

Lesson Plan

Human Invaders

Book: *Rats*

Series: Invasive Species

Level: Navigator

Objective

To help students write opinion pieces on whether humans could be considered an invasive species.

Supplies

- *Rats* book
- Access to the PBS Learning Media video “RARE: Invasive Species Threaten Island Diversity”: <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/rare17-sci-invasives/rare-invasive-species-threaten-island-diversity/>
- Whiteboard
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Read through the *Rats* book, or assign it to students to read on their own.

Activity

The book mentions the threat that black rats pose to the native birds of New Zealand. Watch the PBS Learning Media video to learn more about how invasive species of the past and present threaten New Zealand’s wildlife. After watching the video, have students discuss the following questions. Write students’ answers on the whiteboard.

- How do invasive species harm local ecosystems?
- In what ways can humans and their actions be harmful to biodiversity and ecosystems?

Next, have students journal individually about whether humans could be considered an invasive species. After a few minutes, have students form pairs to discuss their thoughts. After a few more minutes, invite students to share their thoughts with the whole class.

Finally, students should use their notes, the class discussion, and any relevant details from the video and book to write opinion pieces on whether humans could be considered an invasive species. Students’ paragraphs should include the following:

- A clear thesis statement in which the student takes a stance on whether humans could be considered an invasive species

- At least three sentences using specific details to support the student's claim
- A clear concluding statement that summarizes the student's opinion

Evaluation

Collect the paragraphs at the end of class. Give students up to 6 points for the following:

- 1 point for a clear thesis statement that responds to the prompt
- 1 point for each of the three supporting sentences that uses details to back the student's claim
- 1 point for an original summarizing concluding sentence
- 1 point for writing that is relatively free of grammatical and spelling errors

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational text, grade 5 (RI 5.1), and writing standards, grade 5 (W 5.1), and the National Science Education Standards' Content Standards C and F, grades 5–8.