



6-12 Everglades Champions in Action™

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

*A reference document designed to support the
6-12th grade Everglades Lead Teachers.*

Step 1: Community Inventory

What is the purpose of Step 1?

To (1) introduce the Civic Action Process, (2) inventory your community, (3) identify environmental strengths and concerns, and (4) dig into the underlying root causes of those concerns.

Prior to conducting environmental inventories and creating a list of strengths and concerns, it is often necessary to facilitate student buy-in to becoming an environmental citizen and to help them develop an understanding of why they are engaging in this Process, the specifics of the community they will explore, and what it means to make a change in their community. In other words, to get student buy-in.

Once introduced, students will jump into investigating their community by conducting a series of inventories. They will collect data and observations, then synthesize that information into a list of community strengths and community concerns. From there, students will analyze their concerns to dig into the root causes of the concerns they previously identified.

In summary:

- Explore and investigate the local community.
- Assess the community's strengths and concerns; and,
- Analyze those concerns to understand the underlying root causes.

Teacher(s) will:

- Set community boundaries.
- Establish inventory locations.
- Determine what the overarching Everglades focus topic.
- Help guide students into deeper investigation and analysis of the focal topic through guiding questions and inventory selections.

Students will:

- Understand the process.
- Students will discover that in order to be an environmental citizen, capable of developing and carrying out an action project that makes a sustainable change, they need to conduct investigations, dig for research, ask questions from all kinds of people, work together cooperatively and collaboratively, make compromises, and make choices based on criteria. They will review the six steps of the Process to develop an understanding of how each step builds upon the previous one and guides them to make informed and reasoned decisions.
- Conduct 2-3 community inventories that focus on the given Everglades topic. Community inventories include activities such as meeting with community experts; doing online research; surveying members of the community; completing an observational checklist.
- Create a list of community strengths and concerns.
- Determine root causes of their concerns.

You will know you have completed Step 1 when:

- The community has been defined.
- Students have completed multiple inventories including one descriptive and one numbers-based.
- The inventories have resulted in a list of strengths and concerns.
- That list of concerns has been analyzed, and root causes (kept within the community) have been identified.
- Students have created a portfolio to save their work.

Resources for Step 1:

Lesson plans, handouts, and activities

- Environmental Citizen Activity & Attributes of an Environmental Citizen
- Community Inventory List
- Strengths and Concerns
- Cause and Effect Tree - Root Cause Analysis

Guiding questions:

- What does it mean to be an environmental citizen?
- Why does caring for and about the environment matter?
- What makes up our defined community?
- What are the environmental conditions in our community that need improvement?
- What are the environmental strengths in our community?
- What is culturally important to our community?
- Is there any indication of long-term environmental concerns?
- How can we gather information about concerns and strengths in our community?
- How do we know what the underlying issues are of our concerns?
- How do we learn more about a concern so we can determine whether it is the root issue or not?
- Who might know something about our area of focus, and be able to give us a better understanding of it?
- How will we know we are ready to move on to selecting a single issue (Step 2)?

TIPS Cards related to Step 1:

- TIPS Card 1 Keeping a Portfolio
- TIPS Card 4 Taking Notes
- TIPS Card 5 Working Together & Hearing All Voices
- TIPS Card 6 Making the Most of Your Community Inventory
- TIPS Card 8 Finding the Root Cause of Concerns
- TIPS Card 13 Finding & Evaluating Research Sources
- TIPS Card 14 Finding & Using Maps
- TIPS Card 16 Identifying Stakeholders & Beginning Questions
- TIPS Card 19 Guest Speakers & Expert Volunteers
- TIPS Card 20 Interviews
- TIPS Card 21 Surveys

Environmental Citizen Activity



Learning Objectives: To solidify what it means to be an Environmental Citizen. An Environmental Citizen is a proactive member of the community who understands the importance of being a steward of the planet's limited natural resources and is committed to going beyond private actions by using civic actions to sustain them. (Reference [Attributes of an Environmental Citizen](#))

Scaffolds: Try this activity as an entire class, led by you or a student leader instead of breaking up into smaller groups. Students often say their Environmental Citizen needs a friend to help them– so this option allows the space to draw additional friends and helpers!

Materials Needed:

- One large sheet of paper per small group
- Markers
- Wall space or portfolio space to keep the drawings once completed

1] Divide your class into small groups of 3-6 students.

2] Give each group one large sheet of paper and different colors of markers.

3] Each group should begin with a head and torso drawn on their paper, similar to a hangman.



4] Ask the large group – “What is a citizen?” Discuss responses. “Now imagine you want to be an Environmental Citizen – what would you need? (Physical, mental, emotional attributes– real or whimsical) Working in your small groups, use your paper to create an Environmental Citizen. Give them the physical and mental attributes you think would be necessary. Be sure to label each part. [For example, everybody needs a mouth. But how would an Environmental Citizen use their mouth?](#)

5] Give groups at least 10-15 minutes to work. You may need to move between groups, offering encouragement, helping them expand on their ideas, and reminding them to add explanation labels that will help them make a presentation about their Citizen.

6] Give each group a chance to do an oral presentation on their Environmental Citizen.

7] Post the Citizens around the wall. Groups can continue to add attributes later, if desired. Some typical attributes (it is amazing what youth will think of – no two Citizens will be alike!):

- A heart to care
- A brain to analyze community issues
- Hands to reach out to others/to hold a shovel/ to write letters
- A pocket for seed packets/ to hold a notebook
- Soft shoes to tread lightly/sturdy shoes for walking through the community
- A nose to smell pollution/to smell trouble/to smell the flowers

Attributes of an Environmental Citizen



Knowledge	Skills	Orientations (Character Traits)
<p>Environmental Awareness: Awareness of current local environmental issues, needs, and resources</p>	<p>Research: Ability to conduct a thorough and balanced investigation on a local environmental and/or community issue</p>	<p>Civic Responsibility: Sense of personal responsibility for, and commitment to, the well-being of the environment and the community</p>
<p>Historical Awareness: Understanding how past ecological events, political decisions, and the economy have affected the environment</p>	<p>Media Literacy: Ability to assess various sources of information for credibility and bias</p>	<p>Self-Efficacy: Belief in one's ability to make positive changes in the environment and community</p>
<p>Policy & Practice Understanding: Understanding that environmental issues are influenced by policies and community practices</p>	<p>Communication: Ability to defend a position on an environmental issue both orally and in writing</p>	<p>Community Connectedness: Practice building respectful relationships with all members of the community</p>
<p>Stakeholder Knowledge: Awareness of decision-makers who can influence public and private policies and community practices associated with environmental issues</p>	<p>Collaboration: Ability to work cooperatively with peers and adults toward a common end</p>	<p>Academic Achievement: Personal sense of achievement, accountability, and accomplishment in and out of school</p>
<p>Civic Ability: Understanding of the roles that citizens can play in shaping policies or community practices to help the environment</p>	<p>Advocacy: Ability to develop and execute a plan for sustainable improvements to the environment or community</p>	<p>Social Respect & Empathy: Willingness to respectfully consider diverse points of view</p>
<p>Inclusivity: Understanding the importance of integrating diverse experiences and perspectives into all aspects of learning</p>	<p>Problem-Solving: Ability to make wise decisions and plans to solve environmental and community issues using sound research</p>	<p>Program Affinity: Sense of connectedness to movements of students involved in Earth Force and other such environmental programs</p>
<p>Reflection: Ability to think critically about experiences and to solidify big picture take-aways and behavior changes</p>		

Community Inventory List

Use these to help get you started planning inventories



The following is a list of possible inventories to help us understand community concerns. Remember, an inventory is inquiry driven, collects some kind of data, and leads to a list of strengths and concerns of the defined community.

