



WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

Pros and cons of saving the world's endangered rain forests



GRADES 6-8

STANDARD

- SS.6.3.13

OBJECTIVE

- Students will support an argument about conserving the world's rain forests or maintaining the status quo.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Everyone knows that the rain forests are being cut down in countries all over the world. Growing populations are putting tremendous pressure on these great resources. Rain forests are often seen by the governments of these countries as solutions to their problems of overcrowding, poor economic growth and food for the hungry. Slash-and-burn agriculture is sometimes the only alternative for a poor family. Until other methods of farming are found and put into practice, deforestation of the tropics is likely to continue.
- What are the problems? Some problems are slash-and-burn agriculture, logging, cattle ranching, illegal wildlife trade, and hydroelectric projects.
- What are the solutions? Some solutions may be protecting habitats, restoring endangered species to the wild, stopping illegal trade, education, training, and research.

PROCEDURE

- Divide your students into six teams. Assign each team one of the opinions stated below. Each team must come up with arguments to support the opinion that has been assigned to them. The students could then debate the issues they have researched. Team A1 and A2 should debate each other, Team B1 and B2 debate each other, and so on.
- Alternately, assign one of the opinions to each student and have them write an essay supporting that opinion.

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT

- Assess students based on the quality of their arguments and their ability to engage with the other side of the issue.





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Name _____

A1: SCIENTIST

- “So many small farmers cut down trees that the rain forest has no chance to grow back.”

A2: FARMER IN DEVELOPING NATION

- “To feed my family, I must cut down the rain forest to grow rice and other crops.”

B1: AMERICAN

- “Rain forests are so far away. I don't need to care about them.”

B2: DOCTOR

- “Rain forests plants may hold a cure for cancer or AIDS. The forest must be saved so we can learn its secrets.”

C1: ECOLOGIST

- “Rain forests should be preserved for future generations. Man has no right to destroy them completely.”

C2: GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OF DEVELOPING COUNTRY

- “Laws protecting the rain forest are expensive to enforce. Our people need food, not trees.”

