
Endangered Species Research Project Bundle

A Structured 3-Week Multimedia Advocacy Unit

Grades 4–8

Includes: 3-Level Nonfiction Passages (6 Species), Research Organizers,
Writing Rubric, Advocacy Poster Template, Slide Template,
Bibliography Guide, & Peer Feedback Forms

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Table of Contents

1. Teacher Overview & Standards Alignment
2. Three-Week Lesson Plan
3. Student Project Checklist
4. Endangered Species Research Graphic Organizer
5. 3-Level Nonfiction Passages: Amur Leopard
6. 3-Level Nonfiction Passages: Green Sea Turtle
7. 3-Level Nonfiction Passages: Mountain Gorilla
8. 3-Level Nonfiction Passages: Red Panda
9. 3-Level Nonfiction Passages: Whooping Crane
10. 3-Level Nonfiction Passages: Pangolin
11. Bibliography Guide for Grades 4-8
12. Nonfiction Writing Templates & Transition Words
13. Advocacy Poster Template
14. Presentation Slide Template Guide
15. Writing & Presentation Rubric
16. Peer Feedback Form
17. Review Request & Credits

Teacher Overview

This comprehensive **Endangered Species Research Project Bundle** is designed to guide students in Grades 4–8 through a structured, three-week project-based learning experience. Students will select an endangered species, conduct rigorous research using differentiated sources, analyze threats, study conservation efforts, and synthesize their findings into a multimedia advocacy presentation.

What's Included:

- **3-Week Lesson Plan:** Day-by-day instructional guide for seamless implementation.
- **Leveled Nonfiction Passages:** Three reading levels (Below, On, Above Grade Level) for six different species to ensure equitable access to research materials.
- **Research Graphic Organizer:** A structured framework for note-taking and evidence collection.
- **Bibliography Guide:** An age-appropriate introduction to citing sources in MLA format.
- **Advocacy Poster & Slide Templates:** Visual planning guides for multimedia outputs.
- **Writing Rubric & Peer Feedback Form:** Clear evaluation criteria to maintain academic rigor and encourage constructive peer review.

Standards Alignment:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4-8.1:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferences drawn from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4-8.7:** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4-8.4:** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence.
- **NGSS MS-LS2-4:** Construct an argument supported by empirical evidence that changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem affect populations.

Three-Week Lesson Plan

Week 1: Research & Discovery

Day	Focus	Activity Details
1	Project Launch	Introduce the project. Discuss what it means for a species to be endangered. Students select a species from the provided list of 6.
2	Research Skills	Review the Research Graphic Organizer. Model how to pull relevant information from the leveled passages (Below, On, Above Level).
3	Independent Research	Students read their assigned level passage and begin filling out the 'Habitat & Diet' and 'Physical Traits' sections of the organizer.
4	Analyzing Threats	Focus on the 'Threats' section. Students identify natural vs. human-made threats using evidence from the text.
5	Conservation Efforts	Students research current conservation efforts. Introduce the Bibliography Guide; students record their first sources.

Week 2: Writing & Design

Day	Focus	Activity Details
6	Nonfiction Writing	Introduce the Nonfiction Writing Templates. Discuss transition words and formal academic tone for advocacy writing.
7	Drafting Advocacy	Students draft their advocacy essays, ensuring they include a claim, evidence from research, and a call to action.
8	Peer Review	Using the Peer Feedback Form, students swap drafts and provide constructive feedback on clarity and evidence.
9	Revising & Editing	Students revise based on peer feedback. Teacher conducts mini-conferences as needed.
10	Poster Design	Introduce the Advocacy Poster Template. Students sketch and design their visual advocacy component.

Week 3: Creation & Presentation

Day	Focus	Activity Details
11	Slide Creation	Students use the Presentation Slide Template Guide to outline their multimedia presentation.
12	Multimedia Work	Students build their actual slides/posters, combining text, images, and key facts from their organizers.
13	Presentation Prep	Practice public speaking. Students rehearse their advocacy presentations with a partner.
14	Presentations (Day 1)	Students deliver their multimedia presentations. Audience uses Peer Feedback Forms for presentation skills.
15	Presentations & Wrap-Up	Conclude presentations. Reflection on the impact of conservation and final grading using the Rubric.

Student Project Checklist

Name: _____ Species: _____

Task	Done?
I have selected an endangered species for my project.	☐
I have read my assigned nonfiction passage carefully.	☐
I have completed my Research Graphic Organizer with detailed notes.	☐
I have identified at least two major threats to my species.	☐
I have found information about conservation efforts to help my species.	☐
I have cited my sources using the Bibliography Guide.	☐
I have written my nonfiction advocacy essay with a clear claim and evidence.	☐
I have used transition words in my writing.	☐
I have participated in a peer review and used feedback to revise my writing.	☐
I have created my Advocacy Poster using the template.	☐
I have planned my presentation using the Slide Template Guide.	☐
I have practiced my presentation and am ready to speak clearly.	☐

Red Panda

Ailurus fulgens

Level 1: Below Grade Level (Gr 4)

The red panda is a small mammal that lives in the high forests of the Himalayas and China. It has reddish-brown fur, a long, striped tail, and a masked face. Even though it shares its name with the giant panda, it is not closely related. Red pandas spend most of their time in trees. They love to eat bamboo, but they also eat berries and insects. Red pandas are endangered because their forest homes are being cut down for farming and building. Also, climate change is making their mountains too warm. People are trying to save red pandas by creating protected forest areas and teaching local communities how to protect the trees instead of cutting them down.