Note: Earth Force advocates for conducting at least 3 inventories: One that is **numbers-based** data, one with **descriptive** data, and at least one that is **justice-focused** (noted with a ✨). Bonus if **students design!**

Inventory	Examples
<p>🌟 Surveys</p>	<p>Create a school/peer/community survey or poll. Consider different formats: written, digital, or verbal. Consider asking questions like “who is the most affected by...” “do certain groups feel the consequences of X more than others?” See TIPS Card 21</p>
<p>🌟 Audits & Assessments</p>	<p>Complete audits of energy use, recycling, carbon footprints, food waste and access, walkability, canopy cover, etc. Assess how well systems and processes are working within the community.</p>
<p>Review Policies & Practices</p>	<p>Identify city/county ordinances and analyze topographical maps & evaluate adherence to policy. Invite local policy makers to participate in a panel; use observational studies to determine community practices. See TIPS Card 12</p>
<p>🌟 Interviews</p>	<p>There are two groups of people who are excellent to interview: Local Experts, and Knowledge Holders.</p> <p>Look for local experts or persons who are directly involved with a concern like city planners, school administration, and other stakeholders. Invite them into your classroom or interview them by phone.</p> <p>Also consider people who hold community knowledge, like faith-based leaders, grassroots organizations, social service providers, and people who have lived in your community for a long time. This group will be able to shine a light on environmental and social inequities in your community. See TIPS Cards 16-19</p>
<p>Online Databases</p>	<p>Use online databases to investigate concerns and/or help with determining project approaches. Government and other agency websites have public information that can help your students! EarthForceResources.org website is filled with links to such databases as well. See TIPS Card 15</p>
<p>🌟 Maps</p>	<p>Use maps to identify local facilities (energy plants, waste treatment facilities, etc.); collect data based on particular areas; analyze topographical maps & evaluate adherence to policy; and get more information about your community. Story and GIS maps are a fun and interactive way to collect information too. See TIPS Card 14 Note, there are excellent maps that focus on justice-issues, including Redlining, Brownfield, and Ecojustice maps.</p>
<p>Guided Walking Tours</p>	<p>Take a walk! Educators and/or experts can guide students through their community and ask driving questions to stimulate thought and discovery. Identify community boundaries and look for strengths and concerns.</p>
<p>News & Media Search</p>	<p>Look at local media in the recent past and make a list of concerns they see mentioned; summarize the concerns and what the community is doing about them. Make sure sources are credible! See TIPS Card 13</p>
<p>Data Collection</p>	<p>Get out in the field and collect samples; test the health of air/water/soil; sample macroinvertebrates or biodiversity; try observational studies of community practices.</p>
<p>Other Ideas?</p>	<p>Add your own!</p>

[Additional inventory resources \(including those specific to flooding and water quality\) can be found online.](#)

Strengths and Concerns



Learning Objectives: To record the community's strengths and concerns during community inventories.

Added Information: It is recommended to conduct multiple inventories and observe different aspects of your community. Earth Force has resources on planning inventories ([Community Inventory List](#), [Flood Mitigation Supplement](#), etc.), as well as guidance on what inventories your class can take!

Scaffolds: If working with students who need extra assistance, or if this is your first year working through Earth Force, it may be helpful to provide your own definitions of "strengths" and "concerns" before conducting inventories. This could help students focus on your learning goals. Also, practicing with an example strengths/concerns sheet together beforehand will help them become familiar with the tool.

What We Found: Inventory Results

STRENGTHS	CONCERNS

Cause and Effect Tree

An Exercise in Root Cause Analysis



Learning Objectives To understand the systemic root cause of concerns identified during inventories

Scaffolds If needed, use the “Identify Cause and Effect Relationships/Cause and Effect Organizer” activity as a precursor to inventories to help students grasp this concept. Also, the “Why You Need To Ask Why” story under Step 1 Resources is a great narrative example that can be used to kick this activity off.

Note: Many environmental issues are rooted in social and ecological inequities. It is important not to shy away from exposing students to these root causes. By discussing and taking inequities into consideration during this process, your solutions will be more sustainable, equitable, and reflect the true nature of the issue at hand.

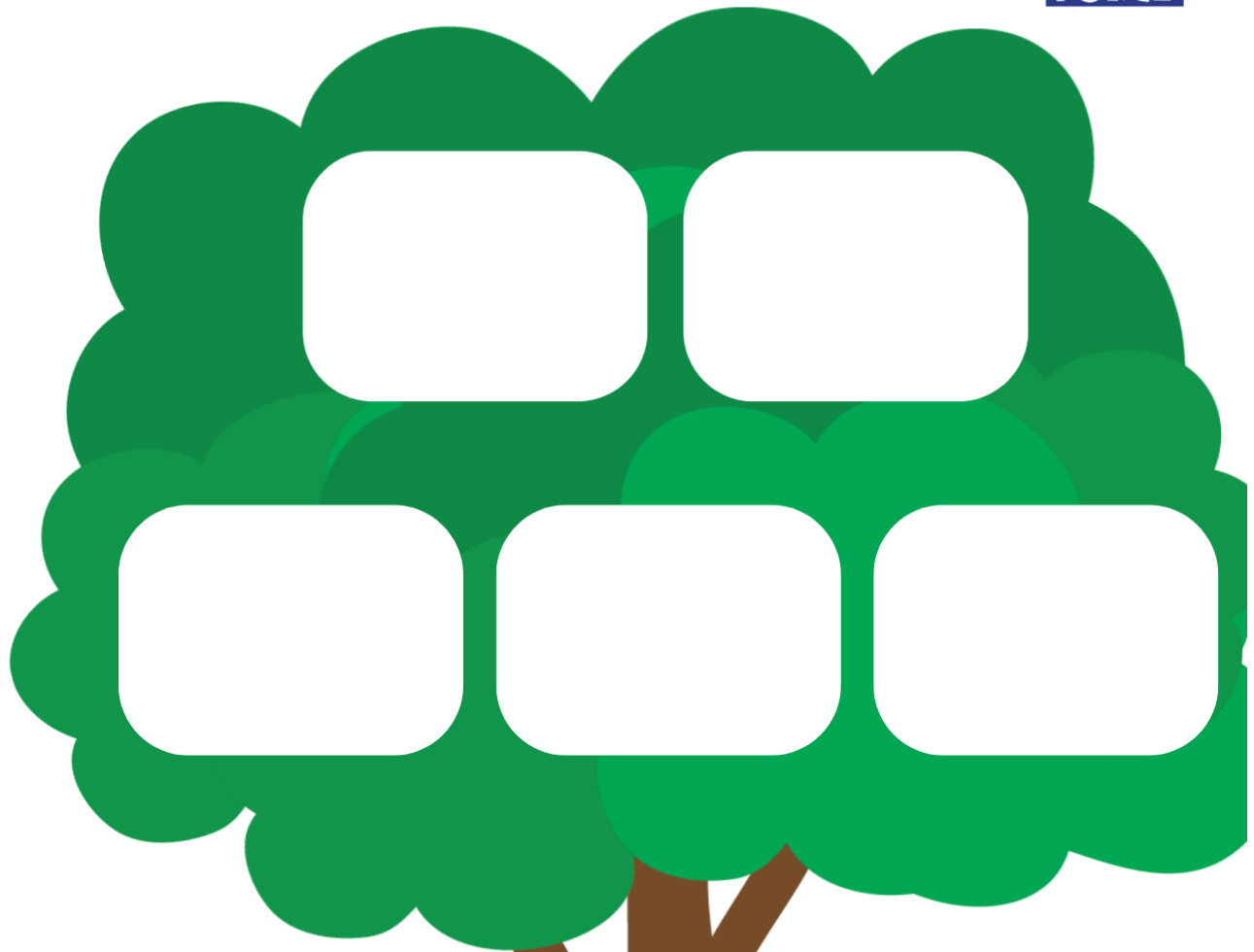
- 1]** Have students write the chosen concern in the center of the tree in the brown circle. They can work individually or in small groups, each group/individual working on their own concern.
- 2]** Prompt students to think about what effects this concern can have on their community and write down their thoughts in the branches and leaves in the tree. To stimulate conversation, here are a few perspectives that could be affected by an environmental concern:
 - Who is most affected by this concern?
 - Are different groups of people affected by this concern differently?
 - Environmental effects that could arise
 - How could this affect our lives?
 - Buildings/ city infrastructure
- 3]** Shift focus to think about the systemic root causes of your concern and how your community is affected by it. Why is this happening in the first place? Have students brainstorm their thoughts in the circles near the roots of the tree. If needed, prompt students with the following questions to help stimulate thought:
 - How did this concern begin?
 - Is it being perpetuated (kept going) by a group of people or law? Maybe a lack of a law?
 - Does this concern oppress certain groups of people?
 - Use the “Five Whys” Method (**Why You Need To Ask Why**). Ask yourself: Why is this concern happening? Then ask “Why is that happening?” etc. Keep going until you’re at the root cause of the concern!
- 4]** The class may find that the concerns they identified while on inventories are already root causes, which is great! Or they may have originally identified effects of a deeper root cause. Come together and talk about the root causes (real community issues) of the concerns that they identified. Working on an effect of a root cause is not usually a good project strategy to move forward on. **Root causes are the best issues to tackle** because changing them have high impact and create sustainable change in your community.

