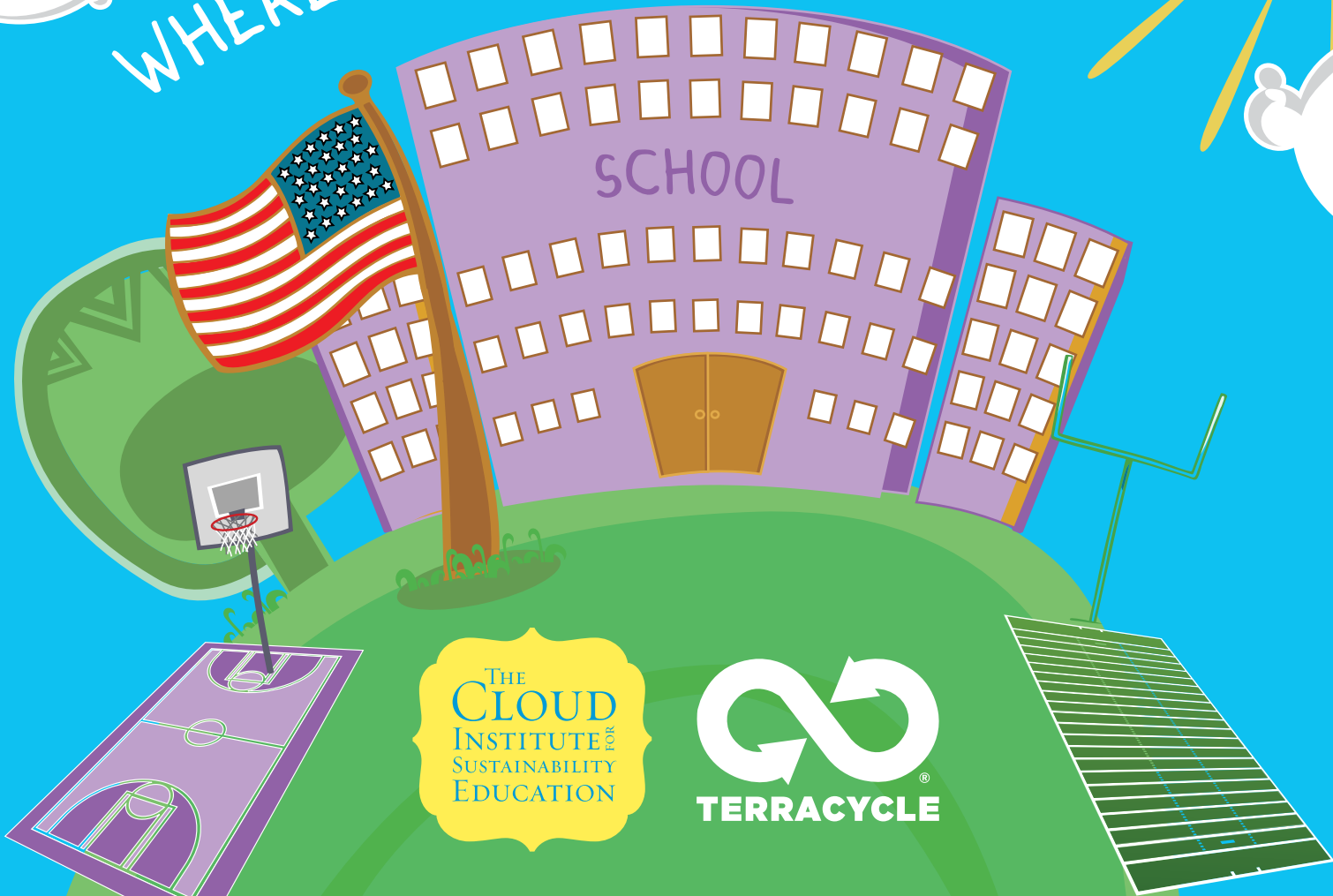


WHERE ARE OUR COMMONS?



THE
CLOUD
INSTITUTE FOR
SUSTAINABILITY
EDUCATION

TERRACYCLE®

Teacher's Guide

Grade: 3 - 5

Lesson: : Where are our Commons?