Level 2: On Grade Level (Gr 5-6)

The red panda is an endangered mammal native to the temperate forests of the Himalayas and southwestern China. Roughly the size of a house cat, it has specialized adaptations for an arboreal lifestyle, including a bushy, ringed tail for balance and semi-retractable claws for climbing. While classified as a carnivore, the red panda's diet consists almost entirely of bamboo. The primary threat to the red panda is deforestation, as logging and agricultural expansion destroy their specialized habitat. Climate change also poses a significant risk by shifting the temperature ranges where bamboo can grow. Conservation programs focus on habitat preservation, reforestation efforts, and working with local communities to establish sustainable forest management practices that protect the red panda's fragile ecosystem.

Level 3: Above Grade Level (Gr 7-8)

The red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) is an endangered arboreal mammal endemic to the temperate forests of the Himalayas and southwestern China. Despite sharing a common name with the giant panda, the red panda belongs to its own distinct taxonomic family, Ailuridae. It exhibits morphological adaptations for a canopy-dwelling existence, including a modified radial sesamoid bone functioning as a pseudo-thumb for grasping bamboo, its primary food source despite its taxonomic classification as a carnivore. The species faces precipitous population declines driven by anthropogenic habitat fragmentation, as commercial logging and agricultural encroachment degrade contiguous forest tracts. Furthermore, climate change models project a significant contraction of suitable bamboo understory habitats. Conservation strategies prioritize community-based forest management, anti-poaching enforcement, and the creation of transboundary protected corridors to mitigate genetic isolation.

Bibliography Guide

When you research your endangered species, you must give credit to the authors and sources you used. This is called creating a bibliography. Use the formats below to cite your sources.

Source Type	Format & Example
Book	Format: Author Last Name, First Name. <i>Book Title</i> . Publisher, Year. Example: Smith, Jane. <i>The World of Endangered Animals</i> . Nature Press, 2021.
Website	Format: Author Last Name, First Name (if available). "Article Title." <i>Website Name</i> , URL. Date Accessed. Example: National Geographic. "Amur Leopard." <i>National Geographic Kids</i> , kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/amur-leopard. Accessed 12 Oct. 2023.
Magazine/Journal	Format: Author Last Name, First Name. "Article Title." <i>Magazine Name</i> , vol. #, no. #, Year, pp. #.#. Example: Doe, John. "Saving the Pangolin." <i>Wildlife Weekly</i> , vol. 14, no. 2, 2022, pp. 22-25.

My Bibliography

Write your sources below in the correct format.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Nonfiction Advocacy Writing Template

Use this outline to structure your advocacy essay. An advocacy essay states a problem, provides evidence, and urges the reader to take action.

Paragraph	Purpose & Details	Notes
Introduction	Hook the reader, introduce your species, and state your claim (e.g., The red panda is heading toward extinction, but we can save it).	
Body 1: Threats	Explain the main threats facing your species. Use evidence from your research (habitat loss, poaching, climate change).	
Body 2: Conservation	Describe what is currently being done to help. Mention specific organizations or laws protecting your species.	
Conclusion	Summarize the main points and end with a strong Call to Action. Tell the reader exactly what they can do to help.	

Nonfiction Transition Words

Use these transition words to connect your ideas and make your writing flow smoothly. Do not start every sentence the same way!

Purpose	Transition Words / Phrases
Adding Information	Additionally, Furthermore, In addition, Moreover, Another reason, Equally important
Showing Cause & Effect	As a result, Consequently, Therefore, Thus, Because of this, For this reason
Showing Contrast	However, On the other hand, Although, In contrast, Conversely, Despite this
Concluding / Call to Action	In conclusion, Ultimately, To sum up, Clearly, It is essential that, We must

Advocacy Poster Template

Use this space to plan your advocacy poster. An advocacy poster must grab attention, state the problem, and tell people how they can help. Draw sketches and write your key phrases below.

SPECIES NAME (Big & Bold!)	
<i>[Sketch your main image or drawing of your species here]</i>	
Key Fact 1: _____	Key Fact 2: _____
Major Threat: _____	Conservation Action: _____
CALL TO ACTION: What can WE do? _____	

Peer Feedback Form

Evaluator Name: _____ Presenter Name: _____

Part 1: Writing Feedback (Review their essay/poster text)

Question	Your Feedback
What is one strong piece of evidence they used to support their claim?	
Did they use transition words effectively? Give an example.	
Is their Call to Action clear? What are they asking you to do?	

Part 2: Presentation Feedback (Review their speaking and visuals)

Question	Your Feedback
What is one thing they did well during their spoken presentation? (Voice, eye contact)	
How effective were their visuals (slides/poster)? Did they help you understand the topic?	
What is one suggestion you have to make their presentation even better?	

Thank You for Your Purchase!

We hope this **Endangered Species Research Project Bundle** engages your students and sparks meaningful advocacy in your classroom. Your support means the world to small educational creators like UM Printables!

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