Cause and Effect Tree:

An Exercise in Root Cause Analysis



Effects



Environmental Concern



Root Causes
(Issue)



Step 2: Issue Selection

What is the purpose of Step 2?

To select a single issue to focus on for the rest of the Process. Step 2 focuses on helping students select an environmental issue based on a set of criteria. Working with the list of root causes developed in Step 1, students go through a selection process that ensures the issue chosen is one of importance to the community, interesting to the students, and connected to your academic needs. Students are more likely to be engaged if they care about the issue. The selection process works most effectively if students work in partnership with you to make this decision.

In summary:

- Use root causes from Step 1 to select one issue.
- Use a criteria-based selection process to select one issue.

Teacher(s) will:

- Facilitate a student discussion of all the root causes found in Step 1.
- Introduce students to the idea of using criteria to make a decision (The What's for Lunch Activity is a great way to introduce criteria.)
- Facilitate a conversation with your students about the criteria that will help them determine the most viable issue to select, research, and develop solutions around.
 - Commonly used criteria include:
 - Connects to curriculum
 - Can be researched without leaving school
 - Affects all or a large number of students
 - Important to the community
- Help students make a democratic decision based on the criteria
- Use guiding questions to help facilitate Step 2.

Students will:

- Debrief and discuss the list of issues identified in Step 1.
- Select the criteria that will be used in the decision-making process.
- Democratically decide on an issue for further research that will occur in Step 3.

You will know you have completed Step 2 when:

- The issue selected is one the students are interested in.
- The issue meets your educational standards.
- You worked with the students to collaboratively make the decision.
- The issue impacts the larger community, not just the students.
- Students add their work from Step 2 to their portfolio.

Resources for Step 2:

Lesson plans, handouts, and activities:

- Using Criteria-Based Decision Making
- What's For Lunch? Activity
- Issue Selection Grid

Guiding questions:

- Do we need to dig deeper into any of our root causes to understand them fully?
- How do we select only one issue to explore more deeply?
- How do we involve all voices, adults and youth, in our selection process and why does this matter?

TIPS Cards related to Step 2:

- TIPS Card 5 Working Together & Hearing All Voices
- TIPS Card 7 Decision Making
- TIPS Card 17 Outreach to Professionals: Formal Letters and emails
- TIPS Card 18 Outreach to Professionals: Phone Etiquette
- TIPS Card 19 Guest Speakers & Expert Volunteers

Using Criteria-Based Decision-Making



Learning Objective: To understand, and be able to successfully use criteria-based decision-making

Added Information: This practice is utilized in both Steps 2 and 4 in Earth Force.

Scaffolds: Introduce with the “What’s For Lunch” Activity to get a foundation for this concept with a familiar topic to students.

In both steps 2 and 4, students will be asked to use criteria to select their issue and their action plan respectively. The following outlines best practices for explaining and establishing criteria that result in strong civic action projects.

1] Introduce “Criteria”. In order to make all of our decisions, we use some form of criteria to narrow down our options and arrive at a final selection. Criteria are defined as “standards on which decisions are based.”

For example, something as simple as what to have for lunch requires us to measure our options against a defined set of criteria. For choosing lunch our criteria might include things like: location, dietary restrictions, price, or how hungry we are. See the [What’s For Lunch Activity](#) if you’d like to begin with this material.

2] After introducing the concept, it is time to use criteria to **select an issue**. Below you will find a chart of criteria categories that Earth Force has found to be helpful in selecting issues that will result in meaningful civic action projects. Earth Force believes that the best projects result from considering the amount of student voice involved, practicality, use of civic skills, and the overall environmental impact. Under each category of criteria, you will find a few questions that pinpoint topics for discussion and further explain the meaning of each category.

You may use this table to start a discussion with your students or you could also assign point values to the answers (i.e. a point for every yes or a scale) to come up with concrete scores for each issue or action proposed. You and your students are encouraged to develop your own criteria or categories as needed based on your discussions, though remember that too many criteria can actually make the process more difficult. We recommend no more than 5.

Step 2 Criteria Examples

Student Voice	Practicality	Civic Engagement/ Skills	Impact
Participation: <i>Can everyone be a part of this?</i>	Educator Needs: <i>Meets the educational standards I need to accomplish.</i>	Community: <i>Does this require us to interact with the local community?</i>	Community: <i>Does our community care about this issue?</i>
Interest: <i>Is this issue fun and interesting for us to work on?</i>	Accessible: <i>Are we working in an accessible area? Is this issue in our community boundaries?</i>	Decision-makers: <i>Will we engage with decision makers & people in power?</i>	Sustainable: <i>Does this issue have solutions that will lead to a more sustainable community?</i>

Using Criteria-Based Decision-Making



Understanding: <i>Do I understand this issue? Does it make sense?</i>	Research: <i>Does this require research outside of our school?</i>		
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3] Try it yourself. Using the above categories and any additional ones suggested, you may rank your issues or proposed action solutions. Have a class discussion to decide on which criteria you would like to use to vote.

This is a great time to use another **democratic voting method** to choose criteria. See [Democratic Voting Processes](#) for ideas.

Use the grid below to map out the criteria your class has chosen as their favorites. Remember, you do not need to use all of the categories we suggested, and you do not need 3 criteria for each category you do choose. Just narrow it down to your class' favorites.

Issue Selection Grid

	Issue Option 1	Issue Option 2	Issue Option 3
Student Voice			
Practicality			
Civic Engagement/ Skills			
Impact			
Additional Category 1:			
Additional Category 2:			

4] Vote. Use discussion, additional voting methods, or your authority to choose the 3–5 criteria that will be used on the Criteria-Based Decision-Making grid (See Issue Selection Grid) and vote on your issue!

What's For Lunch?

An Example of Criteria-Based Decision-Making



Learning Objectives: To understand what criteria-based decision-making is, and how it can be an effective way to make decisions

Scaffolds: This activity is considered a scaffold for the [Issue Selection Grid](#) and [Using Criteria-Based Decision-Making](#) activities.

Criteria-Based Decision-Making may be a new term for your students. In fact, this is something they use in their daily life, they just may not realize it. When introducing Criteria-Based Decision-Making, use an everyday example to help familiarize your students with this concept before using it in their Earth Force project. Below is an exercise that you can use with your students to orient them to Criteria-Based Decision-Making.

Deciding what to eat for lunch is a perfect example of using Criteria-Based Decision-Making in daily life!

Definition: Criteria are guidelines we use to make judgments or decisions.

When deciding what to eat, you think about what you want or like, what is available, and what is involved in preparing the food among other things. You are making multiple decisions to refine your options.

Ask your students what criteria they think about when deciding what to eat. Here are a few ideas:

- What's already in the fridge/pantry
- How tasty the food option is
- How healthy the food option is
- How long it will take to cook

Using these criteria, you narrow down your options. Using a table like the one below creates a visual representation of that narrowing-down process. The more boxes checked for each option, the more closely matched it is to your criteria!

	Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwich on White Bread	Mac & Cheese	Pizza	Salad	Turkey and Cheese Sandwich on Whole Wheat Bread
Availability (already in fridge /pantry)	X	X		X	X
Taste	X	X	X		X
Health				X	X
Shortness of Cooking Time	X			X	X

So as you can see, Turkey and Cheese on Whole Wheat is the best option for lunch using these criteria!

Issue Selection Grid



Learning Objective: To choose a single issue as a group while maintaining buy-in from students.

Additional Information: Need help developing criteria? Look at the [Using Criteria-Based Decision-Making Activity](#).

Scffold: Instead of using a 1-5 rating system per the instructions below, place one “X” per criteria under the issue you think meets it best. To tally, count the number of “X” each issue has.

1] Use the grid on the next page to decide which issue your class should focus on for your Earth Force project. Fill in the rows with the criteria you will be decided on. Use the columns to list the issues you are considering. Rate each issue against each criterion. Rank the issues. 1 meaning it does not meet the criteria and 5 (or the total number of issues you have) meaning it completely meets the criteria. Total the scores at the bottom.

Note: This activity can be done individually (and score sheets added for the entire group) or done as a whole class (project this grid on the board and each student gets X many votes).

2] Once everyone has voted and scores are tallied, look to see if one issue is the clear winner, or if multiple are close. If one is clearly the winner, great! You are ready to move forward into [Step 3: Research](#). If there are a few that are relatively close though, consider having a second round of voting with just those issues. Precede it with a discussion on the merits of those issues or a debate structure of the pros and cons of each.

