



Lesson AHS.40

BECOMING AN ADVOCATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Unit. Stage Four of Development—SERVE

Problem Area. How Do I Grow Others and Contribute to Society?

Precepts. **E2:** Perform Leadership Tasks Associated with Citizenship.

National Standards. NL-ENG.K12-4 — Communication Skills — Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.



Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will ...

- 1 Recognize the importance of the agriculture and natural resource industry.

- 2 Define what being an advocate really means.
- 3 Recognize the avenues of advocacy for agriculture and natural resources.



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Time. Instruction time for this lesson: 50 minutes.



Resources

USDA, Importance of Agriculture,
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/RCAT/rcat102/Rcat102d.pdf>



Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

- ✓ Writing Surface
- ✓ Overhead Projector
- ✓ AHS.40.TM.A
- ✓ AHS.40.TM.B
- ✓ AHS.40.TM.C
- ✓ AHS.40.Assess—one per student

Key Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in bold italics:

- ***Advocacy***
- ***Advocate***



Interest Approach

Activity

In a moment, you will shock the class with some surprising and unfortunate news. The legal driving age has been raised to 21 years old. Try your best to fool students for the sake of making an important point.



Before we get started today, I want to let you in on some bad news. I need you to give me your undivided attention, as this is something that affects all of you. As of this morning, the state has placed a temporary ban on anyone under the age of 21 from operating a motor vehicle. For those of you who have not yet received your license, you may not be able to get it now until you are 21. If you have your license, it has been suspended until further notice. This has all happened because the lawmakers feel that your age group is the biggest cause of accidents in our state. What do you all feel about this? If you have a comment, feel free to raise your hand.

Allow for some student response to the state's decision. Responses may include: this isn't fair, this is stupid, etc. Once you have the students interested, break the news to them that this really didn't happen, but then ask students what they would have done if it were real.



You all seem to have some passionate comments. But you all need to relax; the state didn't take away your driving privileges. This example was just to make a point to you. If this really had happened, do you know what you really could do to create change in the minds of those who made this decision? Would you be able to give them good reasons as to why you should still have the right to



Drive? What if I told you that instead of the state taking away your right to drive, it wanted to take away your right to be here in this ag class? What if the state government decided to take away your FFA organization? Then what would you do? Our industry is very threatened by people making decisions for us, with little or no knowledge about how our industry works. Even ag education is sometimes threatened. By the end of class, you will know exactly what to do when something like this happens.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1. Recognize the importance of the agriculture and natural resource industry.

Activity

In a moment, you will ask the students to write a list of everything that they have done since they woke up. This includes taking a shower, getting dressed, eating breakfast, coming to school, wearing their backpack, etc. Guide them through as many things as possible. This is an individual activity. Give students approximately three minutes or time as needed based on their prior knowledge.



When I say go, I want you to take out a sheet of paper and record every activity that you have done or item that you have used today. For example, you might say you got up, used the bathroom, took a shower, ate breakfast, etc. This list should include everything that you did up until this point and every item that you needed to use to do it. This is an individual activity. You will have three minutes so work quickly! Please work silently until I say stop. You may now start on your lists!

Circulate around the room to assist students with lists. As students seem to be finishing, give them a 30-second warning. Ask students for examples of items on their lists.



You have 30 seconds left.... STOP! By a raise of hand, who would like to share a few items with the rest of us.

As you call on students, write their activities or items on the writing surface. Collect about three students' ideas.



This looks like a great list. Now comes the challenge. Who can tell me which of these activities would not be possible without agriculture?

Try to show that most, if not all, activities or items on the list are directly tied to agriculture. For example: the shampoo has plant products in it; the food they ate was raised by a farmer; the clothes they are wearing as well as the towel they dried off with came from cotton; the paper they are writing on was made from wood fiber, etc.



Can you all see that it is tough to think of things in our daily lives that aren't a part of agriculture? We all take these things for granted. Agriculture is a very important part of every human being's life. Here are a few figures for you to capture in your notes to help explain just how valuable agriculture is to us.

If this information has already been covered, this portion of the activity can be skipped and you may begin with Objective 2.

Display AHS.40.TM.A.

I. Importance of Agriculture

- A. More than one in every six jobs in America stems from agriculture—USDA 2002.
- B. We produce an abundance of food, for ourselves as well as for other nations; we export over \$53 billion per year to other nations.
- C. Our food is some of the cheapest per capita of any food in the world.
- D. Our farmers are the most productive in the world.
- E. Many states rely solely on agriculture for their economy.
- F. Many crops are grown nowhere else in the world commercially.
- G. As the world population grows, agriculture will need to feed all of the world's people.

Objective 2. Define what being an advocate really means.

In a moment, you will use a real-life example to show students what an advocate is. Students will pair up and alternate being a parent and a son or daughter. The son or daughter will try to convince the other student that he or she should be able to extend curfew by one hour. Students will have four minutes to complete the activity. During the activity, choose two responsible students whom you observe in a good discussion, to come forward and reenact their battle with a parent. Ask students to keep score on who makes the better argument. Critique how the example went. Explain that all of the students were just acting as advocates.



When I say go, you are going to break into pairs. One of you will be a parent, and the other will be the son or daughter. All parents, please tune out and don't listen to a word I am going to say. Sons and daughters, you are going to try to convince your parents to let you extend your curfew by one hour. Try your best to make this as realistic as possible.



