

Barriers to Healthy Ecosystems

Is your community ready to bloom? Have your students identify issues and challenges that stand in the way of a flourishing ecosystem.

Objective

Students will identify real-world challenges that put their community's health and sustainability at risk.

Time

PART A 45 minutes

PART B 45 minutes

Materials

Identify the Challenge activity sheet

Map Your Community's Challenges activity sheet

PART A

1 Share the following list of issues with your students: flooding, polluted water, polluted air, hunger, mudslides, greenhouse gases, hurricanes. Ask them to guess what the items on the list have in common. Explain that these are just a few community issues whose impacts can influence an ecosystem.

2 Hand out the Identify the Challenge activity sheet. After students have described how each environmental challenge impacts humans, have them gather in small groups to discuss.

3 Instruct students to research environmental challenges in their state. Provide 15 minutes for students to grab quick facts on what the challenges are and how communities are addressing them. Afterward, allow time for groups to share what they learned with the class.

PART B

1 Ask students to reflect on their research and brainstorm additional environmental issues in various communities (e.g., communities that are urban, suburban, or rural; colder or hotter; on other coasts, in other countries or continents). Use the below prompts to get the ideas flowing:

- ▶ Smog is a big problem.
- ▶ There isn't a place for kids to play in my neighborhood.
- ▶ I want more birds in my backyard.

- ▶ Construction downtown is making everything gritty.
- ▶ Large portions of the rain forest have been cut down.
- ▶ Some people don't have access to fresh fruits and vegetables.
- ▶ Our city has no plants or grass, just concrete everywhere.

2 Hand out the Map Your Community's Challenges activity sheet. In their community maps, students should include details of any environmental challenges they can think of. Have them share their drawings in groups and help refine one another's ideas

3 Have students save their drawings for the next lesson. For homework or extra credit, have students click "Game Time" on the online module at scholastic.com/bloom/plantpower and complete the Which Plant to Plant? digital activity.

NEXT STEPS

In the following lesson, you will introduce students to plant-based solutions to community challenges. They will develop a plant-based solution to an eco-challenge. Students' solutions can be entered into the Planting Your Solution Contest. For information on student and teacher prizes, how to enter, and official rules, visit scholastic.com/bloom/contest.

