

Environmental Decision-Making

GRADES 6–8

Guiding Question

How can we work together to make decisions that are beneficial to the environment

Connecting Concepts

- Science knowledge can describe consequences of actions but is not responsible for society's decisions.
- Compare deliberative processes used by a wide variety of groups in various settings.
- Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.
- People have differing perspectives about forest management, that can be affected by politics, science, economics, values, perception, culture, and experience.
- Ensuring that multiple perspectives are involved in decision-making can lead to more effective problem-solving, greater acceptance of solutions, and more sustainable outcomes for our forests.

Scope and Sequence

The collection and order of content below supports an intentional student learning progression.

Activity	Description
Decisions, Decisions	Students compare options for using a piece of land and explore the consequences of a land-use decision.
Exploration Energy!	Students learn about different sources of energy, conduct an audit of the electricity they use, and create an action plan to use energy wisely.
Life on the Edge	Students model the habitat components that organisms need; research a rare, threatened, or endangered species; and conduct a campaign on behalf of the species.
The Global Climate	Students explore the relationship among CO ₂ , the Earth's climate, and local ecosystems and suggest ways to reduce the effects of increased CO ₂ levels in the atmosphere.
Environmental Health for All	Students propose solutions to various case study scenarios and research potential environmental justice issues in their own state.
Improve Your Place	Students plan and carry out a service-learning project that makes positive environmental changes in their community.

See pltcanda.org/en/education for detailed standards correlations for each activity.

Storyline

Students explore how people can improve their relationship with the environment through their collective decisions, as well as through individual actions and behavior.

Storyline continued on next page.



Environmental Decision-Making (cont.)

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- Introduce the unit with the activity Decisions, Decisions, in which students compare two different community scenarios, an urban setting and a community forest. Whichever you choose, help students see that successful environmental decision-making considers different perspectives and competing interests.
- Next, conduct one or more of the next four suggested activities, depending on your group and their interests. In each of these activities, students examine an environmental issue and develop a plan for addressing that issue. The options include Exploration Energy!, Life on the Edge, The Global Climate, and Environmental Justice for All.
- Conclude the unit with the activity Improve Your Place, in which students design and carry out a service-learning project to make a positive environmental change. Help students decide on a suitable project—perhaps addressing one of the issues explored in the unit—and plan and execute the project.