Now I need the attention of all of the parents. Sons and daughters, please tune me out for a moment. Parents, you are going to do your best to avoid saying yes or giving in to your son's or daughter's request. Remember to keep this professional, appropriate for the classroom, and as realistic as possible. You have four minutes. GO!

Observe students and start to seek out volunteers. Give students about four minutes for this activity to allow adequate time for sharing their experiences.



Great job, everyone! Now I need the two I chose to come to the front and reenact your conversation in front of the class. Let's all pay close attention to them. Try to keep score on who makes the



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better arguments. Make sure to keep your comments to yourself until the discussion ends. OK group, you may begin.

Make comments about the group's performance and how the son or daughter tried to convince the parent.



What we all just witnessed, and what we all just practiced together, was how to be an advocate. This is exactly what an advocate does. In agriculture, we try to get our opinions known and create change for the betterment of our industry and way of life. Remember, as we saw today, there are a variety of ways to do this. Take a second to capture in your notes what an advocate is.

Display AHS.40.TM.B.

II. An **advocate** tries to convince others to create change in policy or in the way another person thinks about something. This person could also be known as a promoter or activist on a

given issue.

Objective 3. Recognize the avenues of advocacy for agriculture and natural resources.

III. **Advocacy**—giving aid to a cause

To drive home the point that there are different ways to be an advocate, lead the students to find that they too, in the last example, had different avenues of advocacy. They could have gone to another parent.



In the activity before, you all did a great job of acting out a real-life example of advocacy. But what might you have done if your real parent, say, your dad, still said no, even after you gave a great argument?

Lead students to say they might go to their mothers.



Great. In the same way, you have options when you are an advocate for agriculture. Let's capture a few ways we can affect change.

Display AHS.40.TM.C.

A. Contact your representative

1. The President
2. Senator
3. Congressional representative
4. State Governor
5. State Senator
6. State Assembly member
7. County Board of Supervisors
8. City Council member
9. Mayor



10. School board
11. Local or state agencies
- B. Contact the press
 1. Newspaper
 2. Local TV news
 3. Radio
- C. How to contact.
 1. By phone
 2. By letter
 3. In person
- D. Always remember to keep it positive and be professional.



Review/Summary

Try to summarize the ideas of the day by relating back to the way that the students felt when they thought they may not be able to drive soon. They now have the option to create change and be a true advocate.



Today, you all got a chance to see what it feels like when change happens without your input. You all seemed very concerned at the idea that you may not be driving anymore or any time soon. But after today, you now know that you can channel all of that energy toward a positive end. You all know what it means to be a real advocate and where you can apply your advocacy. Agriculture is a very important part of all of our lives, and someday soon, you may find yourselves being an advocate for your way of life. It could be much more important than just driving; it could mean whether or not you will have food to eat. With this in mind, we are going to see whether or not we are up to the challenge of defending our industry...Agriculture.

Use the Eye-Witness News Moment to review. Ask students to create a list of 3 questions critical to the ag industry, for example, "Doesn't agriculture use up all of our state's water?" Once each student has created their questions, break them into groups of three, one camera person, one reporter, and one expert. Have the groups rotate so that each person gets to play each role. When finished, ask for a couple of stand out groups to perform in front of the class. Give a few critiques if necessary.

Wow, were are a room of experts. Continue to work on these issues, remember, agriculture is everyone's livelihood!

At this time pass out AHS.40.Assess.



Application

►Extended Classroom Activity:

Have students find an issue that concerns them and interview others on the issue to find out if there is an overall concern.

► **FFA Activity:**

Have students participate in the Issues CDE.

► **SAE Activity:**

Have students write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper outlining why their SAE is valuable to the agricultural industry.



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✓ **Evaluation**

AHS.40.Assess

Answers to Assessment:

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. F
5. Examples from AHS.40.TM.C



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AHS.40.Assess Name: _____

BECOMING AN ADVOCATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

► True or False

Write “T” for true and “F” for false. (2 points each)

- _____ 1. One in six jobs in America is in agriculture.
- _____ 2. America exports over \$50 billion in agriculture commodities.
- _____ 3. An advocate must be an elected official.
- _____ 4. An advocate has very few choices to create change.

► Short Answer—(5 points)

Briefly answer the following statement.

- 5. List five examples of people one could contact to advocate for agriculture.



IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE

- ◆ More than one in every six jobs in America stems from agriculture—USDA 2002.
- ◆ We produce an abundance of food, for ourselves as well as for other nations; we export over \$53 billion per year to other nations.
- ◆ Our food is some of the cheapest per capita of food anywhere in the world.
- ◆ Our farmers are the most productive in the world.
- ◆ Many states rely solely on agriculture for their economy.
- ◆ Many crops are grown nowhere else in the world commercially.
- ◆ As the world population grows, agriculture will need to feed all of the world's people.



AHS.40.TM.B

WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE?

An *advocate* tries to convince others to create change in policy or in the way another person thinks about something. This person could also be known as a promoter or activist on a given issue.



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AHS.40.TM.C

TO WHOM CAN I ADVOCATE?

Contact your representative

- ➔ **The President**
- ➔ **Senator**
- ➔ **Congressional representative**
- ➔ **State Governor**
- ➔ **State Senator**
- ➔ **State Assembly member**
- ➔ **County Board of Supervisors**

- ➔ City Council member
- ➔ Mayor
- ➔ School board
- ➔ Local or state agencies

Contact the press

- ➔ Newspaper
- ➔ Local TV news
- ➔ Radio

How to contact?

- ➔ By phone
- ➔ By letter
- ➔ In person

Always remember to keep it positive and be professional.

