of plants on the school grounds or in the local park. Use this report to attract and stimulate public interest in the continued improvement of public spaces.

Field Trips Visit zoos, aquariums, and natural history museums. Study animals and their environmental needs and relationships. Include docent talks, where possible.

Start Recycling Provide a lasting reminder about the importance of protecting the earth while improving the environment and raising environmental awareness.

Save Gas Whenever possible, walk, bike, use public transportation, or car pool. Keep track of the distance traveled per month. Calculate how much gasoline has been saved.

SUGGESTED INDOOR ACTIVITIES

Art Activities Illustrate some of *Acting for Nature's* stories. Ask younger students to draw some of the animals. Older students might draw and color their idea of a desert before and after the building of small dams, or build small three-dimensional models of a desert or a town with and without trees. A mural painted on a public wall will promote constant awareness about the environment.

Reading, Writing & Presentation Select a subject to research in the school or local public libraries. Assign students short oral or written reports about what they have read. Assign students a chapter of *Acting for Nature* to read and present as an oral report to the class. Conduct class discussions or environmental projects about events that the students have previously participated in or heard about in the local, national, and international news.

Geography Use a wall map to pinpoint parts of the world where *Acting for Nature's* stories take place. Students may also draw maps and point out where other environmental problems are occurring in the world.

Interview Interview local park managers, environmentalists, and rangers. Conduct these interviews in person, in the classroom or on site, or use telephone or e-mail. Consider recording the interviews for further classroom discussion.

Computer Activities Ask students to enter their own stories on the Action for Nature website at www.actionfornature.org. Use the computer to conduct searches on endangered species, or ongoing restoration efforts by the local park service and environmental groups. Assign group or individual reports.



Teacher resources are being prepared for each chapter in Action for Nature. View these and share your own ideas at

www.actionfornature.org

Send YOUR ideas to:

mail@actionfornature.org

For Young Ecologists (And for grown up ecologists too)

Discuss what these words mean and why are they important.

Ecology

Ecologist

Habitat

Conservation

Extinction

Pollution

Species

Recycling

Restoration

Waste

Sustainability

Biodiversity

Talk about, illustrate, and write about the questions below.

● What do you want your world to look like when you are an adult? ● What are some animals and plants that are important for the health of people and other animals? ● What benefits do these animals and plants provide us that we do not want to do without?

● What things do these animals and plants need so that **they** can survive? ● What should be done to make sure that the plants and animals that **we** need are healthy? ● Why do we want some beautiful and rare things to survive?

● Tiny fish eat mosquitoes, bigger fish eat the tiny fish, and even bigger ones eat those. Then we catch the biggest fish and eat it. We are on the top of a **food chain**. ● There are other **food chains**. Can you think of one? ● What happens to the animals, and people, at the top of the **food chain** if the food chain is destroyed at the bottom?

● Do we need oxygen to breathe and stay alive? ● Where does oxygen come from? ● We breathe out carbon dioxide, poisonous to humans and animals in large amounts. What cleans the carbon dioxide out of the air we breathe? ● Why do we need lots of trees, grass and other green plants?

● Do we need clean water to drink to stay alive? ● Where does it come from? ● What do we need to keep the water clean? ● What do we do sometimes that makes the water dirty? ● What can we do to clean up the water that we have made dirty?