

Lesson Plan

Big Invaders

Book: *Zebra Mussels*

Series: Invasive Species

Level: Navigator

Objective

To help students explore the effects of invasive species spreading throughout ecosystems, using the San Francisco Bay as an example.

Supplies

- *Zebra Mussels* book
- Access to the PBS Learning Media video “San Francisco Bay Invaders”:
<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/71a3dc8d-8936-4ce0-8d8d-8c07c9d47fec/71a3dc8d-8936-4ce0-8d8d-8c07c9d47fec/>
- Paper and pencils
- Whiteboard

Before the Activity

Read through the *Zebra Mussels* book, or assign it to students to read on their own. Pull up the PBS Learning Media video in your web browser.

Activity

Invasive species are non-native species that negatively affect the ecosystem. Invite students to share their thoughts on the following questions:

- What do you know or what have you read about invasive species?
- How might invasive species be spread by humans or other means?
- How might invasive species affect biodiversity?

As a class, watch the “San Francisco Bay Invaders” video. San Francisco Bay is one of the most-invaded aquatic ecosystems in the world—in some places, as many as 90 percent of the species currently living there are non-native. The video describes some of these species, how they got to the bay, the impact they’re having, and what people can do to help. After watching the video, have students journal about the following questions. Encourage students to reflect on the video and the book as they write down their answers.

- How do invasive species (or exotic species, as the video calls them) impact native species?
- Why is it important to protect and maintain healthy populations of native species?
- How can people and governments help prevent the spread of invasive species?

After a few minutes, have students come back together as a class to share their answers. Call on as many people as possible to share. Write students' responses on the whiteboard.

Evaluation

Could students use what they learned from the book and the video to develop articulate and well-reasoned thoughts on the effect invasive species have on native species?

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational text, grade 6 (RI 6.1, 6.7), and the National Science Education Standards' Content Standards C and F, grades 5–8.