

**Lesson Plan: What On Earth Is Going On?**  
**Suggested Grades: 3-6**  
**Heather Lynn Shanks**

**Discipline; NYS Learning Standards**

**English Language Arts (ELA)**

*Standard 1:* Language for Information and Understanding

*Standard 3:* Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

*Standard 4:* Language for Social Interaction

**The Arts – Visual**

*Standard 1:* Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

*Standard 2:* Knowing and Using Art Materials and Resources

*Standard 3:* Responding To and Analyzing Works of Art

**Mathematics, Science and Technology**

*Standard 3:* Understand, Communicate and Reason Mathematically in Real-World Settings through Number Systems, Geometry, Algebra, Data Analysis, Probability and Trigonometry

*Standard 7:* Apply the Knowledge and Thinking Skills of Mathematics, Science and Technology to Address Real-Life Problems and Make Informed Decisions

**COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS FOR 3-6**

***Reading: Literature***

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

7. Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, and poem).

**Corresponding College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standard**

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

***Reading: Literature***

**Craft and Structure**

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

**Corresponding College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standard**

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

***Speaking & Listening***

**Comprehension and Collaboration**

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.

**Corresponding College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standard**

2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### **Writing**

#### **Production and Distribution of Writing**

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3)

#### **Corresponding College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standard**

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Student will describe the relationship between key events of the overall story and scenes illustrated in *Common Ground: The Water, Earth, and Air We Share* By Molly Bang [5.RL.7]
- Student will state and explain one analogy and how it relates to awareness about the earth and its problems from the story *Common Ground: The Water, Earth and Air We Share* by Molly Bang [5.RL.4]
- Student will state at least 2 connections between *Common Ground: The Water, Earth and Air We Share* by Molly Bang and the *Betsy Potter: Breaking Nature* exhibit [6.SL.2]
- Student will create a collage including the use of manmade vs. natural objects and concepts from magazines such as *National Geographic* and current mainstream media depicting the consequences and ongoing battle between man and nature.
- Students will write one paragraph describing the problem(s) or concern(s) addressed in their collage with 4 or less grammar, spelling and punctuation errors. [6.W.4]

### **PREPARATION**

#### **1. Resources**

- a. Access to the art exhibition, *Betsy Potter: Breaking Nature*, at the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University
- b. *Betsy Potter: Breaking Nature* Catalogue
- c. Story Book, *Common Ground: The Water, Earth and Air We Share* By Molly Bang

#### **2. Teacher Materials**

- a. Visual Thinking Strategies (handout)
- b. List of relationships between story and illustrations in the story
- c. List of key ideas from the story
- d. List of various connections between story and art exhibit
- e. Whiteboard, chalkboard, smart board or paper to write down environmental ideas
- f. Grammar, spelling and punctuation guidelines

#### **3. Art Materials**

- a. Paper (both blank for collage and lined for paragraph)
- b. Pencils

- c. Scissors
- d. Glue
- e. National Geographic Magazines
- f. Other popular culture multimedia magazines

## **BODY OF LESSON**

### **1. Anticipatory Set**

- a. Teachers should discuss the concept of Earth Day and our environment. Ask students what types of problems they believe to be of concern in our environmental world today. List their answers.
- b. Teachers should discuss *Betsy Potter: Breaking Nature* Catalogue, explaining the ideas and background of the artist.
- c. Students will be read the story, *Common Ground: The Water, Earth and Air We Share* By Molly Bang upon arrival to the museum, or in the classroom ahead of time depending on time constraints.
- d. Students will tour the art exhibition, *Betsy Potter: Breaking Nature* at the Catellani Art Museum and participate in Visual Thinking Strategies.

### **2. Procedure**

- a. Teacher will read the book to the students.
- b. Teacher will discuss the main concepts/key ideas of the story and how they relate to the environment and nature versus mankind.
- c. Teacher will take the students through the exhibition and apply Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS).
- d. Teacher will discuss with the students the concept of mankind versus nature using the artworks in the exhibition as samples.
- e. Teacher will ask students to identify any connections between the artworks and the story *Common Ground: The Water, Earth and Air We Share*.
- f. Teacher will introduce art activity and disseminate materials.
- g. Students will make their own collage using old magazines depicting mankind and human nature characteristics.
- h. Students will write one paragraph describing the issues/concerns in their collage.

### **3. Accommodations**

- a. Teacher will provide a simple word list to the student depicting words associated with the art exhibition *Betsy Potter: Breaking Nature*
- b. Teacher will provide visual list and pictures (if necessary) of current environmental concerns and issues for students to think about and create their collages.
- c. Teacher will provide sentence starters or skeleton sentences for students who need extra assistance in writing sentences.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **1. Informally**

- a. At the end of the session the teacher will ask students to share collages with the rest of the class. Students will be asked to comment on each other's work.

2. Formally
  - a. Teacher will assess the collage and paragraph with the use of the following requirements:
    - i. Both mainstream (mankind) and *National Geographic* (human nature) pictures were used.
    - ii. An environmental issue or concern is present in the collage through the struggle of mankind vs. nature.
    - iii. Paragraph is written with 4 or less grammar, spelling and punctuation errors.

## **EXTRA RESOURCES**

*The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss is another great book that can be utilized as resource for this lesson. Briefly, *The Lorax* is a story about a boy (representing the reader) who comes to a desolate corner of town to visit a being called the Once-ler (who is never shown throughout the book except for his green arms and green hands) and learns about the Lorax. After the Once-ler receives payment from the boy (consisting of 15 cents, a nail and the shell of a great, great, great grandfather snail) he recounts on how he first arrived where they now stand, back then a beautiful forest of Truffula Trees, colorful woolly trees that were spread throughout the area and supported an ecosystem of fantastical creatures.

1. Official Trailer for the movie *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, set to release in March 2012  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74ivsMtTSXY>
2. Audio and Visual Presentation of *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss  
Part 1 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5jnJdnQPr8>  
Part 2 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzYRkGIQpOs&feature=related>