Name: Sarah Westman

Name of lesson: Wangari Maathai and Environmental Activism

Intended grades: 3-5th

Goal / Objective(s): Students will be able to...
1. Explain how leaders have had an impact on the environment in a community.
2. Identify an environmental issue impacting their community and brainstorm a solution.

Materials needed:
- *Wangari Maathai: The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees* by Franck Prevot
- *Deforestation Article*
- Highlighters
- *Reading Response Worksheet*
- Computers

**Day 1 (45-50 minutes)**

Introduction (2 minutes)
- Ask students if they have heard of deforestation and if they know what it is.

Procedure (20 minutes)
- Read the *Deforestation Article* with students. Make sure that each student has their own printed copy and a highlighter so that they can annotate.
- Before reading, tell students to highlight main ideas and important facts as they hear them.
- After reading, ask students the following discussion questions:
  - Why do you think it's important that we stop deforestation?
  - What could we do to stop deforestation?
  - Is deforestation something we experience in our community?

Conclusion (25 minutes)
- Put students into groups of 3-4. Give them paper and markers.
- Tell students to brainstorm ways they would stop and help the effects of deforestation. Give them 5 minutes to brainstorm.
- Pull students back together and have each group present their poster.

**Day 2 (40 minutes)**

Introduction (2 minutes)
- Remind students that yesterday they learned about deforestation.
- Tell them that today we are going to learn about an activist in Africa who helped issues of deforestation.
• Introduce today’s book: *Wangari Maathai: The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees*. Tell students that this is a true story about Wangari Maathai.

**Procedure (25 minutes)**
• Read *Wangari Maathai: The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees*. Ask the following discussion questions while reading:
  o P. 13 What can we say about Wangari as a person so far?
  o P. 15 How do you think having an education will impact Wangari?
  o P. 19 How has cutting trees affected Kenya’s environment?
  o P. 27 What character traits would you use to describe Wangari?
  o P. 29 Why do people want to stop Wangari?
• After reading:
  o How did Wangari make a change?
  o What do you think the theme/message of the book is?

**Conclusion (15 minutes)**
• Show students a picture of Wangari Maathai and a picture of her work.
• Tell students that Wangari Maathai identified an issue in her community and did something to change it and have a positive impact.
• Pass out the [Reading Response Worksheet](#) and have students complete.

**Day 3-4**
**Introduction (7 minutes)**
• Remind students that yesterday we read about Wangari Maathai.
• Have students explore other environmental activists by going to the following website for 5 minutes: [https://www.britannica.com/explore/savingearth/meet-the-activists](https://www.britannica.com/explore/savingearth/meet-the-activists)

**Procedure**
• As a whole group, brainstorm environmental issues we would like to focus on in our community
• Instruct students to pick one issue they are interested in researching
• Tell students they will create a project/presentation answering the following questions:
  o What is the issue?
  o Why should people care about it?
  o What is being done to fix it?
  o What is something you can do to fix it?
• Show students the following example.
• Have students work independently on their project. Adjust the amount of time you need to have them complete the project.
• There are many ways you could have students do this project. I had my students create a Google slide presentation which took 2 days. You could also use Canva or have them do it on a paper poster.