You may not need to use Criteria-Based Decision-Making again. There are many other democratic decision-making tools available that can help come to a conclusion. Look to the [Democratic Voting Processes](#) tool for guidance on other ways to make decisions, and to our [Civic Engagement](#) page online.

Issue Selection Grid



		ISSUES				
		Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4	Issue 5
C R I T E R I A	Criteria 1					
	Criteria 2					
	Criteria 3					
	Criteria 4					
	Criteria 5					
TOTAL						

Step 3: Community Practice and Policy Research



What is the purpose of Step 3?

To research the selected issue looking at policies and community practices, to understand the history and implications of the issue, and to synthesize the information gathered.

In this step students gather information that gives them the context of their selected issue. They will learn:

- Who is affected by the issue and has a stake in how the issue is handled (stakeholders).
- Why their issue exists.
- What current policies and community practices are related to their issue.
- Who the decision-makers are on relevant policies and practices.
- The possible areas for improving relevant policies or community practices.
- There may be more than one viable solution to a problem.

In summary:

- Through research, students will begin to understand how policies are created and how they affect their issue.
- They will begin to identify the motives that led to the creation of those policies, and the different pressures or interests that shaped them.
- They will explore the effectiveness of current policies and practices, helping them identify a policy or practice needing improvement in Step 4.

Teacher(s) will:

- Guide students to understand what is meant by a policy and a community practice and how to distinguish between them.
- Facilitate further exploration of examples of policies and practices.
- Facilitate a discussion of stakeholders who have an interest in their selected issue.
- Guide students to conduct further research into the policies and practices that relate to their issue.
- Invite community experts to come to your classroom or connect virtually to answer questions and provide feedback on information students have gathered.
- Use guiding questions to facilitate this step.

Students will:

- Identify stakeholders.
- Identify and research policies and practices.
- Debrief and analyze the policy and practice information they found.

You will know you have completed Step 3 when:

- Students have researched policies and community practices related to their issue.
- They have used multiple research methods to gather data.
- They have interacted with more than one stakeholder.
- They have synthesized their research to debrief what they have learned.

Resources for Step 3:

Lesson plans, handouts, and activities:

- Stakeholder Mapping - 2 Activity Options
- Conducting Research: A Lesson in Policy, Practice, and Stakeholder Research
- Distinguishing Policy and Community Practice (Intro)

Guiding questions:

- What policies and community practices are currently in place around your issue?
- Who in the community might know information about this issue that we can talk to?
- What policies or practices need to be changed to improve your issue in the long run?
- Who is affected by this issue?
- Who makes decisions about the policies and practices related to this issue?

Guiding questions to help identify stakeholders:

- Who has an interest in this issue?
- Who is an expert on this issue?
- Who has tried to address this issue in the past?

Guiding questions to help identify stakeholders (continued):

- Who makes decisions about this issue and/or is responsible for enforcing policies on this issue? • Who is affected by the issue you selected and cares about the status of the issue?
- Who bears the cost or pays for the issue?
- What are the different points of view that stakeholders have?

Guiding questions to help with policy and practice research:

- What policies are in place around this issue? Are they being enforced?
- What are the community practices around this issue?
- What needs to be changed to improve the issue?
- What is the history of this issue in our community?
- What are the debates and viewpoints on this issue?

TIPS Cards related to Step 3:

- TIPS Card 2 Creating A Contact List
- TIPS Card 3 Staying Organized
- TIPS Card 4 Taking Notes
- TIPS Card 5 Working Together & Hearing All Voices
- TIPS Card 9 Moving from Issues to Projects
- TIPS Card 11 Committee Structures & Peer Accountability
- TIPS Card 12 Policy vs Practice
- TIPS Card 13 Finding & Evaluating Research Sources
- TIPS Card 14 Finding & Using Maps
- TIPS Card 15 Finding Government Information
- TIPS Card 16 Identifying Stakeholders & Beginning Questions
- TIPS Card 20 Interviews
- TIPS Card 21 Surveys



Learning Objective: To learn the basic difference between a policy and a community practice

Additional Information: Refer to [TIPS Card 12](#) for additional information.

Scaffolds: We have additional activities on policy and practice that can be coupled with this to introduce the concept. Consider using this activity as the introductory conversation. Then use the [What's In Your Backpack?](#) hands-on activity so students have the opportunity to try this out before research begins.

1] Display the following table in front of your class.

Column 1: _____	Column 2: _____
Chewing gum is not allowed in school	I choose to wear jeans on the weekends
You must be 16 to get a driver's license	My neighbors recycle their bottles and cans
ABC Pharmaceutical Company does not test its products on animals	A big group of high school students usually hangs out at the local skate park on Friday nights

Explain that one column is a list of policies and the other is a list of practices.

2] **Ask:** "What do the statements in the first list have in common?"

Answer: They are rules or guidelines established by people/organizations in authority.

Explain that we refer to these as policies. There are public policies, which are rules/laws instituted by various levels of the government, and private policies, which are by private institutions, like your school or ABC Pharmaceutical Company.

3] **Ask:** "What do the statements in the second list have in common?"

Answer: They are habits and behaviors – basically things people do.

Explain that we refer to these as practices. They can either follow or contradict policies, if a policy is in place.

4] Debrief by explaining that we will be exploring and gathering information on policies and practices for the chosen issue. Answer any clarifying questions needed to move forward.

Conducting Research

A Lesson in Policy, Practice, and Stakeholder Research



Learning Objectives: To have a clear understanding of policies, practices, and stakeholders, to examine research, and point out environmental inequities in your community

Additional Information: Inside this lesson plan, there are references to other Earth Force materials including activities and TIPS Cards. It would be handy to have EarthForceResources.org open and a set of TIPS Cards handy while reviewing this lesson. Also, this lesson begins as a discussion and transitions into active, independent research and will likely take multiple classes, or a combination of class time and homework to complete.

Scaffolds: Before beginning this lesson, introduce the concept of policy and practice using the [What's In Your Backpack](#) activity or [Examples of Policies and Practices](#).

1] Convey the context and goal of this lesson, which is that students will begin to research their chosen issue. Moving forward, they will hear from stakeholders in the community and from other sources about the policies and practices that relate to their issue.

Scaffold option: Draw from students' experiences by relating to a new band / musical talent. Ask students if they have done research before. When they hear a new band that they like, do they try to find out more about them – where they're from, how long they've been together, the names of the musicians? Basically, that's research!

In order to create a sustainable solution to your issue, you will need to dig into the environmental inequities that are in your community. Please keep in mind marginalized populations, how environmental problems affect groups differently, and who most benefits from fixing this issue.

2] Define and discuss stakeholders, policies, and practices if you have not done so already.

Stakeholder: Someone who has a direct interest or investment in an issue. Make sure to include those who are most affected by the issue.

Policy: rules or guidelines established by people/organizations in authority.

Practice: habits and behaviors – basically things people do.

Ask students about these three concepts related to their own school.

Next, what burning questions arose when they developed questions related to their issue? Recap their question brainstorm.

Discuss the importance of consulting stakeholders as part of the research and the importance of looking at an issue from varying perspectives and multiple sources. What if we only consulted one source when we wanted to make a change that would affect many?

For example: Farmers could be consulted about the possibility of using treated wastewater to irrigate their fields. In this way, water could be better managed. However, if local geologists were also consulted, they may warn that irrigation using this method could result in the contamination of a nearby spring due to the high nitrogen content of treated wastewater.

3] Introduce the research process.

Using whichever structure works best for your class, divide the class into partners, groups, or committees. Provide students and groups with necessary handouts and expectations for research. The [Step 3 resources web page](#) has additional tools and organizers to facilitate this.

Conducting Research

A Lesson in Policy, Practice, and Stakeholder Research



Also, the **TIP Cards** have different TIPs to help students work in their groups, find sources, and judge if they are credible or not.

4] Begin researching by identifying stakeholders to contact, and gathering policy and practice information.

Have some groups identify community stakeholders. See **TIP Card 16** for additional information. Groups make a

stakeholder web (See **Stakeholder Web Activity**) of the key people who have a role in the issue. Students research

appropriate people/organizations to contact. Have students keep track of all contacts throughout the process, see **TIPs Cards 2 and 3** for more information. Think about how different groups of people communicate. Using different methods of outreach can help you reach a more diverse group of people.

Need help finding information on the inequities in your community? **The EPA's EnviroAtlas** mapping tool has tons of information and resources that can help. <https://www.epa.gov/enviroatlas>

Other groups are researching policies and community practices. Use the **Policies and Practices Related To Our Issue** organizer to help them keep track of sources and organize their thoughts.

