



David Suzuki

(adapted from the David Suzuki Foundation's "Connecting with Nature" publication)

Age: Grades 4-8

Lesson Plan One: Ruth Foster

Objective: To understand that individuals, as well as groups and organizations, can make a difference when it comes to nature and that everyone is responsible for preserving our environment.

Background: David Suzuki has inspired many Canadians to protect nature. His organization, the David Suzuki Foundation, has a mission to work to protect the diversity of nature and our quality of life, now and for the future.

Activity: To launch this lesson and introduce David Suzuki and what he stands for, watch the trailer for *Force of Nature: The David Suzuki Movie* at david Suzuki.org/youthandnature/c.

Next, visit the David Suzuki Foundation website and find the "about" button on the homepage to read more about the foundation.

Read the biography below of the man behind the foundation.

David Takayoshi Suzuki was born in Vancouver, B.C. on March 24th, 1936. His grandparents had come to Canada from Japan in the early 1900s, making him a third generation Canadian.

But the fact that David was born in Canada meant sadly little when Canada went to war against Japan in 1941. The Canadian government insisted that people of Japanese descent – even those born in Canada – be shipped off to internment camps, ghost towns in the Rockies, and plantations. David and his family were sent to a camp in interior B.C.

After the war, the Japanese were freed, and the Suzukis moved east to Ontario. In Leamington, they were the only non-white family in the neighbourhood. Life was lonely for David, and he began spending hours exploring the swamp near his home. He now recalls this swamp as his inspiration to protect nature.



After high school, David studied zoology and genetics in university. He earned his PhD and became a professor at the University of British Columbia, where he ended up teaching for 40 years. His teaching skills transferred well to TV and radio, and he hosted his first TV show for kids (called Suzuki on Science) in 1970. In 1979, he began hosting a popular CBC science show called The Nature of Things, which he still hosts today.

Then, in 1989, David had a new idea. His radio series, It's a Matter of Survival, had called people's attention to the serious state of the planet, and thousands of listeners were writing to him, asking what they could do to help the environment. So David and his wife Tara Cullis, a professor at Harvard University, created the David Suzuki Foundation, an organization dedicated to finding solutions for environmental problems.

They began by focusing on projects in other countries, such as protecting indigenous people in Columbia and salmon in Japan. When environmentalists from all over the world gathered in Brazil for the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, they created the Declaration of Interdependence, to remind everyone that we are one with the Earth.

Today, the David Suzuki Foundation focuses on protecting oceans, freshwater, and terrestrial wildlife in Canada, and finding climate change solutions.

Now in his (eighties), David still volunteers for the foundation he created in Vancouver. When he's not in the office, he's usually sharing this knowledge through speaking presentations, recording episodes of The Nature of Things, and spending precious time with his children and grandchildren.

Reflection questions:

1. What do you find interesting about David Suzuki's life?
2. Why do you think he has inspired so many people?
3. How can you connect your experiences with nature to what you have learned about the David Suzuki Foundation?
5. Have you, or anyone you know, ever taken some personal action that made a difference? Did it inspire others to take action as well

Challenge: What information on the David Suzuki Foundation did you find meaningful or inspiring?

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