

LESSON: Kids Speak for Soil GRADE: 1**OBJECTIVES:****English Language Arts****Speaking and Listening Standards**

- **SL.1.4** Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.
- **SL.1.5** Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
- **SL.1.6** Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

Physical Education

- **P.E. Standard 6:** Values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES:

- Books:
 - *Life in a Bucket of Soil*, by Silverstein

PRESENTATION:

Soil is one of the most dramatic places on Earth! Some people might think soil is boring and even refer to it as “dirt”. But, did you know every day millions upon millions of births, deaths, and transformations occur right under our feet? There are millions, even billions of living things in a teaspoon of soil. That’s dramatic!

What do you think the organisms would have to say to humans? In this lesson kids get a chance to speak for the soil, by writing and acting in their own play. *Kids Speak for Soil*.

DIRECTIONS:

1. First read the book, *Life in a Bucket of Soil*.
2. Optional, but very useful, begin with this lesson: the *Clean and Green, Kdg. Science, Composting with Worms Lesson*.
3. Tell the class they get to write and act out a play. The first step will be some research the characters, setting, and action in the play. You need to observe the soil!

4. Go outside and observe the creatures in soil. Tell the kids the important part of the research is to *imagine being the organisms*. What would the organisms say to humans? Have them take notes. Notes should include words, photos, sketches, samples from nature. Notes should include what is seen, smelled, heard, felt, (but, probably not tasted in this case) Kids should also note what they think the organisms would say if they could speak to us. (If there is a compost system on site, this is also a good place to observe organisms in the soil.)
5. Now it time to get the notes, drawings, and ideas about their observations in to script form. The perspective of this play is from the viewpoint of the soil community members. *What would the organisms say to humans?* This could be done as a large group with the teacher taking note of the kids ideas script form. Or, small groups of kids can work together. The lines of the play are what the kids want to say *for* the organisms and soil. Below is a sample script. Please modify it as you like.
6. The play needs characters. Each kid chooses an organism to represent and depending on the time allotted, should create some sort of costume or least identification. This can be as simple as a name tag or a mask which represents the organism. Or, the class can spend several periods making more elaborate costumes to make themselves appear as the organism they are representing. The same is true for the set of the play. With limited time, have the children use imaginations to create the set in their minds. With more time available, they could create a more elaborate set with backdrop boards of soil, paintings or drawings of organisms, worm holes, etc.
7. Then have the kids act out their play by taking turns acting out the organism they chose and reciting what they have decided the organism might say to humans.

TIME:

45-120 min.
depending on choice of
costume complexity

Sample Script

I speak for the _____

(Name the member of the soil community for which you speak)

What it's like to be me:

(Describe your size and shape, how you move, how you sound or smell or feel)

What's most important to me:

(Describe what you require to live and thrive. Is this jeopardized or helped by humans? What do you want humans to know?)

Why I'm special:

(What do you contribute to the soil community? What does the soil community provide for humans?)

How can humans be good earthlings and friends to the soil community?:

(Tell the humans what is helpful and harmful and what you need from them: be specific)

Other actors & audience can respond: **"We hear you _____.**

We appreciate you and will work to be more helpful.