These groups continue their questioning and research while the others go through the interviewing phases of stakeholder research. Groups can work together if you would like all to participate in all aspects of research. **Use whatever methods work best for your class!**

5] Help facilitate the community stakeholder interactions and conduct the interviews (**TIP Card 20**). There are three main ways to interact with stakeholders and where to find a little more information on how to facilitate each one. The TIPs Cards are a great tool to help students take ownership in coordinating stakeholder interactions. If other ways work better for your situation, get creative!

- Email exchanges - **TIP Card 17**
- Phone Interviews - **TIP Card 18**
- Guest Speaker Opportunities - **TIP Card 19**
- Make sure to follow up the interviews by sending a thank-you note (See **TIP Card 31**), and saying that you will keep in touch as the project progresses.

6] Allow time to wrap up all aspects of research, and debrief.

Depending on how you're structuring your groups, let the groups working on policies and practices wrap up their findings. Allow the stakeholder groups to write-up their interviews and think about the big take-aways.

Then, bring everyone together for a debriefing session so all groups can learn about all aspects of the research findings. This is a great time to answer everyone's questions, and see if you all feel satisfied with the amount of information that has been acquired. Maybe you need to answer a couple more questions in order to move forward, or maybe you're good to go.

7] From here, use the **The Change I'd like to See activity to transition to Step 4.** This helps move the group from thinking about the issue to possible project ideas.

Stakeholder Mapping



Learning Objective: To organize students' thoughts and information on key stakeholders they may need to contact to further the research process

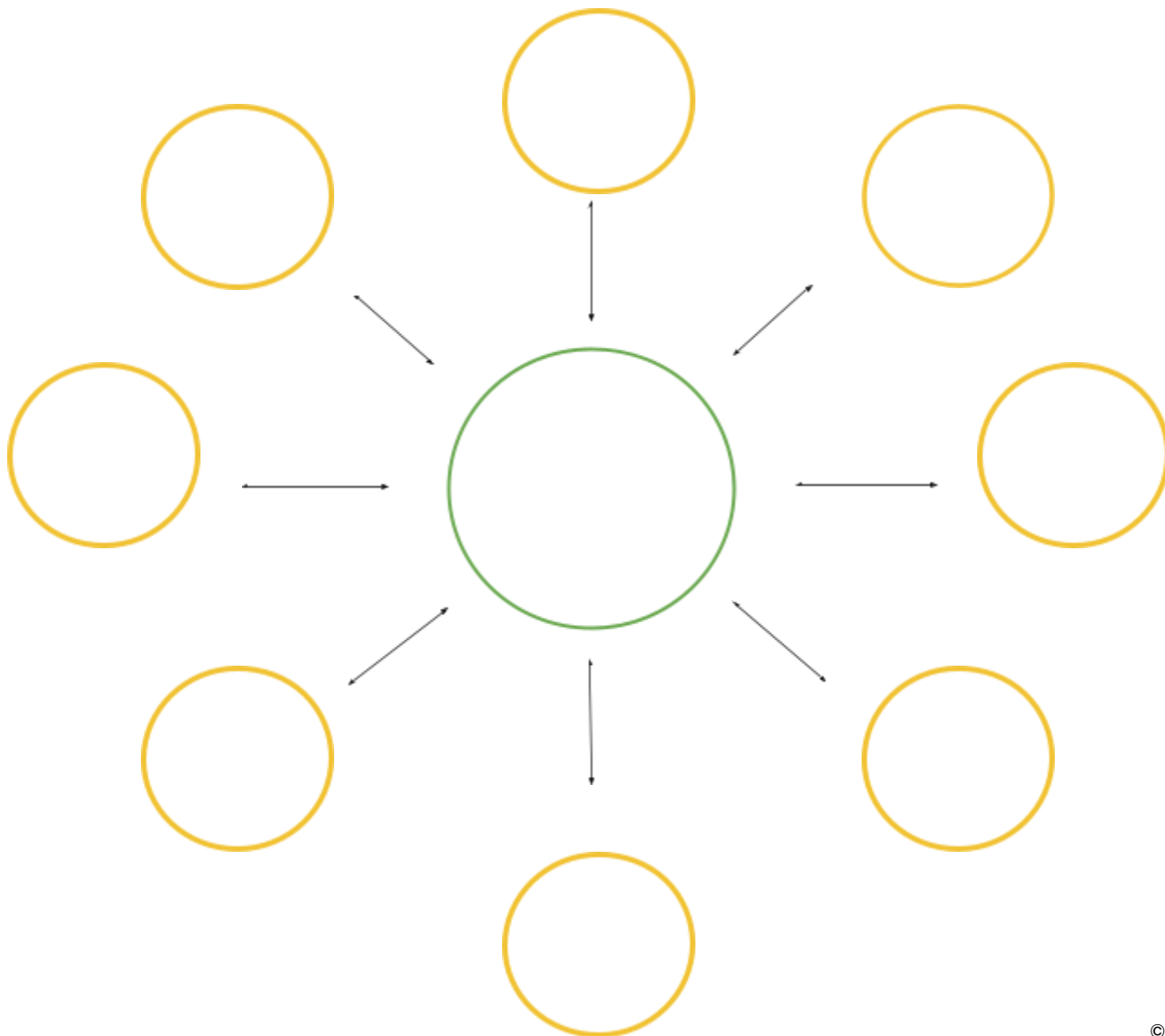
Scaffolds: Activity Option 1 is simpler than Option 2 and allows for more creativity/individuality. Option 2 is more easily incorporated into math and NGSS standards, but may require a little more conversation ahead of time to ensure students understand how to use the tool.

ACTIVITY OPTION 1: STAKEHOLDER WEB

Use this web to organize your key stakeholders. Write your issue in the green circle in the middle, then add stakeholders in the circles around it.

Remember to include groups of people that may be more affected by your issue than others! Don't only think of experts, but those who could greatly benefit from this issue getting fixed.

Feel free to arrange them in a way that makes sense to you! Maybe add a color-coding or pattern system, use stickers, draw more lines, etc.



Stakeholder Mapping



ACTIVITY OPTION 2: STAKEHOLDER GRID

Use the grid below to plot your stakeholders to figure out who you may want to contact. Earth Force recommends trying to contact someone from each quadrant if possible.

								Highly Influential (has power to change issue)																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																							
Least Impacted												Most Impacted																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			
								Not Influential (interested, but does not have power to change issue)																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																							

Step 4: Goal and Strategy Selection



What is the purpose of Step 4:

To determine one policy or practice to change (the goal), as well as to develop and vote on ways to change it (strategies).

In summary:

In this step, students will use the information gathered and analyzed in Step 3 to determine their solution for the selected issue. This involves:

- Determining one policy or practice that was researched in Step 3 to change, this will be their goal.
- Developing project strategy ideas and creating project goals and strategy statement.
- Selecting the most effective strategies to achieve their desired goal.

Teacher(s) will:

- Guide students to set a project goal by reviewing the key research findings from Step 3.
- Discuss with students which are the most viable options that will create the change they want to see.
- What do they want to see as a result of their action project?
- What stakeholders can help bring about the desired change?
- Are any of the possible goals connected to stakeholder interests that will help gain momentum for change?
- Which policies or practices are they most interested in?
- In partnership with students, develop 4-5 criteria that strategy ideas will be measured against during the voting process. Project management and sustainability criteria are appropriate here, items like timelines, budgets, community impact, etc. are all great criteria.
- Break students up into groups to generate strategy plans. If they need examples or strategy possibilities, look to the Examples and Inspiration of Strategies for Your Change.
- Have each group fill out the Project Goal and Strategy Statement to streamline their ideas and outline the major strategies that their plan includes. This will help each group while presenting their ideas to the larger group.
- Have each group present their ideas; allow for questions by other groups; and then facilitate a democratic vote to determine the best strategy to use to accomplish their goal.
- Use guiding questions to help facilitate this step.

Students will:

- Define their project goal.
- Choose criteria for selecting the best strategy to accomplish their goal.
- Develop strategy ideas to accomplish their goal.
- Present strategy idea.
- Vote to determine the best strategy.
- Reflect on what they have accomplished so far.

You will know you have completed Step 4 when:

- The group's goal reflects the research they have done and decisions they have made.
- The chosen strategies are a logical sustainable way of addressing the issue.
- The decision-making process considered multiple voices, both youth and adult.
- Students updated their work portfolio with materials from this decision-making process.