Number of Class Periods: 4 45-minute periods

The Healthy Commons Lesson Set was co-created by TerraCycle, The Cloud Institute for Sustainability Education, and Learner-Centered Initiatives.



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WHERE ARE OUR COMMONS?

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Standards

Common Core State Standards

ELA

Grade 3: Writing 7, 8
Speaking and Listening 1 b, c, d
Language 1, 2, 3, 6

Grade 4: Writing 7, 8, 9 b
Speaking and Listening 1 b, c, d
Language 1, 2, 3, 6

Grade 5: Writing 7, 8, 9b
Speaking and Listening 1 b, c, d
Language 1, 2, 3, 6

MCREL National Standards 3-5

Geography Standard 14 Understands how human actions modify the physical environment

Efs Standards

B. 2 Responsible Local and Global Citizenship Demonstrate individual and collective respect for themselves and others, and for the things that they all share, depend on, and are responsible for (the Commons).

E. 1 Healthy Commons Define "The Commons" in their own words and in relation to their own experiences. Know the difference between private, and common areas.

E. 3 Identify several examples of Commons in their classroom, school, town and in our world and explain how those Commons function—i.e., the rules for access and use and who or what enforces them.

E. 4 Explore examples of healthy Commons locally and compare and contrast the various ways people use, protect and care for them.

I. 1 Sense of Place Draw the parameters of their community (e.g. class, school, and/or neighborhood). Identify the characteristics of that place and why it is important to be able to do so.

I. 19 Provide evidence of skill development including: data gathering, data collection, organization, interviewing, prediction, estimation, meeting scheduling.

I. 20 Communicate their findings accurately and effectively (oral presentation, power point, spreadsheets, graphs, role play, mural, song, etc.).

Efs Enduring Understandings (EU)

EU 4 Recognize and protect the Commons (We all depend on them and we are all responsible for them.)

EU 12 We are all responsible (Everything we do and everything we don't do makes a difference.)

LESSON SUMMARY

In this lesson, students develop an understanding of the Commons, as a concept and a reality. Interpreting and synthesizing information from several sources, students create their own definition of a Commons and apply that definition as they identify and map the various Commons in their school. Students engage in discussions about rights, roles and responsibilities to and for the Commons, supporting the further annotation of the map to include how each Commons represented is important to the school community and how it can be taken care of. If desired, a large version of the School Commons map can be posted in a prominent place where it can promote awareness of the Commons for members of the school community as well as for those who visit.

OVERARCHING QUESTION

Where Are Our Commons?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

WHAT IS A COMMONS?

WHERE ARE THE COMMONS IN OUR SCHOOL?

WHAT DO OUR COMMONS NEED FROM US? (EU 4, 5)

RESOURCES / MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON:

[Pencils as a Commons \(video\)](#)

Field definitions of Commons

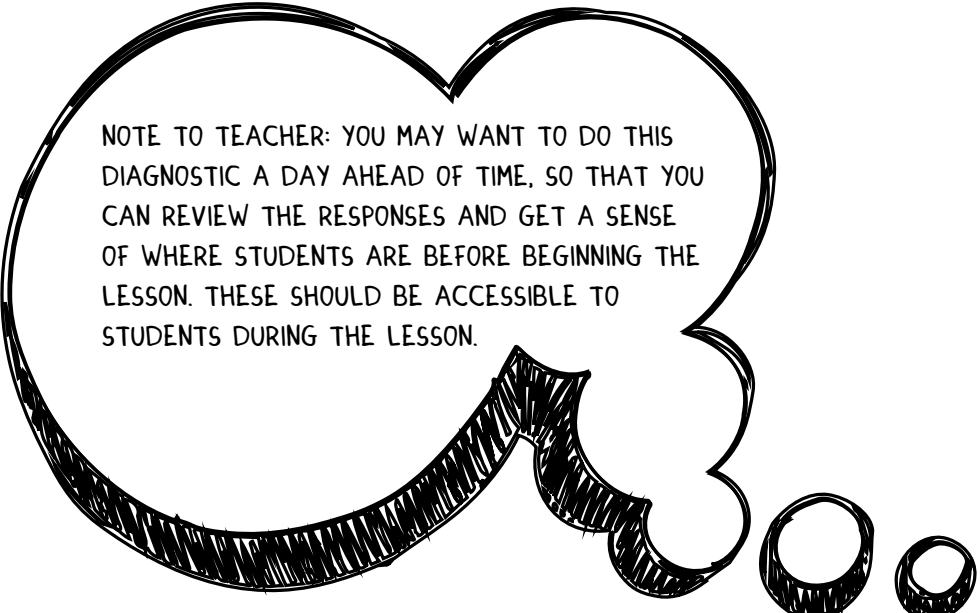
Pre-printed floor plan of the school or graph paper for creating a scaled map

