



Lesson Plan

EARTHECHO
EXPEDITIONS

Power of Pictures

Teacher Background

Photographs are a powerful story telling medium and a wonderful tool for reflection. Similar to writing essays or stories, we can also develop a series of photographs to tell a story or convey a message. As part of our journey with *EarthEcho Expedition: Into the Dead Zone*, we captured as much of our experience as possible through photographs. In this activity, students will use photographs from EarthEcho International's Flickr albums to compile their own photo essay.

After viewing the content video from any *EarthEcho Expedition: Into the Dead Zone* module, students can expand upon this content using photos found in the corresponding Flickr album (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/earthecho/sets>). This type of reflection supplements linguistic expression by adding a visual lens. Through a photo essay, student can individually or in small groups exchange ideas and thoughts about *EarthEcho Expedition: Into the Dead Zone*. Adding written text that supports the images, or even a musical accompaniment can further augment this reflection. This variety in reflection styles supports the idea of reflection in their upcoming service learning experience. This also allows students to integrate their skills and talents during reflection.

Engage

Guide students through a series of questions to include:

- What parts of the *EarthEcho Expedition: Into the Dead Zone* video stood out to you?
- Do you learn more from watching the videos or would the information be just as powerful conveyed through text?
- Do you remember any particularly powerful images from the video? Did any of the concepts strike an emotional chord?
- In what ways can images add to the telling of a story?

Choose 1-2 photos from the appropriate Flickr album and ask students to caption the photos as a class. Captions may be funny, informative, or even quotes; however, the key intention is to express an idea succinctly. Many students are skilled at concise communication through their use of social media and texting so encourage the application of those skills!

Introduce students to photojournalism or photo essays through the resource links within this lesson plan. Just like traditional video, film, and text journalism and essays, photo essays are meant to convey a story concept. Photo essays can express action, relay a concept, show emotion, or demonstrate the steps in a process.



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Explore

Use the components of a regular essay to think about what a photo essay should contain. Have students brainstorm what elements should and should not be included in a photo essay and post those elements in the classroom.

Have students explore the photos from the appropriate *EarthEcho Expedition: Into the Dead Zone* module and generate ideas about the concepts they would like to explore using the available images.

Using online tools have students develop their photo essays individually or in pairs. Students decide on a topic or thesis for the central theme of their photo essay. After writing a concise, one sentence thesis, students then choose a photograph that represents this thesis.

Based on this thesis, students consider what supporting details they need within their photo essays. Afterward, they browse the photo gallery, choosing photographs that convey their story and produce the desired emotion about the subject matter. As they develop a cohesive photo essay, remind students to considering the elements they brainstormed at the beginning of the activity.

After developing the photo essay, students write a short accompanying statement. The statement can be in the form of short, succinct captions, more descriptive sentences for each photo, or a short paragraph describing the photo essay as a whole. Finally utilize an online platform to compile the photographs. While students may be familiar with PowerPoint as a presentation tool, online platforms like Prezi and Animoto are free for educators and provide some additional tools for creativity in the photo essay.

Explain

Have students share their photo essays with their peers either via a classroom gallery, presentation, or online forum.

Discuss any new issues brought up through students' essays.

Is there a tone or emotional attachment to any of the images? How did students' utilize this emotion?

Extend

Have students lead an open discussion about additional ideas for photos that they would have liked to capture to include in their photo essay. What did they think they were missing?

Have students take photos in their own community that would add to the photo essay and bring the content to their backyard. If desired, this step could be added earlier as they create the series.



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Service Learning

Content video and photographs from *EarthEcho Expedition: Into the Dead Zone* are the first steps to engaging students in a service learning experience to address the environmental issues explored in the videos. These materials will launch students into a dynamic process of investigation, preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration of learning through applied action. After watching the video about aquatic dead zones and human impacts on our environment, students are primed to learn more.

Each content video has an accompanying story of young people applying their knowledge and skills to benefit their community as part of their service learning experience. Introduce the opportunity for students to take similar action through these service learning video stories. Ask students how these photo essays could be useful as they move from the early stages of investigation to taking action through the service learning process.

Additional Resources

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/05/china/yellow-river/girard-photography>

<http://www.robinwyatt.org/photography/photo-essays/environment/kenya/>

http://www.patagonjournal.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2766%3Aphot



Expedition: The Power of Pictures

Create a photo essay around the story of *EarthEcho Expedition: Into the Dead Zone* or a topic from the video.

All *EarthEcho Expedition: Into the Dead Zone* images can be accessed via Flickr at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/earthecho/sets>

Ideally a good photo essay should include a variety of photographs that help to demonstrate one main point: your thesis. Photo essays should have enough photographs to convey a point, though not so many as to confuse, distract, or bore the viewer.

Below you will find a list of different types of photos that can be found in photo essays:

- Thesis or signature photo: One strong photograph that demonstrates your thesis or the concept you are conveying within your photo essay.
- Establishing Photo: A photograph that gives your viewer a sense of place or context.
- Supporting Photographs: Each photograph in your series should convey one distinct point, like a sentence in an essay. Just like you wouldn't repeat many similar sentences, avoid many similar photographs within your photo essay.
- Closing Photo: Similar to finishing an essay with a good closing sentence, your closing photograph should leave the viewer with a sense of completion, or curiosity to want to know more. Ending with a photo mid-action, may leave the viewer feeling like your photo essay is incomplete.
- Action Photos: Any type of interactions or action appropriate to your theme should be conveyed.
- People or Portraits: Photographs with people add a human element to your story.
- Emotion: Look to include one or more photos that evoke the emotion or emotions you are trying to convey.
- Close-up: A close up of an element in your story adds an interesting feature to your essay.