

Watershed Public Service Announcement
Help your watershed by teaching others!



WWI Uncle Sam Recruiting Poster-
an early example of a PSA.

Grade Level: 3-6

Time: 15 minutes outdoors; 15 minutes to 1 hour inside

In this activity, students will spend time outdoors making observations and noting potential threats to watershed health. From these observations and their knowledge of pollution sources, students will develop an educational message for their peers or other audience. Students will be helping to protect their watershed!

Materials:

- Journal and writing utensil for each student to use outside.
- Variety of art supplies for creating posters/fliers

Objectives and Outcomes:

1. Learn about the use of Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
2. Identify nearby sources of pollution or watershed degradation
3. Practice developing persuasive messages

Background:

This activity expands on previous lessons that introduce students to the watershed concept, the impact humans have on watershed health and sources and types of pollution. However, this activity could be adapted to other topics that students are learning about or feel strongly about. For example, PSA could be developed on anti-bullying, classroom behavior, participation in community events, or other topics trending in the news.

Introduction:



Public service announcements are used to persuade others to change their attitude or behavior. Students can spend time reviewing examples of PSAs on the Ad Council website: <https://www.psacentral.org/home>. Their website features a searchable database with print and video PSA examples. Discuss the PSAs with students:

1. What is the main message? Does it persuade you?
2. How did the PSA use words or images to get their message across?
3. Who is the intended audience?
4. If you were developing the same message, how would you change the PSA?
5. Are there other methods for changing attitudes or behaviors?

Students can discuss current events or issues that they feel are important and would be suitable for a PSA. Are there PSAs that have influenced them?

Activity:

1. Students will begin by gathering data on the impact the school campus has on the watershed. Spend as much time as desired touring the campus, making observations and recording findings in a journal. The campus tour could be completed in a single visit or over several visits that incorporate different weather conditions, or different seasons for example. Students could work in pairs or small groups.
 - a. What watershed elements can students find?
 - b. What types of surfaces does the campus have? Are there places where rainwater soaks in (permeates); places where water runs off?
 - c. Are there plants and trees helping to collect runoff water?
 - d. Are runoff waters being directed to storm drains?
 - e. Where does water from rooftops go?
 - f. Are there sources of pollution such as litter, bare soil that's eroding, pet waste, garden chemicals, oil from cars (consider neighboring homes as well).
 - g. Is there habitat for urban wildlife? Places that could be improved to support wildlife such as songbirds?
2. In the classroom, have students look over their data. Are there watershed issues they feel strongly about? Did they find potential threats to watershed health? Are there threats they want to prevent? Students could work in small groups to develop a couple topics for focus.
3. Have students highlight any positive impacts they found on campus such as rain gardens or well-placed trash cans.
4. Once students have selected issues to focus on, spend time brainstorming solutions. What could students do to help? Their parents do? The school administrators or building maintenance crews?
5. In pairs or small groups, students will choose their topic and target audience and develop a message. Review other PSAs and the use of techniques such as humor or other emotions to get people interested in the PSA.
6. Students can spend as much time as desired creating a PSA. Poster sized PSAs could be created over several weeks and then displayed in the hallway at school. Smaller PSAs could be shared using an overhead projector in the classroom.
7. As a wrap up, students could evaluate the PSAs and give feedback on the power of the created message and images.

Extension Ideas:

- Students can develop their PSA further by doing additional research on their topic. Find out if there are other PSAs on the topic. Conduct internet research on watershed related issues.
- Students could use technology to create short PSA videos, taking time to learn about the use of storyboards and other video production techniques.

For additional information on bringing PSAs into the classroom, visit **Powerful Voices for Kids** website:

<http://powerfulvoicesforkids.com/ideas/power-psa>