

Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District Clean Air Ambassadors  
**Lesson 1, The Lorax - Resources and Our Environment**

**Targeted Grade Levels:** Third Grade

**Objectives:** To demonstrate how air pollution affects not only humans but plants and animals as well. To demonstrate that cutting down trees hurts the environment in a variety of ways, including air quality.

**Next Generation Science Standards:**

- **3-LS3-2:** Characteristics result from individuals' interactions with the environment, which can range from diet to learning. Many characteristics involve both inheritance and environment.
- **3-LS2-1:** Cause and effect relationships are routinely identified and used to explain change
- **3-LS3-1:** Use evidence to support the explanation that traits can be influenced by the environment.

**Materials:**

- The Lorax book
- The Lorax Costume
  - Orange gloves
  - Glasses and mustache
- The Onceler Costume
  - Top hat
  - Green gloves
- Yellow phone
- Purple Thneed
- Toy Ax
- Truffula trees (1 for each student)
- Mustache seeds (1 for each student)

**Introduction:** *Have students sit down on the ground facing you.*

- "Hi third graders! Nice to meet you! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my friend \_\_\_\_\_. We are very excited to be here today! We are from Santa Barbara's Air Pollution Control District."
- "So the Air Pollution Control District is a lot of big words, but it basically means that we help protect the clean air that YOU breathe when you play outside and breathe all day long."
- "Who here likes clean air? Awesome! I hope you all do, I know \_\_\_\_\_ sure does!"

**Transition:**

- “Who here has read *The Lorax* before??”
- “Who here has seen the movie?!”
- “Excellent! Well, today we are going to be reading a very special version of *The Lorax*. While we read it today, we are going to be scientists! Scientists make observations. Does anyone know what an observation is? (Call on a few students) Right! An observation is a comment about what you see or notice. I’m going to pause while we read and ask you to make some observations. If you think you have a good observation, raise your hand quietly and I’ll call on you! Sound good? Great! And also third grade, watch out for that silly Lorax because he just might make a special appearance!”
- “Before we start the story, we need to reach up high in the sky for that special listening key. Grab it from its hiding spot. Let’s unlock our left ear. And now our right ear. And let’s put that key back in its special hiding spot. And now, let’s unlock our super sharp watching eyes, in case that Lorax makes an appearance. Go ahead and reach up high in the sky for that special watching key. Let’s unlock our right eye, and now our left eye. And put that key back in its hiding spot. Now plant those hands right in your lap. (Demonstrate doing this with the kids, slowly, making eye contact with the kids who do not catch on right away). Excellent! Keep those listening ears and watching eyes open while we read!”

### Begin Reading *The Lorax*

*One instructor will read from the book and the other will do the voice-over for the Lorax while wearing the mustache. Pause on the following pages:*

- **Pg. 1:**
  1. “Can somebody raise their hand for me and make an observation?”
  2. “Would you want to live in this town?”
  3. “How does the bird look?”
    - *Key points: the dark and dirty air, the dead trees, the sick bird, the dead soil*
- **Pg. 9** **Get out the phone:** *Hold the phone to your ear while you read “I will call you by the wispermaphone...”*
- **Pg 13:**
  1. “Can anyone raise their hand and tell me, what do you observe is different on this page than the first page we looked at?” *Flip back and forth between the two pages*
    - *Key Points: Many trees, colorful landscape, happy birds, healthy pond, clear blue sky, green grass*
- **Pgs. 14-15:**
  1. “So there are a lot more animals here. Can anyone raise their hand and tell me, what does it look like they are doing? Do they look happy?”
    - *Key Points: Brown Barbaloots (bears) eating the Truffula Fruit, Humming Fish swimming in the pond, they look happy*
- **Pg. 18:** **Get out the Ax:** *First demonstration of the chopping of a truffula tree, have a big reaction (gasp)*
- **Pg. 19:** **Get out the thneed** *While the Onceler reads, hold the thneed up for the kids to see*
- **Pg 20:** **Put mustache glasses on:** *The instructor impersonating the Lorax will turn with their back facing the children and say loudly “ga-Zump!” when the reader say this line, “The instant I’d finished, I heard...”*

- **Pg 23:**
  - “I am the Lorax and I speak for the trees! I speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues, but they keep the air clean and safe for our lungs. I love these truffala trees because they make the sky blue, and I actually brought one for each one of you!”
    - “Third grade, it is time for us to make our very own truffala tree forest! Would anybody like a truffala tree? Awesome! I am going to come give each of you a tree. If you don’t like the color you get, you can trade with a friend! Once you get your tree, take it back to your table and add some colors to the trunk! (*point at the popsicle stick*) You can add polka dots, stripes, whatever you want! Once we are done, we will come back to the rug to finish the story.”

*While the kids color, walk around to each table and engage with them: “What color did you choose?, Woah, I like that pattern!, Awesome, purple is my favorite color!, etc. Once the kids look like they are finishing up, give them a one-minute warning: “Ok friends, let’s meet back on our rug in one minute! Add those finishing touches!” .... After one minute say “Ok friends, time to get back to the rug! Please put your markers away and join me back on the rug with your trees!”*