Resources for Step 4:

Lesson plans, handouts, and activities:

- Goal and Strategy Selection Lesson Plan
- Project Goal and Strategy Selection Statement
- Examples of Strategies for Change
- Democratic Voting Processes

Guiding questions:

- How do we select an action to take that will make a measurable and sustainable change?
- How can we select a single policy or practice to change?
- What are we trying to achieve by changing this policy or practice?
- What are our strategy options for changing this policy or practice?
- What criteria do we need to select the most effective strategies?
- Should we work with a group, organization, or initiative already working on our issue? Or should we take our own action?

TIPS Cards related to Step 4:

- TIPS Card 5 Working Together & Hearing All Voices
- TIPS Card 7 Decision Making
- TIPS Card 10 Elements of An Action Plan
- TIPS Card 11 Committee Structures & Peer Accountability
- TIPS Card 22 Petitions
- TIPS Card 23 Public Speaking
- TIPS Card 25 General Process for Changing Local Legislation
- TIPS Card 26 Fundraising

Goal and Strategy Selection

A Lesson Outline



Learning Objectives: Create a goal and strategy for your project, Identify and apply selection criteria when making a decision, demonstrate cooperative group process when making decisions

Added Information: This is the overall lesson plan outline for **Step 4**. It is one option to accomplish the goal and strategy selection process; there are other ways as well. Please feel free to adapt and create alternatives that meet your class needs. The key pieces here are that students get the opportunity to discuss and deliberate strategies, focus on one policy or practice to change, and vote in a democratic way.

Scaffolds: The **green text** below are callouts to activities and additional resources that can help throughout this step.

Transitioning from Step 3 to Step 4 can be tricky. This lesson gives a detailed outline of a process to follow should you need it. This does not need to be completed all in one class period, break it up as needed.

WHAT TO DO:

1] Begin by recapping what you all have learned so far. We are about to transition from talking about issues, to projects. So now is a good time to revisit all of the important facets we know about the issue, including who are our major stakeholders, who are the decision-makers, what policies are in place, etc. Talk to students about the idea of proposing solutions now, and that you'll begin that process.

Note: Use the **Defining a Course of Action Activity** for this step for added help in graphic organizer form.

2] Choose a Goal. Before jumping to strategies, or how you're going to change your issue, it's important to set a goal. Your goal is the specific **policy or practice** your group wishes to change. Often this goal is naturally evident and the group comes to consensus through discussion. If not, and there are a few that are feasible options, use a democratic voting method (**See Step 2 resources for options**) to vote and choose.

3] Establish criteria for selecting a strategy. Students should already be familiar with criteria-based decision-making, as they used it in Step 2. We will use it here, again, in Step 4 to vote on short-term project strategies. Developing criteria as a group before students develop their project ideas helps them craft higher-quality solutions.

In order to create sustainable solutions, be sure to keep equity and impact on marginalized communities when developing your criteria, and later your strategies for your change. Use the Step 4 Activity JEDI Check if you need

See **Difference Between Step 2 and Step 4 Criteria** handout for additional information.

Goal and Strategy Selection

A Lesson Outline



4] Break Students into Teams. Now that you have your goal set, it's time to brainstorm strategies to change it. Have students break into groups- no more than 5 groups per class. It is okay if group size is a little large. The more groups there are, the more project ideas you will be voting on. It's easier to have 5 projects to vote on, rather than 25.

Ask the groups to consider the criteria that was created to come up with a game plan to change the goal (policy or practice). Outline the strategies (what you will actually do) your group wants to actually accomplish. Prompt them to think of multifaceted approaches that use different strategies to come at the goal from different ways.

If needed, the [Examples and Inspiration of Strategies for Your Change](#) handout can provide guidance on possible strategies that can help.

Ask each group to complete the [Project Goal and Strategy Statement Template](#), so when presenting, they are easily compared to one another.

5] Present and Vote. Ask student groups to present their strategies, beginning with reading their Project Goal and Strategy Statement. If you have time, allow for creative presentation styles, including videos, skits, PowerPoint presentations, etc. If time does not allow, a simple explanation in front of the class gets the job done.

Once everyone understands all strategy plans, move to a democratic voting method using the Strategy Selection Grid to decide on which project should be selected based on the criteria chosen previously ([See Step 2 resources for options](#)).

6] Assess for Understanding, Reflect, and Acknowledge Privilege. Use the [Step 4 Assessment: Post Goal and Strategy Selection](#) activity to check for understanding, and allow students to reflect on this experience. If keeping a **portfolio** of student work, add these assessment pieces to their portfolio after completion.

Creating a strategy and asking for change from decision-makers is a privilege that not all community members feel they can do. There are issues of residence status, financial and time barriers, as well as systemic circumstances that limit groups of people from interacting in their government systems. Please take a moment and discuss this with your students. If these barriers exist within your group, talk about how you plan to move forward.

Examples and Inspiration of Strategies for Your Change



Below is a list of potential strategies applicable to a wide variety of action projects. Use these to inspire the development of your own project idea. It is often a good idea to create a multi-faceted project. Students can get involved in pieces they are interested in, and you create higher chances for success.

In order to create a sustainable solution, **keep your chosen policy/practice you would like to change in mind**, as well as your community's needs.

Remember, an effective Earth Force project involves **asking for change**. So make sure your strategy includes at least one component from that category!

Ask for Change From a Person in Power:

Note: "Speak" can mean virtually if meetings are held in that manner

- Ask policy makers to amend or create policy you would like to see
 - Speak at city council meetings
 - Meet with your principal
 - Speak at a school board meeting
 - Speak to a private business owner

Engage the Media:

- Create a documentary
- Hold a press conference
- Invite newspapers/tv stations to events
- Publish a press release
- Publish a PSA
- Write a letter to the editor
- Write a blog post

Community Organizing:

- Create a social network presence
- Host a community forum
- Build a coalition of community members
- Create a petition/ write letters to policy makers
- Plan a youth summit or conference

Environmental Management:

- Implement and maintain a buffer zone
- Label storm drains
- Create a rain garden and build a plain for its maintenance
- Replace impervious surfaces
- Improve wildlife habitat
- Install rain barrels

Create or Serve an Organization:

- Start a nonprofit organization
- Serve on a school/city/state planning committee
- Serve on a nonprofit board
- Serve on a youth advisory or action council
- Organize a youth component to an existing organization or campaign
- Create an eco-club at your school focused on action

Project Goal and Strategy Statement

Template & Example



Learning Objectives: Students understand projects goals and strategy clearly enough to communicate to others succinctly

Added Information: Use this tool in small pieces to help students boil down their project ideas into a succinct statement. *Note:* This activity is usually done in small groups.

Scaffolds: This tool is embedded within the [Goal and Strategy Selection Lesson Outline](#), should you want to follow an exact method to go through Step 4.

****The blank student template is on the next page.****

Example:

What policy or practice will we change?

School policy preventing a recycling program

Who do we want to ask for this change?

Our school board and principal

What do we hope these decision-makers will do and how will this impact people? Change the policy to allow for school-wide recycling programs which allows students and teachers to recycle.

What are our short-term strategies to make this happen?

1. Ask our principal to gain her support
2. Talk to facilities to gain their support
3. Make a petition of our peers
4. Present our ask at the school board meeting

Final Statement (a combination of the 4 statements above):

We will change our current school policy on recycling programs by asking for change from our principal and school board. We will support our case by getting approval from facilities and our peers.



Name:

Group Members:

Date:

What policy or practice will we change?

Who do we want to ask for this change?

What do we hope these decision-makers will do and how will this impact people?

What are our short-term strategies to make this happen?

Final Statement (a combination of the 4 statements above):

Democratic Voting Processes



Learning Objectives: To vote in a youth-adult partnership, while maintaining student buy-in.

Added Information: These methods can be used in conjunction with **Criteria-Based Decision-Making** in Steps 2 and 4 to select an issue or a project strategy. These also work great throughout the process to make smaller decisions as needed.

Scaffolds: These voting methods can help break decisions into smaller, bite sized pieces, making them more manageable as needed.

GROUP VOTING METHODS

DOT VOTING Write each of the issues or strategies on the board in large letters. Distribute three dot stickers to each student. Explain the rules of voting: students may use their three votes in any way they choose, from one vote on each, to all three votes on one. Invite students to walk up to the board and place their dots next to the issue(s) or strategy(ies) of their choice.