Note to teacher: This lesson requires a degree of understanding about maps and would benefit from being directly connected to geography curriculum lessons that develop or enhance map skills. Those who are interested in integrating this lesson into a bigger geography/mapping unit might find www.greenmap.org helpful.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

1. Determine what your students already know by asking them to write or draw (or otherwise represent) everything that they know about the Commons.

- Prompt them to include examples as well as questions that they have when they think about the Commons.
- Ask them to caption or summarize their work by writing their definition of the Commons at the bottom of the page.
- Let students know that they will be using this and making changes to it throughout the lesson, as they learn new things about the Commons.



NOTE TO TEACHER: YOU MAY WANT TO DO THIS DIAGNOSTIC A DAY AHEAD OF TIME, SO THAT YOU CAN REVIEW THE RESPONSES AND GET A SENSE OF WHERE STUDENTS ARE BEFORE BEGINNING THE LESSON. THESE SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE TO STUDENTS DURING THE LESSON.



DAY 1 & 2 - WHAT IS A COMMONS?

2. Use the video, [Pencils as a Commons](#) to introduce or revisit the concept of the Commons.

Possible discussion questions:

- What do you understand about the Commons now that we have seen this film? How does this compare to what you knew before we saw it?
- What new questions do you have about the Commons?
- How did thinking of pencils as a Commons help to solve a problem?
- What Commons exist in our classroom and school?
- How might thinking about the Commons in our classroom and school help us to rethink some of the problems or issues that we face

3. Ask students to write a definition of the Commons based on what they are thinking now, having watched and discussed the film. When they finish this new definition, they should look at their first one and mark any differences or changes.

4. Arrange students in small groups of 3 or 4, and give them 10 minutes to share their current definitions, giving them permission to revise their own if they hear anything that they feel would improve or deepen their own definition.

5. Provide each group with the additional information provided (see Student Resource sheet), and tell them that their job is to use these definitions and their group's best thinking to create a group definition of the Commons. Definitions should be written on chart or other large paper.

6. Post all group definitions and lead the class in identifying similarities and differences among them. Using the commonalities as the base, and helping the class to negotiate the differences, create one, coherent class definition. Write the definition on chart paper and post it in the classroom.

7. Assign each group to a different part of the school and give them time to brainstorm the Commons that they believe exist there. Let them know that the next day, they will actually go "into the field" and map the Commons in the part of the school that they were assigned.

Note to teacher: If waste receptacles and recycling bins are not part of the brainstormed lists, make the observation and discuss how they are indeed a Commons ("There's no such place as away.") All materials cycle on planet Earth. Once trash leaves your hands, it becomes part of the waste stream which is a Commons, and how we deal with it is very important. Food waste is part of the Commons also, and can be really productive if we put it in the right place, like a compost pile. Manmade waste, like cans and wrappers, are different from food waste because nature can't break them down to be useful and productive. It is our responsibility to recycle the waste we create (that's where reducing, reusing, recycling and re-designing become important). Waste receptacles and recycling bins should be identified on our maps as important to maintaining the health of our Commons.

DAY 3-WHERE ARE THE COMMONS IN OUR SCHOOL?

