

SOCIAL STUDIES AND SCIENCE  
THEMATIC UNIT  
Grades 7-9

### **Social Studies Objectives**

Students will reach a group decision using consensus.  
Students will take multiple perspectives on a social/environmental issue.  
Students will write and deliver statements representing one perspective on the issue.  
Students will paraphrase other students' statements.  
Students will formulate key questions to obtain information necessary to make an appropriate decision.

### **Key concepts**

Consensus  
Decision making  
Respect for all viewpoints  
Critical thinking and questioning

### **Science Objectives**

Students will explain how wolves became an endangered species.  
Students will understand how humans and wildlife interact in a given habitat.  
Students will learn the natural history of wolves, their habitat, diet, life cycle, social patterns.

### **Key concepts**

Habitat  
Animal social behavior  
Endangered species  
Habitat/species recovery

### **Daily Learning Activities**

#### **Day One**

Students will listen to the story, *Who Speaks for Wolf*. Teacher may elect to have students draw images from the story while they listen. Teacher asks the question: what may we learn from this? Open-ended responses include any and all impressions, images, learnings, conclusions, questions from students. Teacher prompts may lead students to look at how the people made their decision, what their error was, what they learned from their error.

#### **Day Two**

Introduce the concept of wolf as endangered species and efforts towards species recovery, primarily in the Rocky Mountains. Through class discussion, identify the

group who might be involved in making such a decision (ranchers, environmentalists, wildlife biologists, area residents, Native peoples, and don't forget Wolf!). In cooperative groups or pairs, have students brainstorm questions they would need to answer before making an informed decision on this issue. Class share to generate a list.

### **Day Three**

Science unit exploring the natural history of the wolf (see objectives and key concepts).

### **Following Days**

Place students in cooperative groups representing each of the interested parties to the decision. (Be sure that one group speaks for wolf.) Groups will write and present a position statement. The class sits in a circle, and each speaker will conclude his/her statement with the words, "I have spoken, now I will listen." (You may wish to use a "talking stick" to further underscore that there is one speaker but many listeners in any council circle and that no one may interrupt). Each group will demonstrate respect and listening skills by paraphrasing another's statement orally or in writing. Continue the process until the group reaches a consensus that all parties can accept.

### **Follow Up**

Writing assignment: What have I learned from this?

Listen to *Who Speaks for Wolf* again.

Approach other social/environmental/local/classroom issues using the consensus model.

This unit was developed by Ilana Rembelinsky