4 CORNERS Write the numbers 1-4 on 4 pieces of paper and tape them on each corner of the room (or place them on the floor). Review the criteria chosen by the group. Then, read each issue out loud and ask students to move to the number that they think that issue meets the suite of criteria. (1= does not meet the suite of criteria, 4= meets them very well). Tally the votes. If the votes do not identify a preferred issue, have more discussion before casting another vote.

HUMAN CONTINUUM Two signs, one saying "High" and the other "Low," are placed on opposite sides of the wall (or on the floor) to form the ends of a continuum. For each issue, students stand somewhere along the continuum to demonstrate their point of view. A student standing at the high end volunteers to describe why they have taken that position; similarly, a student at the low end describes their reasoning. Then hold a brief discussion. After discussion, students have the opportunity to change their location on the continuum. Repeat this for each issue. Tally the results. If the votes do not identify a preferred issue, have more discussion before casting another vote.

ANONYMOUS METHODS

MAJORITY VOTE Review the criteria chosen by the group. Give students time to review, in pairs or alone, which issue best meets the set criteria. Hand out pieces of paper and have students write down one issue each. Collect the papers and count how many votes each issue was given. This is an opportunity to discuss a number of factors:

- There is a difference between majority rule and consensus building.
 - Majority Rule is a good tool to **begin the conversation or to narrow the options** so that the group can use consensus to reach a final decision. It is important to facilitate the group so that those who "lose" the vote stay vested.
- Our political system is based on majority rule with strong protections that guarantee respect for minority views.



HEADS DOWN, THUMBS UP Incorporating at least one type of anonymous voting can allow students a chance to vote without feeling self-conscious about their choice, and may reduce the “group-think” and peer influence that can sometimes dominate classrooms. Try voting with students at their desk, heads down. Ask them to vote for their issue or strategy of choice by raising their hand when you call it out loud. Tally the votes. If the votes do not identify a preferred issue, have more discussion before casting another vote.

5 FINGERS To add an additional layer to the Heads Down, Thumbs Up method described above, ask students to put their heads down at their desk. But this time, instead of just putting their hand up for their issue/strategy of choice, ask them to vote with their fingers. 0 finger (their fist) means they don't think that issue meets the suite of criteria, all the way up to 5 fingers which means they think that issue/strategy thinks it meets that suite of criteria really well. Tally the votes. If the votes do not identify a preferred issue, have more discussion before casting another vote.

ELECTRONIC POLLS Polling apps or websites allows for students to cast votes without the pressures of peer opinions. You can structure the voting method like a majority vote, or a Dot Vote, but use an online method! Try polleverywhere.com if interested.

Step 5: Planning and Taking Action



What is the purpose of Step 5:

- To design and implement a civic action project that will lead to a sustainable, and measurable environmental change.

In summary:

There are two key components to Step 5:

- Refine your action plan to address the project goal and strategy statement.
- Take action by implementing the action plan.

Teacher(s) will:

- Facilitate with your students the development of an action plan which breaks down all the tasks that need to be done, including how you will implement each strategy, who will do the work, what resources you will need, and the timeline to get it done.
- Help students form a committee structure to divvy up the tasks.
- With students' input, set deadlines, identify resources, and set budget, if needed. This creates accountability so they can monitor their progress. Prompt students to think about what people, skills, materials, and money are needed to carry out the action plan.
- Discuss with students what potential challenges or obstacles they might face in implementing their action plan and what the backup plan will be if these challenges are too big to address.
- Monitor and guide student progress as they implement their action plan.
- Use guiding questions to help facilitate this.

Students will:

- Develop an Action Plan.
- Build a Committee Structure.
- Implement the Action Plan.
- Refine/Reflect on the Action Plan.

You will know you have completed Step 5 when:

- Students have a detailed action plan for their project.
- Roles are assigned based on personal strengths and everyone has a chance to be part of the collective effort.
- The action plan includes measures to ensure project sustainability.
- Students implement their action plan.

Resources for Step 5:

Lesson plans, handouts, and activities:

- Writing an Action Plan Lesson
- Action Planning Sheet
- Committee Task Sheet
- Action Project Funding Request Budget Template

Guiding questions:

- What are the necessary tasks to complete our strategies and meet our goal?
- How long will each task take?
- Who will do what?
- What resources are needed for each task?
- Who will help us?
- What challenges or obstacles might occur along the way?
- What will we do to overcome those possible challenges?
- How will we know when our action project is completed?

TIPS Cards related to Step 5:

- TIPS Card 3 Staying Organized
- TIPS Card 5 Working Together & Hearing All Voices
- TIPS Card 10 Elements of An Action Plan
- TIPS Card 11 Committee Structures & Peer Accountability
- TIPS Card 24 Preparing for Meetings with Decision-Makers
- TIPS Card 25 General Process for Changing Local Legislation
- TIPS Card 26 Fundraising
- TIPS Card 27 Writing A Grant Proposal
- TIPS Card 28 Media Attention
- TIPS Card 29 Writing an Article

Writing An Action Plan

A Lesson



Learning Objectives: Work collaboratively with classmates to develop an action plan using a committee structure

Added Information: This is an optional lesson plan.

1] INTRODUCE STEP FIVE. This is the step in the Process when students develop and implement their project – it's what everything has been building up to! Students will be discussing what needs to happen in order for them to carry out their project, and will then work in committees to complete tasks. It's important for students to be thinking about measurability and sustainability. How will they know if their project is successful, and how are they ensuring it will be maintained in the coming years?

2] REVIEW THE KEY PIECES OF INFORMATION. Make sure they are stating the issue from Step 2, review the goal and the strategy selected in Step Four, and identify the stakeholders involved in this issue. This will help ensure the project involves appropriate stakeholders and involves all of the appropriate components. Use the [Action Planning Sheet](#) to facilitate this activity.

3] BRAINSTORM ACTIVITIES REQUIRED. Begin with the column labeled “Key Parts of the Strategy” on the [Action Planning Sheet](#). These will become different committees. Prompt students to brainstorm different tasks/activities for each of these committees. You could organize this by writing each committee on a piece of paper and post it around your room. Students could write activities on sticky notes and stick it around the room in appropriate places, or a simple group discussion works as well.

Note: Committees will vary greatly, but may include communications, fundraising, publicity, budgeting, managing, event coordinating, specific strategies, etc.

4] CREATE COMMITTEES. Decide how you will form committees. For example, you might assign your students to committees based on their interest or abilities that they communicate to you, or allow students to self-select their committees using sign-up sheets. Use whatever method you feel works best for your class.

5] COMMITTEES PLAN. Each committee should complete the [Committee Task Sheet](#) together, and then present their plans to the rest of the class. As a large group, students should discuss each committee's plan and give feedback to ensure success. Committees should complete a preliminary budget based on the resources they think their committee will need using the [Committee Budget Sheet](#) if needed.

Note: An important piece to be explicit about with all committees is a timeline. There is a box on the [Committee Task Sheet](#) to lay out timelines, be sure to dedicate discussion time to walk through expectations. Backwards planning can be an effective strategy here.

Look to [Fine Tuning An Action Plan: A Lesson](#) for further assistance on executing plans.

Action Planning Sheet



Learning Objectives: To connect the issue, policy/practice, and goal/strategy concepts together and move to concrete planning

Added Information: This sheet provides an example, the template to use with your class is provided on the next page.

Scaffolds: This document is embedded in the [Writing An Action Plan: A Lesson](#) lesson plan for added facilitation on Step 5 from start to finish.

EXAMPLE

<p style="text-align: center;">Environmental Issue</p> <p>Our school throws away recyclable materials.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Key Parts of the Strategy <i>List the Main Categories of Tasks</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1] Researching cost savings and amount of recyclable waste produced by the district.2] Securing a spot on an upcoming school board agenda.3] Creating the speech and presentation material.4] Spreading the word that we are speaking.5] Creating a petition of our peers and other school district community members.
<p style="text-align: center;">Policy or Practice to be Changed</p> <p>Our school district does not have a waste reduction and recycling policy in place (school policy).</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Project Goal (We want ___ to ___, which will result in ___)</p> <p>We want our school district to pass a recycling policy, which will result in our school no longer throwing away recyclable plastic.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Strategy (In order to achieve this, we will ___)</p> <p>In order to achieve this, we will present to the school board at a school board meeting and include how much money they will save.</p>	

Action Planning Sheet



Name:

Date:

Begin with the yellow boxes on the left-hand side and work your way down. These boxes should be familiar to you, they have been completed previously. Once you complete the green box labeled "Strategy", move to the green, right-hand side box. Connect your ideas from the "Strategy" box, and begin to dig deeper into what you think the main tasks are into successfully executing that strategy.

