



**The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory:**

**A Humane Environmental, Cooperative Learning, Art, and Language Arts Lesson**

**6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grades**

**National Museum of Animals & Society**

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## Introduction

The following lesson plans are designed for 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students as supplemental classroom resources for educators to share with their students upon viewing the National Museum of Animals & Society exhibit *Elephant: Forget Me Not*. The curriculum explores the causes of how elephants have become an endangered species, elephant behavior, how elephants contribute to healthy ecosystems, the challenges involved in conserving elephant populations, and solutions to assist elephant and other endangered species populations. It is the museum's hope that this exhibit inspires the viewer to consider the elephant conservation issue through an empathetic and solution-based lens.

The subject matter of this exhibit lends itself to 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students since they may comprehend the endangered species issue and may be familiar with the BBC *Elephant Diaries* series. Students within this age range may be familiar with the term “endangered species” while not understanding some of the contributing causes to this complex issue. This curriculum integrates the following disciplines: reading, writing, language arts, history / social studies, science and visual arts while encouraging active citizenship, critical thinking, cooperative learning, empathy and team building skills. Additionally, this curriculum is aligned to California Public Schools Common Core and Visual Arts State Standards, Grades 6-8.

## Learner Outcomes Guidelines

Upon viewing the BBC *Elephant Diaries* series, NMAS *Elephant: Forget Me Not* exhibit, *The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory* PowerPoint presentation and completion of a team poster presentation and individual student worksheet students will be able to:

### **1. Identify the causes and challenges of endangered species.**

#### Reading Standards for Informational Text 6-8

Key Ideas and Details:

1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

#### Writing Standards 6-8

Text Types and Purposes:

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

#### Language Arts 6-8

Conventions of Standards English:

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:

6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

#### Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects 6-8

Key Ideas and Details:

2. Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

#### Writing Standards for Literacy in History / Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6-8

Text Types and Purposes:

1. Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

## **2. Explain how people and policies may aid in protecting wildlife populations.**

### Reading Standards for Informational Text 6-8

#### Key Ideas and Details:

2. Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

### Writing Standards 6-8

#### Text Types and Purposes:

1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

### Language Arts 6-8

#### Conventions of Standards English:

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

#### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:

6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

### Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects 6-8

#### Key Ideas and Details:

2. Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

### Reading Standards for Literacy in History / Social Studies 6-8

#### Key Ideas and Details:

3. Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

## **3. Work in teams to create a persuasive poster to represent a stakeholder position.**

### Reading Standards for Informational Text 6-8

#### Key Ideas and Details:

2. Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

## Speaking and Listening Standards 6-8

### Comprehension and Collaboration:

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
2. Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

4. Present claims and findings (e.g., argument, narrative, informative, response to literature presentations), sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details and nonverbal elements to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
5. Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.

## Language Standards 6-8

### Knowledge of Language:

3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

## Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects 6-8

### Key Ideas and Details:

2. Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

## Visual and Performing Arts Grades 6-8

### Visual Arts: 1.0 Artistic Perception

Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to the Visual Arts. Students perceive and respond to works of art, objects in nature, events, and the environment. They also use the vocabulary of the visual arts to express their observations.

### Visual Arts: 2.0 Creative Expression

Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Visual Arts. Students apply artistic processes and skills, using a variety of media to communicate meaning and intent in original works of art.

### Visual Arts: 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts  
Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists.

Visual Arts: 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts  
Students analyze, assess, and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, the principles of design, and aesthetic qualities.

**4. Demonstrate understanding of the need to maintain healthy animal populations in maintaining balanced ecosystems.**

Reading Standards for Informational Text 6-8

Key Ideas and Details:

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Writing Standards 6-8

Text Types and Purposes

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Language Arts 6-8

Conventions of Standards English:

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Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects 6-8

Key Ideas and Details:

2. Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What causes elephants and other animals to become endangered?
- How does the Endangered Species Act and public policy aid in protecting endangered species?
- How do various stakeholders affect endangered species populations?
- What are the benefits to the environment and local ecosystems in assisting elephant populations?
- What challenges do elephant populations face?
- What can people do to assist elephant populations and other endangered species?

