

Topic: Sustainability

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| Lesson: Whaling | KS or Year Group: Year 7 |
| Resources: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WDCS video 2. Resource 1 – Should whales be hunted? 3. Resource 2 – Different viewpoints 4. Web access | Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students gain knowledge of international environmental agreements. • Students are able to look at a controversial issue from a viewpoint that may not be their own. |

National Curriculum

Key Concepts: 1.1b, 1.1d

Key Processes: 2.1a, 2.1b, 2.1c, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.2c, 2.2d

Range and Content: 3e

Lesson

In this lesson about the controversial whaling industry, the students will view raw video footage of a Japanese expedition from the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society. They will then read 'for' and 'anti' positions on the issue and have a class vote on whether they believe that whalehunting should be allowed to continue. In groups, they will then research and discuss the issue from a different specific point-of-view, presenting their arguments to the class after this is complete. The class will again vote on the issue.

Starter

- Play the footage from the WDCS (the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society). Ask the students for their initial thoughts and reactions. Explain that the WDCS is a worldwide charity with the mission of defending these animals against many dangers. As well as whaling, they try to protect them from dolphin hunts, fisheries bycatch, captivity, chemical and noise pollution, climate change and ship strikes.
- Distribute copies of **Resource 1 – For and against whaling**. Have a class vote on which side they thought has the strongest argument. Ask selected students why they voted a particular way. Which points do they feel to be the most convincing or important?

Main activity

Split the class into five groups.

Activity 1:

- Cut up and distribute the different viewpoints from **Resource 2 – Viewpoints** amongst the groups.
- Tell the groups that they need to make a convincing case for their particular viewpoint. Provide the groups with A3 paper and felt pens for note making. Ask them to “brainstorm” as many reasons as possible to substantiate their viewpoint.
- Groups should spend 10 minutes on the internet, using the links below to guide the research with the teacher on hand to monitor their progress. They should use the information to create a 2-minute presentation of their point-of-view.
- Each group will need to elect a spokesperson (or pair of spokespeople) to present their argument for their assigned viewpoint.
- After each group has made their presentation, the class should be asked to vote again on the question ‘Should whaling be banned?’. Ask if any student have changed their opinion since the last vote. Why?

Plenary

Following the vote students can be asked to justify their decision, either as a written piece individually or as a Q&A verbally to selected students.

Aim high

Students could create a campaign for the perspective they were adopting for the main activity, such as posters or speeches. Technology permitting, they could video their speeches and post on YouTube.

Assessment

Students may be asked to write a piece based on their group’s research, adding a conclusion and their own personal point of view. Assessment of knowledge & understanding can thus be gained. Research and group work skills can be assessed during the activities through teacher observation.

Check the web

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_7100000/newsid_7100500/7100535.stm CBBC Newsround article on a Japanese whale hunt.

<http://jp.youtube.com/profile?user=teensagainstwhaling>

YouTube teens against whaling and a clip from the Australia Department for the Environment.

http://www.seashepherd.org/whales/whales_world.html

Marine wildlife conservation organization, much like Greenpeace (but not always peaceful)

<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/oceans/problems/whaling>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/03/07/japan.whaling/index.html#cnnSTCText>

Watch a video of whalers clashing with activists.

<http://www.icrwhale.org/eng-index.htm>

Is a pro whaling site. A little hard-going for some students but worth a look, especially for teacher research/background.

<http://news.mongabay.com/2007/0607-whaling.html>

Has whale harvest bar chart. Good for numeracy links.

Resource 1 - Should whales be hunted?

Sunday May 27, 2007

Are whales worth more dead or alive? As politicians, whalers and experts from all over the world prepare for the International Whaling Commission meeting at Anchorage in Alaska, Sky News went to Iceland and spoke to two Icelandic men with completely opposing views.

The Hunter

Kristjan Loftsson is director of Hvalur AS, a company which owns four whaling vessels in Iceland. One of his ships killed seven fin whales in Icelandic waters last year.

Kristjan says:

- Whale hunting is a viable industry. Suggestions that it's 'dying out' are 'political nonsense'. He says they wouldn't do it if it wasn't good business.
- He is confident he will be able to sell whale-meat to Japan and Norway again, as soon as tests on the latest 'kills' prove the meat is clean of toxins; he expects this to happen in the summer.
- Some whale species might be endangered in other parts of the world, but not in Icelandic waters. Surveys suggest there are around 44,000 minke and 23,000 fin whales near Iceland, so annual catches of 200-400 are 'sustainable'.
- "It's a renewable resource," he said. "It should be harvested. There's no way we'd want to kill the last whale."
- The IWC is a 'circus', staged for the benefit of bureaucrats; nothing will come out of it except increased quotas for subsistence whaling in the USA and Greenland.
- Killing whales for scientific whaling is justifiable because we need to know how much fish is being eaten by the minkes, and learn about mating habits.
- He has nothing against the whale-watchers, but he claims the companies involved are losing money.
- The British anti-whaling position is 'hypocritical', because whalers with British flags killed thousands of the mammals - including Blue Whales - last century.

The Conservationist

Arni Finnsson is chairman of the Iceland Nature Conservation Association. He works closely with IFAW, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, and wants to see an end to all whaling in Iceland. Arni says:

- There is no need for whaling, whether it is for scientific purposes, or commercially.
- There's very little money to be made out of it because there's only a minimal demand for whale-meat in Iceland, and there's no export market.
- Whaling damages the reputation of Iceland, and an IFAW study this week suggests other business on the island are seriously worried about its damaging impact on them.
- There's no significant advantage in killing whales in the name of science; you can find out most of what you need to know from living creatures or from animals which have died naturally.
- There's no evidence that whales are jeopardising fish stocks used by humans, and even if that were true, you'd have to kill thousands of whales annually to protect the fish.
- Whales are worth a lot more to Iceland alive than dead; studies show tourists attracted to Iceland by the prospect of whales-watching would be put off by a resumption of large-scale commercial whaling.
- Public opinion in many parts of Western Europe, the USA and other important markets for Icelandic tourism thinks of whaling as inhumane and cruel.

Resource 2 – Different viewpoints

Viewpoint 1 : Japanese worker on a whaling boat



Things to consider

- Whaling provides his/her income.
- His/her government is pro-whaling.
- His/her culture has a history of eating whale meat.

Viewpoint 2 : Australian teenager



Things to consider

- Whaling is often done off Australia's coast where whales have gone for warmer waters, so Australia considers the whales as 'theirs'.
- Australia may be able to create tourism thanks to their presence.

Viewpoint 3 : Greenpeace



Things to consider:

- Greenpeace is a global non-commercial organisation seeking to protect nature and the environment.
- It maintains that Japan is in the wrong and scientific catches of whales are a cover for commercialism.

Viewpoint 4 : Japanese government



Things to consider

- They are pro-whaling, despite global disapproval.
- They claim they are whaling mainly for scientific and cultural reasons.

Viewpoint 5 : Japanese teenager

Things to consider

- Sales of whalemeat in Japan are falling, possibly because younger people do not want to eat it.
- Their viewpoint could be pro- or anti-whaling, depending on their upbringing and influences in their lives.