Environmental Issue	Key Parts of the Strategy <i>List the Main Categories of Tasks</i>
Policy or Practice to be Changed	
Project Goal (We want ___ to ___, which will result in ___)	
Strategy (In order to achieve this, we will ___)	

Committee Task Sheet



Learning Objectives: To help students self-steer their committees and build a peer accountability structure

Added Information: This sheet provides an example, the template to use with your class is provided on the next page. This example builds upon the same example used on the [Action Planning Sheet](#).

Scaffolds: This document is embedded in the [Writing An Action Plan: A Lesson lesson plan](#) for added facilitation on Step 5 from start to finish.

EXAMPLE

<p>Committee Name Recycling Researchers!</p>	<p>Committee Members John, Eve, Derek, Maria</p>	<p>Who we are working with? (community partners or other committees)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Johnson, Head of Facilities at our School • Katherine Peterson, works at Waste Management Plant in our community • Presentation/Speech Committee in our class 	
<p>Primary Goal To research cost savings and amount of recyclable waste produced by the district</p>			
<p>Resources Needed Do your resources require money? Use the Committee Budget Sheet to work out your costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class time to research (with laptops if possible) • Ability to email Mr. Johnson and Katherine Peterson • Excel or Google Sheets 	<p>Task List</p> <p>Create questions for Mr. Johnson</p> <p>Email/Interview Mr. Johnson</p> <p>Create questions for Katherine P</p>	<p>Deadline (check when task is completed)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> April 16</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> April 18</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> April 16</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> April 18</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> May 10</p>	<p>Who's responsible?</p> <p>John and Maria</p> <p>John and Maria</p> <p>Eve and Derek</p> <p>Eve and derek</p> <p>Break up workload- all 4 participate</p>
<p>Possible Obstacles Mr. Johnson and/or Katherine Peterson are not available or do not respond to us</p>	<p>Email/Interview Katherine P</p> <p>Research online any</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> May 12</p>	<p>Eve gather everyone's information and send to presentation team</p>
<p>How we will know if we have done well: Everyone completes their tasks on time. We get the information we need for our class presentation.</p>	<p>leftover or unanswered questions</p> <p>Get information to presentation team</p>		

Committee Task Sheet



Committee Name	Committee Members		
Primary Goal	Who are we working with? (community partners or other committees)		
Resources Needed Do your resources require money? Use the Committee Budget Sheet to work out your costs.	Task List	Deadline (check off when task is completed)	Who's responsible?
Possible Obstacles			
How we will know if we have done well:			

Step 6: Celebrate and Reflect



What is the purpose of Step 6:

To make sure students recognize their accomplishments they need to share their project with the public and reflect on their experience.

Reflection and celebration help students explore and understand what they learned, what worked, and how this experience changed them. It is especially important that students recognize their success and celebrate all the hard work and effort they put into this project process. This step brings closure to the entire process.

In summary:

- Students reflect on and celebrate their experience.
- Students document their journey by writing a project story.
- Students document their project story with a video.

Teacher(s) will:

- Use guiding questions to facilitate this step.
- Help students reflect on their experience.
- Have students create their project story and present it to others.
- Guide students to create a project story video that talks about their project and what they did step-by-step.
- Submit the project story video and all supporting documentation to The Everglades Foundation via their Final Reporting Form.

Students will:

- Use their portfolio/documentation to review everything they have done throughout the process.
- Reflect on their experience.
- Create a written project story and video.
- Share their story with others.

You will know you have completed Step 6 when:

- Students have reflected, and feel a sense of accomplishment.
- Students have shared their work publicly.
- Students have written an action project story and submitted their video to The Everglades Foundation via their Final Reporting Form.
- You feel great about your students' experience and accomplishments.

Resources for Step 6:

Lesson plans, handouts, and activities:

- Reflection Prompts and Methods
- Civic Reflection

Guiding questions:

- How well did the action plan work?
- How well did we work together?
- What did we learn that would make our next project more effective?
- What could be done next with our project or issue?
- How have I changed as a result of participating?

TIPS Cards related to Step 6:

- TIPS Card 1 Keeping A Portfolio
- TIPS Card 17 Outreach to Professionals: Formal Letters and Emails
- TIPS Card 18 Outreach to Professionals: Phone Etiquette
- TIPS Card 23 Public Speaking
- TIPS Card 28 Media Attention
- TIPS Card 29 Writing An Article
- TIPS Card 30 Telling Your Story
- TIPS Card 33 Reflect On Your Work



Learning Objectives: To have students reflect on their experience to solidify the stewardship behaviors they embodied during the project experience

Added Information: This activity is built to be very flexible. Students could choose which questions and methods they would like to answer, or you can assign questions and methods. It is completely up to you.

Earth Force recommends students answer at least one question that reflects upon their past experience, and one looking forward to the future. If you would like students to guide themselves in reflection, look to [TIPS Card 33 Reflect On Your Work](#).

Scaffolds: Choose one method and the set of questions ahead of time to be used for the entire class. This will help with time and classroom management. Alternatively, use the [Step 6 Assessment](#) activity which is a ready-to-go reflection writing prompt.

Questions

- What have been your successes?
- What have been your challenges and how did you overcome them?
- How sustainable do you think our project will be?
- What impact did we have on the community? On the environment?
- Did your action project benefit a particular community more than others?
- How did the decision-makers you spoke with treat you and your class?
- What is the single most important thing you've learned?
- How has this process influenced your attitude about your personal responsibility to help improve your community?
- Has this process changed your attitude about your ability to help improve your community? How?
- What does "environmental citizenship" mean to you now?
- How might the project be continued and/or improved? †
- How can the knowledge and skills you've gained through this experience be applied to other aspects of your lives? †
- In what ways can you be an environmental citizen in the years to come?
- How can you support the work of marginalized groups in your community?
- How did your project expose or address social inequities in your community?
- What did you learn about the lives of others in your community? Does everyone have a similar experience as you?



Methods

BUILD A QUESTION BALL. Have students write the questions on slips of paper. Roll up the slips of paper to form a ball. Arrange your students in a circle and pass the paper ball. As each person receives the ball they peel off one question, then read and answer the question and randomly pass it on to the next person. Ensure that all students answer at least one question.

PRESENT FINAL DOCUMENTATION. If students maintained a **portfolio** throughout the Earth Force process (e.g., journals, videos, saving activities, etc.), have them present in-class summaries of what they accumulated and how they feel moving forward.

DRAW A PICTURE OF THE COMMUNITY. Students can draw portrayals of the community now, either individually or in mural form. The drawing(s) can be either the culmination of a discussion or a stepping-off point for group discussion.

WRITE CREATIVELY. Students can write creatively like essays, poems, or raps about their experiences in Earth Force. Emphasis can be on what was learned, what was accomplished, and what might be changed in future work to make it better.

INTERVIEW EACH OTHER. Students can interview each other about what they learned and any difficulties they had in Earth Force. Interviewers can write up their interviews in a news report and submit a story to the school newspaper. This can also take the form of a Fishbowl Discussion.

DEVELOP AND PERFORM A SKIT. Students can think back on their Earth Force experience and develop a skit, acting out the whole process. Built into the skit can be what students learned, accomplished, and had problems with what they had along the way. The skit can be performed before parents, community members, or people from organizations that helped them.

Interactions with Decision-Makers: A Reflection on our Civic Processes



Learning Objectives: To have students reflect on their experience working in the public sphere, and how they can continue to contribute to their community in the future.

Instructions:

The educator and students engage in a group discussion about what they both learned through participating in a civic action process. They review their portfolios or other materials they've gathered along the way, then discuss what worked well and what didn't. Next, brainstorm ways that they can continue to be civic actors, either through continuing this project or working on new ones.

Example Questions to Prompt Discussion

- Did the change you asked for actually happen? What were the hurdles you faced, if not?
- What makes a civic project successful?
 - Help students realize that it is in the ask itself and the skills they built along the way
- What do you want to do moving forward to help continue to work on this issue?
- What was it like to ask for a change from decision-makers?
- If you could do this all over again, what would you do differently?
- How do you plan to make changes in the civic sphere moving forward?
- Do you feel that these decision-makers accurately reflect your community representation?
 - If not, how might that change?

Moving Forward

Use the below space to record what students would like to do moving forward. Is there a way you can support their work even after they leave your class? Can you provide resources or support in other ways?