## Lesson One

### How Stakeholders Impact Elephant Conservation

#### Objectives:

- Using the information students have learned about the ivory trade and the need for elephant conservation by viewing the BBC *Elephant Diaries* documentary series, the National Museum of Animals & Society exhibit *Elephant: Forget Me Not*, and *The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory* PowerPoint presentation, students will draw an advocacy poster representing their special interest group.
- Students will list their rationale explaining their groups' position on the issue of elephant poaching demonstrating their understanding of the stakeholders involved in a controversial issue.

#### Pre-requisite Skills:

Students will have been introduced to the issues surrounding elephant conservation including the ivory trade industry, ivory trade policies, the practice of elephant poaching, and the impacts on elephant populations, humans, and ecosystems as a result of human consumerism. The BBC *Elephant Diaries* documentary series, National Museum of Animals & Society exhibit *Elephant: Forget Me Not*, and *The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory* PowerPoint presentation are recommended viewing in preparation for this lesson.

#### Preparation and Materials:



- BBC *Elephant Diaries*, 2008 documentary film series (available via [http://www.elephantdiaries.org/the\\_series.html](http://www.elephantdiaries.org/the_series.html)).
- National Museum of Animals & Society exhibit *Elephant: Forget Me Not* ([www.museumofanimals.org](http://www.museumofanimals.org)).
- *The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory* Research: *The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory* (document available via <http://www.museumofanimals.org> Education / Curriculum page).
- *The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory* PowerPoint Presentation (presentation available via [www.museumofanimals.org](http://www.museumofanimals.org) Education Curriculum page).
- Poster board
- Markers, paint, or colored pencils
- Pencils
- Index cards (with written group name: *Ivory Trade Industry, Ivory Trade Distributors, Ivory Trade Merchants, Poachers, Ivory Consumers, Villagers, Environmental Conservation Organizations, Elephant Conservation Organizations, Elephants, and Planet Earth*).

Anticipatory Set:

Have the students turn their desks around to form collaborative teams (2-4 students per team). Place art supplies on student desks. Announce, “Today, we are going to design an advocacy poster representing your groups’ position on elephant ivory trade!” Place

folded index cards with group name in a hat, and have students choose a group from hat.  
Have students choose a partner or team to work with.

Teaching:

Input:

Begin by reviewing what students have already learned about elephants from previous class lectures, discussion, the documentary film, *Elephant Diaries*, the National Museum of Animals & Society exhibit *Elephant: Forget Me Not*, and PowerPoint presentation *The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory*. Explain that they will be designing an advocacy poster with their team member(s) that will reflect their assigned groups interest in regards to elephant conservation issues (ivory trade industry, ivory trade distributors, ivory trade merchants, poachers, ivory consumers, villagers, environmental conservation organizations, elephant conservation organizations, elephants, and planet Earth). Describe how one side of the poster should include their written rationale stating their groups' position on the elephant conservation issue. The reverse side of the poster should include a creative promotional advertisement that illustrates their groups' position to promote their groups' interests and advocate for their cause. Explain that their poster should be unique and persuasive in its appearance, so be creative!

Modeling:

Demonstrate the project as follows. Draw an advocacy poster on a poster board and show it to the class (or have a sample poster prepared and ready to present). This poster may be related to a similar environmental cause (anti-fracking, climate change, toxic

waste, oil spills, etc.). Explain what makes an advocacy poster an effective means of communicating a message (emotionally persuasive, catch phrases and slogans, educational, effective use of visual symbolism, attention getting, etc.). Explain what attributes their groups they may want to focus on. Explain how to list their groups written position on the issue on one side of the poster, and to draw their advocacy message and visual images on the reverse side.

Check for Understanding:

Ask if anyone has any questions. Make sure that the groups the students formed themselves into are not too segregated by learning types, such as all the visual learners in one group with no visual learners in another.

Guided Practice:

Have students work in small groups to brainstorm what their group's stance on the issue is and what their group's advocacy poster should include. Have the students determine within their own groups, strategies for which team members will draw and which will write out the written rationale on their groups' position on the issue. Once they have decided on their groups plan, they may begin working on their drawing and written rationale. Since the groups are asked to establish their own specializations of labor, assist the groups with the collaboration if needed. Walk around and be available to answer any questions and assist artistically.