- 1. Each group should have:**
 - a.** Graph paper or a floor plan of their part of the school
 - b.** A copy of the class definition of a Commons to reference
 - c.** The group's brainstormed list of the Commons that they expect to find
 - d.** Additional paper for notes
 - e.** Pens, pencils, rulers necessary for creating their map

- 2. Groups assign roles and responsibilities:**
 - a.** Explorer(s) – identify Commons areas from the field; provide exact locations, labels and images/icons of confirmed Commons.
 - b.** Researchers – use the definition to confirm that the Explorer(s) findings are truly Commons; determine how each Commons is used and by whom.
 - c.** Cartographer(s) – create the physical map of the area to scale (or locate and highlight it if a floor plan is provided), including a Title and a Key, and locate the Commons areas on it.

- 3. Groups each make a field visit of no more than 15 minutes to the area of the school that they have been assigned (If necessary, these visits can be staggered to allow for each group to have adult supervision.). Once they have gathered the necessary data, the groups should return to the classroom to complete their work.**

- 4. Back in the classroom:**
 - a.** Cartographers complete the physical map.
 - b.** Explorers finish their illustrations, icons and labels so that they can be added to the map.
 - c.** Researchers complete the written descriptions of how each Commons is used and by whom.



DAY 4 - WHAT DO OUR COMMONS NEED FROM US?

1. Display the maps around the room, so that groups can move from one to the next.
 - a. Provide each group with a different color pad of Post It notes.
 - b. Have groups visit each map and provide feedback by writing questions or ideas on the post it notes and placing them on the map.
 - c. Guide the feedback they provide by giving them the following three areas to focus on:

Additional Commons in that area that are not on the map

Other people who use the Commons

Questions about the map's title or key

**** Do not repeat feedback that is already posted**

- d. Groups return to their map and make revisions. If they have questions about a piece of feedback, they should ask for clarification from the group that left the Post It.
2. As a class, cluster the various Commons on the maps into categories and create blurbs, To-Do lists, or "How Tos" for taking care of them.
3. Finally, ask students to revisit their original individual definition of Commons, and discuss what they know now that they didn't know a few days ago.

By posting the maps in various areas of the school Commons, lessons learned by one can benefit the larger school community through an increased awareness. In addition this adds authenticity to the lesson.

Instructional/Environmental Modifications/Differentiated Strategies:

Strategies like choral reading or teacher-led small groups may help those who have difficulty with the printed materials.

EFS ASSESSMENT/SCORING CRITERIA

What do I need to collect or administer to prove that students have grown towards and/or achieved desired outcomes/standards?

Efs/National Standard	Efs/State Performance Indicator (letter and number)	Efs/State Assessment Instrument	Efs/State Scoring Criteria
B. Responsible Local and Global Citizenship	B. 2	The Map and annotations	Demonstrate individual and collective respect for themselves and others, and for the things that they all share, depend on, and are responsible for (the Commons).
E. Healthy Commons	E. 1 E. 3 E. 4	Individual and collective definitions Map of the Commons	<p>Students are able to articulate in discussion: Define “The Commons” in their own words and in relation to their own experiences. Know the difference between private, and Common areas.</p> <p>Identify several examples of Commons in their classroom, school, town and in our world and explain how those Commons function—i.e., the rules for access and use and who or what enforces them.</p> <p>Explore examples of healthy Commons locally and compare and contrast the various ways people use, protect and care for them.</p>
I. Sense of Place	I. 1 I. 19 I. 20		<p>Draw the parameters of their community (e.g. class, school, and/or neighborhood). Identify the characteristics of that place and why it is important to be able to do so.</p> <p>Provide evidence of skill development including: data gathering, data collection, organization, interviewing, prediction, estimation, meeting scheduling.</p> <p>Communicate their findings accurately and effectively (oral presentation, power point, spreadsheets, graphs, role play, mural, song, etc.).</p>

