

Watershed Experience Lesson 9:

Environmental Action Project

ACTIVITY TYPE: *Classroom activity*

AUDIENCE: *High School*

TIME FRAME: *1.5 hours to start*

SUMMARY:

Following their data assessment, students will decide which issue is of most concern. Then they will use what they've learned to take action on improving water quality. Using the MWEE Guide, teachers will help students focus their ideas and develop a project.

MATERIALS:

*MWEE Guide Appendix Pages 61 -69 (Make copies of the worksheets)
Computer with internet connection*

PREPARE AHEAD:

Look at some action projects here: <https://www.baybackpack.com/action-projects> to get ideas for what others have done. Of course, the project idea must come from the students under your guidance.

ENGAGE:

*Ask students: After all the research you've done, what issue concerns you the most?
Lead a discussion of the issues and make a list on the board*

PROCEDURE:

If there is more than one issue of concern. Allow the students to vote on the most pertinent. Allow them to speak about why their issue is most important. Ask them to think about:

- *Is the issue of concern to many people?*
- *Is it something that you can reasonably do something about?*

Once they have made their cases, conduct a vote to choose the issue to focus on. Once they have chosen an issue, use the MWEE guide to develop an action project.

If they have trouble coming up with ideas, show them the projects here:

<https://www.baybackpack.com/action-projects>

Steps required to make an action project successful will differ based on the project, students involved, location, etc. However, there is a basic framework you can follow to facilitate student-directed solutions and interventions. Tools from the [Student Worksheet Toolbox](#) and additional resources are included.

The Action Framework follows the student worksheets found in the [Environmental Action Project Planning set](#). The worksheets cover basic steps in planning and implementing an action project and can be used by students independently, in small groups, or as a class. There are five total worksheets in this planning set. Use the worksheets that make sense for your students' action project and/or assign different pages to small groups or individuals to complete. These worksheets were adapted from a resource by ShoreRivers in Easton, Maryland.

BACKGROUND:



This lesson is based on NOAA's Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience Guide and can be found here: <https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-meaningful-watershed-educational-experience>

EXPLAINER FOR CHOOSING AN ACTION PROJECT WORKSHEET

You can support students in brainstorming action project ideas and then choosing a single project to carry out as a class or small group in many different ways. This explainer describes one way of how you might bridge the use of the Moving from Claims to informed Action worksheet with the Choosing an Action Project worksheet. Adapt and create alternatives that meet your class needs.

- 1. Using the Moving from Claims to informed Action worksheet provides space for students to brainstorm possible solutions to their environmental issue. The prompts on the left-most column can be helpful in fleshing out concepts. This can be done individually or in pairs, and ideally students come up with at least three distinct ideas. Encourage your students to use divergent thinking to generate creative solutions.*
- 2. Organize students into five small groups to discuss and debate their ideas. The focus is now on convergent thinking. Task them with developing a single idea they would want to carry out in order to take action on the issue. By the end, they should have a succinct one-sentence description of their action project idea.*
- 3. Using the Choosing an Action Project worksheet, each of the five groups will*

briefly pitch their idea to the whole class. Add each idea into one of the boxes in the top column of the grid.

4. introduce the concept of criteria, or “standards on which decisions are based.” in order to make a decision about which project to move forward with, the class will use criteria to narrow down the options and arrive at a final selection. it can help for there to be teacher-created criteria as well as student-created criteria. Examples of teacher-created criteria may include restrictions around timing (e.g., the project must be completed in two class periods) or funding (e.g., the project must cost less than \$50). Encourage students to think about what they value most when they create criteria. Examples of student-created criteria may be around impact (e.g., will this make substantial change in our community) or interest (e.g., will this project be fun to work on). Add the criteria into the boxes in the left-most column of the grid.

5. Finally, engage the class in voting on the action project ideas listed at the top against the criteria that were written along the side. This can be done as a large class discussion or students can vote individually by placing dot stickers or check marks in the appropriate boxes. Tally the results. One strategy may stand out as the clear winner. if one does not emerge naturally, students may need to establish additional criteria or use a different kind of voting technique to come

*to consensus. Or perhaps, students can brainstorm a way to merge the ideas
and execute aspects of both*