



Educational Curriculum

Mexico Lesson: Sea Turtles

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www.pbs.org/globaltribe

GlobalTribe is a PBS series that combines the spirit of travel with a meaningful exploration of the global issues that affect us all. On our journeys to remote corners of the world, we seek to understand in human terms the universal struggles of our planet: from healing racial wounds to saving the environment to improving the lives of the poorest among us. Our quest is also to find solutions and to meet the unsung heroes in every country who offer us hope and a path to a better tomorrow.

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Introduction / Pre-viewing

1. Make a list of what students know about Mexico (this might be based on first hand experience, family member's stories, or information from books and other media). Then make a list of what they want to know about Mexico. Look at the list and discuss whether they think it should be different, given that Mexico is one of our two bordering neighbors.
2. Share some basic statistics about Mexico City with the students: 1,000 babies are born a day; approximately 1/6th of the population live in extreme poverty, going without basic necessities such as indoor plumbing; city services, including garbage pick up, are sporadic. Given these facts, ask the students what they think it would be like to be a teenager growing up in Mexico City? What problems might they face? Especially consider problems caused by overpopulation, poverty, and environmental degradation.
3. Ask the students what they know about deforestation. If they're unfamiliar with the term, you might briefly tell them that it is when many trees are removed from a large area. What are some of the reasons for deforestation (e.g., trees are needed to make paper)?
4. Tell the students that one part of the program they'll be watching deals with an endangered animal that is being killed because many people enjoy eating it. Is there anything they eat that other people might find wrong or bad? Have they ever considered not eating a certain food because of environmental or ethical reasons? Who should make the decision about what people can and cannot eat?

Sea Turtles: Attracting Tourists

Objective: Students will understand ecotourism, an environmentally and culturally sensitive approach to tourism, through creating their own ecotourism destinations.

Time: Lesson can be adapted to between 3 and 8 in-class hours.

Grade Level: 9-12

1. In GlobalTribe, Amy asks Roberto how he would convince a fisherman who accidentally caught a sea turtle to release it back into the ocean. One of the reasons he gives is that it will help attract ecotourists. What is ecotourism? Ask students to brainstorm definitions.

After you've written some characteristics of ecotourism on the board, provide this definition from the World Conservation Union:

"[Ecotourism]...is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations."

Discuss why Roberto and others who wish to protect Baja's sea turtles would want to attract ecotourists.

2. Have small student groups design ecotourist destinations, such as an Alaskan lodge or a safari camp in Kenya. You might assign several groups to design Mexican sites and several to the U.S., perhaps specifically in your state or region. Or, let them choose any places which appeals to them. Students should create a report for potential financial backers that includes visual elements, such as maps and sketches, as well as the following information:
 - Site selection: Where will their lodge/camp/retreat will be located? Why this place?
 - Low impact: How will their lodge/camp/retreat make as limited an impact as possible on the site?
 - Energy and conservation: How will energy be provided for the site? What are some conservation measures your site will use?
 - Cultural impact: How will the local community benefit from the lodge/camp/retreat?
 - Visitor activities: What are some of the activities your visitors can partake in and how do these relate to your eco-mission?

Direct students to some of the award-winning ecotourism sites below, and encourage them to find others for inspiration. They can create a brochure, web site, or Power Point presentation to share their final designs with the class.

Assessment

1. Using The National Audubon Society Travel Ethic for Environmentally Responsible Travel as a guideline (<http://www.ecotourism.org/audubonfr.html>), review the designs as a class and vote on the best overall design and the best by category. Have students discuss why they voted for particular projects.
2. Afterward, have students write about a vacation they've taken in the past. Compare and contrast their experiences to what they imagine an ecotourist trip to be like via their research. Their responses should reflect an understand of multiple aspects of ecotourism.

Extending

1. Have a class debate regarding the pros and cons of ecotourism. Read Timothy Egan's article as a starting place (see below).
2. Perform research about sea turtles, including their habitat, physical characteristics, and causes of death, as well as efforts to protect these reptiles. Have students write opinion papers on whether methods such as ecotourism and community based conversation (see "It Takes a Village") are sufficient measures to help sea turtle recovery. What else is and/or should be done?
3. Brainstorm ways that ecotourism could work in your area. Adopt a nearby public area, such as a beach, wetland, or prairie to help support and promote. Talk to rangers and other caretakers of such environments to find ways to be involved in this space.

Resources

Sea Turtles

"Of Turtles and Things"

<http://www.planeta.com/planeta/96/0896mexturtles.html>

Sea Turtle Information (including "causes of death" and "conservation")

<http://www.seaworld.org/infobooks/SeaTurtle/home.html>

"It Takes a Village"

<http://www.greendzn.com/village.htm>

Sea Turtle Conservation Network of the Californias

<http://baja.seaturtle.org/>

Wildcoast

<http://www.wildcoast-usa.com/index2.asp>

Examples of award-winning ecotourism

The MAQUIPUCUNA FOUNDATION

<http://www.arches.uga.edu/~maqui/maquifnd.htm>

Tropic Ecological Adventures

<http://www.tropiceco.com/html/ethics.html>

Lapa Rios

<http://www.laparios.com/lapgoal.htm>

Maho Bay

<http://www.maho.org/environment.html>

Naturegate's Methodology (a company that helps design ecotourist sites)

<http://www.naturegate.com/methodology.html>

“Rural Mexican Learning to Make Ecotourism Work”

http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/09/0905_mexicoecotourism.html

Ecotourism Information

Investigate Your Alternatives

<http://www.ecotourism.org/travelchoice/investigate.html>

UNEP's About Ecotourism

<http://www.unep.org/pc/tourism/ecotourism/home.htm>

Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?, Martha Honey, Island Press (1999)

“Uneasy Being Green: Tourism Runs Wild.” *The New York Times*, May 20, 2001. Timothy Egan.

Standards

Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=8&StandardID=2>)

Understands the physical and human characteristics of place
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=8&StandardID=4>)

Understands that culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=8&StandardID=6>)

Understands how human actions modify the physical environment
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=8&StandardID=14>)

Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=13&StandardID=1>)

Uses various information sources, including those of a technical nature, to accomplish specific tasks
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=24&StandardID=2>)

Contributes to the overall effort of a group
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=22&StandardID=1>)

Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=21&StandardID=3>)