Efs/National Standard	Efs/State Performance Indicator (letter and number)	Efs/State Assessment Instrument	Efs/State Scoring Criteria
ELA Writing	Research to Build and Present Knowledge	Distilling and developing individual definition of "Commons" Map making project	<p>Grade 3 Students Can:</p> <p>7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.</p> <p>8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.</p> <p>Grade 4 Students Can:</p> <p>7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.</p> <p>8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.</p> <p>9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>b. Apply <i>grade 4 reading standards</i> to informational texts (e.g., "Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text").</p> <p>Grade 5 Students Can:</p> <p>7. Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.</p> <p>8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.</p> <p>9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>b. Apply <i>grade 5 reading standards</i> to informational texts (e.g., "Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point[s]").</p>

Efs/National Standard	Efs/State Performance Indicator (letter and number)	Efs/State Assessment Instrument	Efs/State Scoring Criteria
ELA Speaking and Listening	Comprehension and Collaboration	Discussions and collaborative map making	<p>Grade 3 Students Can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 3 topics and texts</i>, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion). c. Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others. d. Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion. <p>Grade 4 Students Can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 4 topics and texts</i>, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles. c. Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others. d. Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion. <p>Grade 5 Students Can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 5 topics and texts</i>, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles. c. Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others. d. Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

Efs/ National Standard	Efs/State Performance Indi- cator (letter and number)	Efs/State Assessment Instrument	Efs/State Scoring Criteria
ELA Language	Conventions of Standard English (assessment of indicators dependent upon individual teacher and curriculum)	Blurbs, to-do lists and/or How-To related to taking care of the Com- mons	<p>Grade 3, 4 and 5 Students Can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. 2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. 3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. 6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., <i>After dinner that night we went looking for them</i>).
McCREL National Standards 3-5	Geography Standard 14	Discussion and writing related to what our school Commons need from us	Students can explain the connection between the actions of humans and the health of a Commons.

STUDENT RESOURCE SHEET

Resource 1

Descriptions of Some Well-Known Commons (excerpted from The State of the Commons Report 2003/2004, produced by Friends of the Commons, a project of the Tides Foundation and from the Cloud Institute)

- **Public Libraries** let anyone sit, read, borrow books and access the Internet for free.
- **Sidewalks** are marvels of common use. With a minimum of law enforcement and maintenance, they foster mobility, commerce and social interaction.
- **Parks** in cities are islands of quiet and play. Typically, they are fenced but free and open to all.
- **National Parks and Wilderness Areas** protect habitat and provide millions of people a direct experience of nature.
- **Community gardens** rejuvenate neighborhoods and enable landless city-dwellers to enjoy the fruits of gardening. They often spring up on land that had been considered without value.
- **Air** is a Commons that we get from Nature (for example plants and trees produce it). We all depend on air to live and we all have a responsibility to make sure that the plants and trees can keep making it, and that we all keep it clean.

Resource 2

Ancient Romans and The Commons (adapted from The State of the Commons Report 2003/2004, produced by Friends of the Commons, a project of the Tides Foundation)

The ancient Romans distinguished between three types of property: private, public and common. Private property consisted of things that could be possessed or owned by an individual or family. Public property was defined as things built or meant for public use. The property called "Common" consisted of natural things used by everyone, such as air, water, and wild animals.

In the United Kingdom, during the Middle Ages, the Commons were shared lands used by villagers for gathering, hunting, planting crops and collecting wood.

Resource 3

Part of Pennsylvania's constitution:


Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustees of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.




Resource 4
Examples of the Commons



Government, Laws,
and Justice




Public Health




Playgrounds, Parks
and Other Green
Spaces



City Streets and
Sidewalks




Water



Rain and Snow



Cultures



Trust




Community Gardens
and Healthy Soil




Subway and Public
Transportation




Sun and Energy




Animals and Seeds



Insects, Butterflies
and Pollen



Air and Oxygen



Education and
Lifelong Learning



History Memory
and Knowledge




Languages



Our Shared Future



Communications



The Alphabet
and Music

Resource 5

References: Friends of the Commons and Jonathan Rowe, Tomales Bay Institute

Some Definitions of The Commons are:

The creations of nature and society that we inherit jointly and freely, and hold in trust for future generations.

That upon which we depend, and for which we are all responsible.

That to which we relate with "a sense of we" rather than exclusively "a sense of me".