- **Pg. 24:** **Get out thneed** *While the narrator reads what the purpose of a thneed is, act it out and be silly (“It’s a shoe, it’s a hat..”)*
- **Pg. 33:** **Get out the ax** “Uh oh friends... now that the super ax hacker has been invented, our truffala tree forest is about to get knocked down...Go ahead and raise those truffala trees high in the sky for me, stay on your bottoms. When the super ax hacker wacks your tree, drop it to the ground right in front of you. Now I need one volunteer who is going to be the chosen one. This means you will be the only one whos tree doesn’t get hacked down right now.” (*Go around to each kid, except the chosen one, gently tap their tree with the ax, and say “Drop it to the ground” “oh man!” Etc.*)
  - *When you are done chopping the trees, say: “Ok, chosen one, put your tree down for now and I’ll tell you when to pick it back up! We are going to finish the story now! Keep those truffala trees on the floor in front of you, and raise those empty hands high into the air (Do this with them) Now let’s plant our hands right into our lap. Awesome! Let’s keep reading!”*
- **Pgs. 34-35:**
  - “Can anyone raise their hand and make an observation as to why the Lorax is so sad right now?”
  - “That’s right! Those animals don’t want to live where it is so yucky.”
  - “Would you want to live here?”
- **Pgs. 38-39:**
  1. “Can anyone raise their hand and observe what type of building the Onceler is making those silly Thneeds in?”
    - “Hint, it starts with a ‘F’. That’s right! A factory!”
  2. “What is all of this stuff coming out of the top of the factory building?” “Does anyone know what the fancier name for dirty air is?” “Air pollution! That’s right! We are goign to talk lots more about air pollution. Next time so keep this in mind!”
  3. “Put your thumbs up or down, would you want to breathe that polluted air coming out of the factory?”
    - “No, yucky!”
- **Pg. 40:**
  1. “Where does the smogulous smoke come from again?”
    - “Yes, the factory!”
- **Pg. 51:** **Get out the ax** “Uh oh! Time to wack down the very last truffala tree of them all” *Demonstrate wacking down the chosen one’s tree*
- **Pg. 60:**

1. "What do you think friends, if you were the boy in the story what would you do with the last truffala tree seed?
  - a. "I would definitely plant it and start a new truffala tree forest!"

**Game:**

- "Well friends, thank you so much for sitting so nicely while we finished the story! We would love to play a game with you now. Has anyone played "Simon Says" before? Awesome! We are going to play "The Lorax Says!". Do whatever the Lorax says, but don't fall for my tricks! If the Lorax doesn't say, don't move! Me and \_\_\_\_\_ will do an example so just watch us.
  - (Example for the kids to watch) "The Lorax says touch your ear. The Lorax says touch your other ear. Now touch your nose. Oops! The Lorax didn't say! See how you only move when the Lorax says! Ok, let's play all together. If you mess up, we will take a deep breath of clean air to get back in the game! Can everyone please stand on their feet and hold those truffala trees calmly in your hands? Great!"

Here are some suggestions, you don't have to copy them exactly! (If time allows, you could call on someone to be the Lorax- recommended for 3rd grade)

- The Lorax says hold your truffala tree high in the air
- The Lorax says plant your tree on top of your head
- The Lorax says tap your nose with your truffala tree
- Now tap your toes with your tree
  - Oops! The Lorax didn't say! My friends who touched their toes, go ahead and take a deep breath of fresh air to get back in the game! Awesome everyone is back in!
- The Lorax says stand on your tippy toes
- The Lorax says plant your tree right in front of your toes
- The Lorax says do a silly face
- Now sit on the rug
  - Oops! The Lorax didn't say! My friends who are sitting on the rug go ahead and stand back up on those feet and take a deep breath of air to get back in the game! Leave those trees on the floor! Great!
- The Lorax says stand on one foot
- The Lorax says wiggle your nose
- Here's the last one friends: The Lorax says put your hands on your head!

"Awesome game third grade! Please sit back on the rug now. (Once kids are sitting) We have some questions for you now. If you think you know the answer, raise your truffala tree high into the air quietly and The Lorax might choose you to answer!"

**Option 1 Discussion:**

- Do you remember what was making the air so yucky in the story?
  - a. The factory!
- How were they making those silly thneeds?
  - a. That's right! They chopped the trees down and used the fluffy part to make it into a thneed! Now thneeds are awesome, but they made way too many of them and all the trees went away!
- Why did the Lorax and his friends go away?
  - a. The air was too dirty! They chopped all the trees, there was no more food! They were probably so hungry!
- Do you think there are ways to keep the air clean?
  - a. Yes! We are going to learn more about how we can keep the air clean when we come visit you again next time!

## Option 2 Use the Supplemental Slide show to guide a longer discussion if time allows

### Plant Activity:

- Did you friends hear what we said at the very end of the story? We said, Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, it's not going to get better, it's not.
- So, we brought you this present, it's a pot with that word Unless written on it to remind you of the story. It just looks like dirt right now, but buried underneath this dirt are some tiny poppy seeds.
- So, do you guys think you could help your teacher care a whole awful lot for this plant and maybe you'll get some pretty orange flowers growing in this pot?!
- Awesome! Now we also have a small present for each of you to take home with you today! Just like the boy in the story, you are each going to get your very own seed to plant.
- We made these seeds in the shape of a mustache, to remind you of that silly Lorax.
- They were made out of dirt and clay and there is a different type of seed in here, it's called milkweed.
- Does anyone know what kind of animals like milkweed?
- Butterflies, that's right! So, if you do what the boy in the story is going to do with the very last truffala tree seed: plant this mustache under a little bit of dirt, treat it with care, give it clean water, and feed it fresh air, you might get some butterfly visitors!
- Before we go, we wanted to do one more thing with you friends. Are you guys up for doing a Clean Air Chant?!
- Ok, stand up on those feet and leave your trees by your toes.
- Just watch me and \_\_\_\_\_do the chant first, then we will do it all together!  
*When I say "Clean", you say "Air";*  
*"Clean", "Air"; "Clean", "Air";*  
*slap slap - clap clap - snap snap;*  
*"Clean Air!!"*
- Thank you guys! See you next time!