



WHEN THE BORDER VANISHES



It's Not Easy Being **GREEN**: Presidents and the Environment

Standard:

- II. Time, Continuity, and Change
- III. People, Places, and Environment
- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
- VIII. Science, Technology, and Society
- IX. Global Connections
- X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Grade Level: 7–12

Objectives:

The student will:

- Identify environmental actions of presidential administrations
- Assess the effectiveness of presidents in aiding the environment
- Determine which presidents are “most **GREEN**”
- Assess the feasibility of deep sea oil drilling
- Examine personal views related to energy sources

Time:

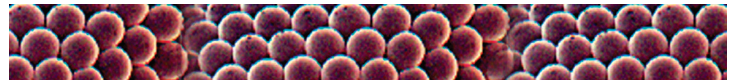
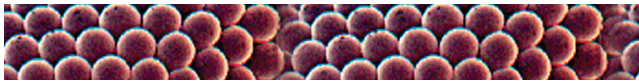
1–2 class periods, depending on the level

Materials:

Handout #1: Presidents and Environmental Legislation (without descriptions)
Handout #2: Presidents and Environmental Legislation (with descriptions)
Handout #3: Presidents and Environmental Legislation
(with descriptions and presidents)
Handout: **THE GREEN METER**

Procedures:

1. Ask students to explain what it means to “be green” when referencing the environment. Discuss the various ways that individuals, groups, and governments implement to improve and preserve the environment. What are the differences among conservative, moderate, and extreme conservation proponents? Where would they place themselves on a scale of 1–10, with “1” indicating very little involvement to “10” indicating significant involvement in protecting the environment?
Do any of the students consider themselves extreme/radical in their approaches?
2. Explain that presidents and legislators have dealt with or presently deal with environmental issues. Some presidential administrations have passed significant legislation and others very little. Some are more **GREEN** than others.
3. Select either *Handout #1: Presidents and Environmental Legislation* (without legislation descriptions) **OR** *Handout #2: Presidents and Environmental Legislation* (with descriptions of the legislation).
4. Have students research and complete the descriptions if using Handout #1. If time is limited, divide the legislation so that different students research only five items each. Collate results so that all students have completed charts.
OR
5. Distribute Handout #2 (with descriptions of legislation included) to students.
6. Have all students complete the column “Presidents” using available resources: U.S. History textbook, computer, etc.



7. Confirm students' answers placed in "Presidents" column. See completed chart, *Handout #3* for answers.
8. Discussion questions:
 - a. What did the earliest laws have in common? Why did these interests appear at this time?
 - b. During which decade did concern about air and water pollution become legislated? Why during this decade?
 - c. What became a matter of legislation by the 1970s? Why?
 - d. When did oil appear in legislation? What caused this legislation?
 - e. What reasons account for the apparent decline of legislation between 1918 and 1948?
 - f. The 1960s marked the beginning of the modern era of environment preservation. Why did the environmental movement hit its stride during the 1960s?
 - g. Why did the environmental movement not grow as might be expected during the 1990s and 2000s?
 - h. Identify current environmental issues. Explain why these issues need more or less legislation.
9. Distribute copies of **THE GREEN METER**. Place names of presidents from the chart on the meter by the number that best measures the **GREEN** qualities of each administration. Discuss placements of presidents. Which were lowest and highest on the meter? Was one president the clear "winner" on **THE GREEN METER**?

Extension Activities:

1. The site, http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/latest/greenest-presidents-460808?click=main_sr has two lists, the "Greenest Presidents" and the "Worst Environmental Presidents." Reasons are provided for the rankings. Present the two lists to students and determine why each president is ranked **GREEN** or Not So Green. One president is on both lists!

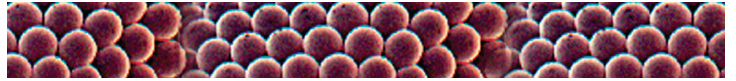
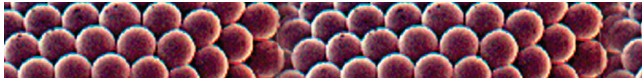
THE **GREENEST** PRESIDENTS

1. Theodore Roosevelt
2. Jimmy Carter
3. Thomas Jefferson
4. Bill Clinton
5. *Richard Nixon*
6. Franklin Delano Roosevelt
7. Abraham Lincoln
8. Lyndon Baines Johnson
9. Woodrow Wilson
10. John F. Kennedy

NOT-SO-GREEN PRESIDENTS

1. George W. Bush
2. Ronald Reagan
3. Ulysses S. Grant
4. Dwight D. Eisenhower
5. Warren G. Harding
6. Herbert Hoover
7. Andrew Jackson
8. *Richard Nixon*
9. William McKinley

2. Play the song, *Bein' Green*, for the students. They may know the words and can sing the song. Kermit, the Frog, bemoaned his green color in this song. It certainly is applicable to a discussion of race and color. In this instance, could the song be an anthem for saving the environment? Identify sections of the song that could resonate with those who diligently work for environmental causes. Does it capture the essence of being a **GREEN** environmentalist? ■



BEIN' GREEN

It's not that easy being green
Having to spend each day the color of the leaves
When I think it could be nicer being red, or yellow or gold
Or something much more colorful like that

It's not that easy being green
It seems you blend in with so many other ordinary things
And people tend to pass you over 'cause you're
Not standing out like flashy sparkles in the water
Or stars in the sky

But green's the color of Spring
And green can be cool and friendly-like
And green can be big like an ocean, or important
Like a mountain, or tall like a tree

When green is all there is to be
It could make you wonder why, but why wonder why
Wonder, I am green and it'll do fine, it's beautiful
And I think it's what I want to be

Joe Raposo, 1970