



A PARTNERSHIP TO SAVE THE WORLD: A DEEP DIVE INTO THE UN SDGS



Grade: 9th - 12th

Subject: World Geography

Lesson: A Partnership to Save the World: How the US & the UAE can collaborate to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Lesson Focus and Goals:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the Sustainable Development Goals and their intent to create a better world for all people. Students will analyze current global challenges and how countries can work together to address these issues by creating a hypothetical partnership between the United States and the United Arab Emirates to do just that. After the lesson, students will understand how these challenges can be addressed at all societal levels - through government influence, societal pressure and individual contribution.

Standards Met: World Geography TEKS

38(C): evaluate the economic and political relationships between settlements and the environment, including sustainable development and renewable/non-renewable resources.

9(A): identify physical and/or human factors such as climate, vegetation, language, trade networks, political units, river systems, and religion that constitute a region.

12(A): analyze how the creation, distribution, and management of key natural resources affects the location & patterns of movement of products, money, people.

12(B): evaluate the geographic and economic impact of policies related to the development, use, and scarcity of natural resources such as regulations of water.

16(B): Describe elements of culture, including language, religion, beliefs, institutions, and technologies.

16(C): Describe life in a variety of urban and rural areas in the world to compare political, economic, social, and environmental changes.

19(C): Analyze the environmental, economic, and social impacts of advances in technology on agriculture and natural resources.

20(B): Examine the economic, environmental, and social effects of technology such as medical advancements or changing trade patterns on societies in different levels of development.



Materials Needed:

- Computer with internet
 - Access to the suggested websites on the "Direct Teach" portion of this lesson.
- Access to Canva Templates (Infographic or Slides Presentation)
- Overhead Projector
- Sustainable Development Goals Handout
- Paper

Warm-Up:

Part I - Think-Pair-Share: Ask students to consider the biggest problems they believe are facing their community, their state, the country and the world. After a moment, ask students to share their responses with a neighbor. Call on a few students to ask them to share what they discussed and compare those responses with that of other groups. Jot down the biggest issues mentioned on the board.

Part II - Idea Building Blocks: Divide the class into teams, give them a sheet of notebook paper and present them with a problem related to the Sustainable Development Goals (or what was discussed in Part I of this activity). Ask them to consider how each problem could be addressed even if that problem has no direct impact on their local community. The team member who was handed the piece of paper starts by writing down a solution and then passes the sheet of paper along to the next team member, who builds upon that idea and then passes it along to the rest of the team. The paper is passed around until each team member has added to the original solution (Note: team members can also cross out and replace a previous team member's suggestion if they believe it won't work). After 3 minutes, a spokesperson can present their ultimate solution to the rest of the class. After each group presents their solution, the class should then work together to create a solution that includes a contribution from each team. This activity helps develop students' problem-solving and collaboration skills, with learners working towards a common goal. Repeat for several of the SDGs if time permits, starting with a different student in the group each time.

- Possible Problem Topics:
 - As a result of conflict and displacement, the Democratic Republic of Congo in Africa is facing extreme famine with 26 million people facing severe hunger.
 - The United States is the second largest emitter of CO₂, contributing significantly to the impact of global warming.
 - The Chinese government is waging a targeted campaign against the Uyghur people (a minority group in the region), including forced labor, sterilization, detention of more than 1 million Uyghurs in internment camps, family separation and the destruction/closure of mosques and other religious sites.
 - Many countries lack basic access to clean water (in Ethiopia, for example, 60% of the population has no access to clean water).
 - A war has broken out in a country responsible for the production and export of 30% of the world's wheat, meaning countries are not receiving these badly needed supplies for their citizens.

Direct Teach Instructions:

Explain to the class that the purpose of the warm up was to recognize that people must work together to find solutions to pressing issues, like the ones mentioned in the activity. To address these major challenges, the United Nations adopted a series of 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 as a blueprint to create a better world for all people. These SDGs are intertwined and must be addressed together by all countries to achieve success.

Show this video as an introduction to the SDGs. Ask students to write down the ones that stand out to them as most important. Tell them to make sure they can explain why those specific topics stand out. Spend a few minutes discussing the SDGs and what they mean to students.

Explain that, in order to address the SDGs, countries (no matter how different) must work together to find solutions that benefit ALL, not just citizens within their borders.

To illustrate the importance of these partnerships, students will take a look at a budding relationship between the United States and the United Arab Emirates, whose governments have recognized the need to work together to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. For more information about the UAE, have students explore the [UAE Embassy Website](#).

Use these documents ([United States](#), [United Arab Emirates](#)) to have students identify which of the Sustainable Development Goals both countries have had a difficult time addressing (#2 - Zero Hunger, #12 - Responsible Consumption & Production, #13 - Climate Action, #15 - Life on Land).

Divide students into groups of no more than 6 and assign one of the above SDGs to each group. When assigned an SDG, groups need to create an infographic or presentation with the following information:

1. A description of the problem and how it impacts both the United States and the United Arab Emirates.
 - a. Description of the Goals
 - b. Resources:
 - i. #2 Zero Hunger: [Hunger & Poverty in America](#), [10 Facts About Hunger in the UAE](#), [10 Facts About Hunger in the UAE](#)
 - ii. #12 Responsible Consumption & Production: [America's Food Waste Problem](#), [UAE Energy Consumption](#)
 - iii. #13 Climate Action: [Environmental Challenges in the UAE](#), [EPA Indicators of Climate Change](#)
 - iv. #15 Life on Land: [Environmental Challenges in the UAE](#), [Climate Change Impacts in the US](#)
2. Resources that each country has to try to address the problem.
 - a. Resources:
 - i. [How the US is contributing to the achievement of the SDGs](#); [US Climate Action Task Force](#)
 - ii. [UAE's Approach to SDG 12, SDG 2, SDG 13, & SDG 15](#)
 - iii. [PACE](#)
3. A solution developed by students that combines the resources and/or tactics of each country.
 - a. [UAE-US Cooperation](#)
4. A community example of the problem locally and ways students can contribute to the solution.

Students will have 3 in class days to complete this infographic/presentation. They will be expected to share their information with the class in a 7-10 minute presentation. Audience members are expected to ask questions about the feasibility of the group's proposed plan, so members must be well versed on the problem and the potential solution.

Assessment: Post-Lesson Discussion & Wrap Up:

Now that students have had a chance to familiarize themselves with some of the Sustainable Development Goals, have them write down their own answers to the following questions. Once they have finished answering these questions independently, discuss their responses (all class or small group discussions - entirely up to you!).

1. What did you learn about the United States and the United Arab Emirates as you worked on this project?
2. What are the benefits of addressing global challenges collaboratively?
3. What are the drawbacks of addressing global challenges collaboratively?
4. Did you find it difficult to come up with a solution that included proposed solutions from both countries? Explain.
5. While much of the focus of this activity was on high level international solutions to major global challenges, what were some ways you discovered that you could address these problems in your own communities?
6. Do you believe it is possible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by their original completion date (2030)? Why or why not?