

Better Air for Our City

Afterschool/Summer: Middle School

Lesson 7: Better Air for Your Block!



Lesson 1: Our Air, Our Street

Lesson 2: Who's Driving Around Our Block?

Lesson 3: Dirt in My Air?

Lesson 4: That Air's in My Lungs?

Lesson 5: Climate Change and My Street

Lesson 6: What's My Carbon Footprint?

➔ Lesson 7: Better Air for Your Block!

Lesson 8: Share your PSA

Better Air for Your Block!



BIG IDEAS To Share With Your Students

ADVOCACY IS IMPORTANT TO IMPROVING OUR AIR

There are advocacy campaigns to improve air quality that are part of larger campaigns for “Environmental Justice.” These are campaigns out there fighting for right to a healthy environment, including our air.

A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA) IS A GREAT TOOL FOR EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

In real life, we see advertisements every day. A Public Service Announcement (PSA) is persuasive like an advertisement, only it serves to educate the public about an important topic (think anti-smoking ads).

BY MAKING A PSA AND SHARING IT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY, YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We can teach our community about what we have learned. In order to have a larger impact, we should share with others what we know.

Know the Facts

- In New York City, it’s illegal to leave your car idling in front of a school for more than 1 min. City-wide, it’s illegal for more than 3 min.
- A person commuting by SUV may produce six times the greenhouse gas emissions as a subway rider traveling the same distance.
- Cars currently only carry 31% of commuters in New York City yet produce 60% of commuting CO2 emissions.
- In addition to improving air quality, there are a lot of other benefits to shifting commutes away from cars, like reduced congestion, safer streets, and healthier people.

(Sources: Asthma Free School Zone, RollingCarbon.org)



Main Activities

The students will work with partners to plan and begin to create their PSA posters

- The students reflect on all the things they’ve learned
- Working in pairs, students plan PSAs to present the changes they want most
- Students begin work on their PSAs

Materials Needed

- PSA Planning Sheet
- Poster board
- Pens or pencils
- Markers



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LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 HOUR

Description of Activities

1) Class discussion (10 minutes)

Ask the students in a discussion: What does Public Service Announcement (PSA) mean? Explain to them that a PSA is like an advertisement but serves to educate the public on an important issue, to improve their own lives. Can they think of some examples of campaigns they have seen before on TV, in magazines, in public spaces? You can give them the example of the anti-smoking ads if they are stuck here.

Then shift the discussion to your specific project. What we have learned about green transportation. Why is it important to educate our own community about these issues? What have we learned about ways we can change the way we get around to improve air quality in our city?

2) Planning the PSAs (10 minutes) Put the students in groups of 2-3 and explain that they will create their own PSAs. Have them use the planning sheet as a guide to help them plan their PSA. Make sure they follow the flow from brainstorming, to focusing on the key point they want to make, to getting the point across with a short phrase and catchy art.

3) Making the PSAs (40 minutes) Pairs use posterboard and trace their drawings and text with pencil first. Then use markers to make their PSA poster! Make sure to leave a few minutes for groups to clean up and save the work so they can finish it up during the next session if necessary.

Tips for Success

- Emphasize to the students that they need to keep their message short and bold.
- If they can't come up with ideas, give them some suggestions: take the subway, the bus, walk, or bike, carpool, and don't idle your car.
- Come up with some examples of a clever but short PSA (Example "Who needs to drive when you can walk, bike or ride?")
- The kids should feel free to do research and add some facts to their PSA

Resources

- Transportation Alternatives www.transalt.org/
- Asthma Free School Zone <http://www.afsz.org/>
- We ACT <http://www.weact.org/>

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Handouts

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Planning Chart

Brainstorm:

What kinds of things could people do differently about their transportation choices to improve air quality?



Focus:

What one thing do you want to ask people to do most?



Why?

Try to express to people why they should make a change in one sentence.



Art:

How will you design your PSA?
You can write some words or even sketch a bit in this space