Closure:

Have students share their completed posters with the class, explaining why their groups' position and advocacy poster is relevant to the elephant conservation issue. Encourage

comments from the rest of the class on each poster. Have the students vote on which poster they feel was the most effective in promoting their message and why. Discuss some common themes and visual images between the posters and the groups' interests. Also explain how various stakeholders affect the outcome of conservation issues including social movements, public policy, financial contributions, stakeholder partnerships, social media, public education and consumer practices.

Independent Practice:

Ask the students to discuss what they learned with their families.

Adaptations for students with learning disabilities:

Students with learning disabilities will be teamed up with gifted students, and ESL students will be teamed up with bilingual students to assist them with any questions they may have in completing the assignment. Accommodations may be made and additional time may be spent working with those students to assist them in completing their posters as needed.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on whether or not their written rational, team presentation, and advocacy poster demonstrated a clear understanding of the elephant conservation issue.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Lesson Two**

### **The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory Student Worksheet**

- 1. What is ivory?**
- 2. What is ivory used for?**
- 3. What is poaching and who benefits from this practice?**
- 3. List three animals that are poached for ivory.**
- 4. How does elephant poaching impact elephant populations?**



## Lesson Two

### The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory Worksheet Answer Key

#### 1. What is ivory?

*Ivory is an organic gemstone and is derived from the teeth or tusks of animals.*

#### 2. What is ivory used for?

*Various objects including carved statues, jewelry, billiard balls, and piano keys.*

#### 3. What is poaching and who benefits from this practice?

*Poaching is the illegal hunting, killing or capturing of animals.*

*Poachers, ivory sales and distributors, consumer establishments.*

#### 3. List three animals that are poached for ivory?

*Hippopotamuses, walruses, warthogs, sperm whales, hornbills, and elephants.*

#### 4. How does elephant poaching impact elephant populations?

*Mature elephants are killed, young elephants are orphaned or die, imbalance of male and female populations, no longer able to use tusks for survival and tasks, males are losing their “big tusk” gene, decline in elephant populations, elephants are traumatized, young elephants are not properly trained and not prepared for leadership roles within their herd.*

**5. How does elephant poaching impact local ecosystems?**

*Plant life is threatened due to loss of forest canopy and tree regeneration, lack of elephant dung used to nourish soil and aid in seed germination, other animals and insects rely on elephant dung for food and reproduction, spreads disease to other animals from trap wounds, puts other animals at risk of extinction.*

**6. How does human overpopulation impact elephant populations?**

*Loss of habitat, human elephant conflict (HEC)*

**7. What policies help to protect elephants?**

*Endangered Species Act, African Elephant Conservation Act*

**8. If poaching elephants is illegal, why does it continue to occur?**

*Consumers continue to purchase items made of ivory.*

**9. List the stakeholders involved in the elephant conservation issue.**

*The ivory trade industry, ivory trade organizations, poachers, ivory consumers, villagers, environmental conservation organizations, elephant conservation organizations, elephants, and planet Earth*



## **10. What can you do to help elephant populations?**

*Support elephant conservation organizations, do not purchase items made from ivory, purchase items made from ivory alternatives, educate and advocate for elephants and other endangered species.*

### Assessment:

Students will be assessed on completion of the *The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory* Lesson Two Worksheet.

Criteria: 80% mastery

The handouts will be graded but may be weighted by participation in class discussions and teamwork contributions.

Elephant: Forget Me Not: Exhibit Assessment

Student Handouts and Assignments:

Lesson One - How Stakeholders Impact Elephant Conservation: 50%

Lesson Two - The Environmental Impacts of Elephant Poaching for Ivory Worksheet:

25%

Other:

Class Participation: 5%

Listening Skills: 5%

Poster Presentation: 5%

Team Participation: 5%

Student Behavior (remained on task, respectful of others, and cooperative): 5%

## Related Issues For Further Study

- Wildlife Conservation and Preservation
- Wildlife Protection
- Invasive, Threatened, Endangered, and Extinct Species
- Habitat Loss
- Climate Change
- Biodiversity
- Local & Global Ecosystems
- Deforestation
- Urban and Suburban Sprawl
- Wildlife Habitat Gardening
- Animal Sanctuaries
- Wildlife Policy
- Cohabitating with Wildlife
- Endangered Species Act
- Responsible Consumerism