

# Instructional Lesson Plan #3 – Wangari Maathai EXCERPT

## Reading Language Arts

Grade: 05

Unit Title: Earth – A Fine Balance

Length: 5 days

### Lesson Overview

Through this instructional sequence, students will deepen their understanding of how humans can have positive and negative impact on the environment. Students will investigate how the influence of one can affect many.

This lesson will span multiple days as students gather and analyze information from several sources including literary and informational texts as well as digital media. Students will integrate and synthesize the information learned to craft an explanatory essay explaining the contributions Wangari Maathai\* made in restoring a balance among nature. To assist in the writing of their own essays, students will closely examine the author's craft and analyze the use of similes, symbolism, and figurative language to create powerful, meaningful, and engaging writing.

*\*Maathai was born in Kenya, Africa where she introduced the idea of community-based tree planting. She continued to develop this idea into a broad-based grassroots organization, the Green Belt Movement (GBM), whose main focus is poverty reduction and environmental conservation through tree planting.*

### Essential Question

When nature interacts, what happens to the harmony, or balance, among the species?

### Lesson Procedure

#### Day 5

#### Writing

- Visually display the prompt and ask students to read it. Answer questions they may have.
- Allow approximately 20 minutes for students to draft. Provide individual or small group support as necessary. If computers are available, encourage students to use technology to draft.

Scientists and researchers gather information from multiple sources to learn about a topic, solve a problem, or compare information. During this unit of study you have used a variety of resources to deepen your understanding about Wangari Maathai.

Using information you have read, viewed, and recorded in your *Field Journals*, write an essay explaining how Wangari was a powerful influence in helping to restore a balance between nature and humans. Be sure to use information from all three sources.

In your essay, be sure to include:

- Background, or general, information about Wangari
- What caused her to take action
- How she helped restore a balance
- Effects or contributions of her actions

#### Revision

- Display the following to guide the peer revision process. Provide 6-8 minutes for students to peer revise.
- Provide an additional 5 minutes to edit and make necessary revisions.
- Allow approximately 20 minutes for students to write the final draft.

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Use the checklist below to help guide you.

- Did I introduce my topic clearly?
- Did I organize my ideas clearly and logically?
- Did I include facts, concrete details, and at least 2 quotations to help explain Wangari's importance to our unit theme?
- Did I link ideas within and across my paragraphs using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *in contrast*, *especially*)?
- Did I use precise language and appropriate vocabulary to explain Wangari's powerful influence?
- Did I end my essay with a strong concluding sentence?
- Did I follow all expected language and grammar conventions?

- Provide time to share their essays. Students may even visit another grade to report their new knowledge of Wangari Maathai.
- Use a rubric such as [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson261/sample.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson261/sample.pdf) or [http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm\\_send/140](http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/140).

### Extension and Enrichment Ideas:

- Hummingbirds are frequent characters in Native American stories. Have students research and report about one of the stories and its origin. Students should compare and contrast their story to *The Flight of the Hummingbird*.
- Write a poem or story using **Mama Miti** as the mentor text where students include a repetitive line throughout. Donna Jo Napoli repeated "*Thaya nyumba – Peace my people.*" Write about an environmental issue or about the efforts of a conservation group/individual.
- Write a review of each source used in this unit.
- Conduct a deeper investigation of Kenya, the people, and the culture. An excellent source is <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/>.
- Conduct research on local trees and their importance in the environment.