



SPEAK FOR THE TREES, Boston

TreeBoston.org | @Trees_Boston | trees@treeboston.org

Benefits of Urban Trees

Grades: 5th - 8th

Standards: 5.ESS.3.1 / 6.ETS.1.1 / 7.LS.2.4 / 8.ESS.3.5

Setting: Indoor

Purpose of Lesson: Students will learn the importance of a robust urban forest when living in a city, urban forestry, and define the context of redlining.

Essential Questions:

- What is an urban forest?
- Why are trees important in urban environments?
- What is redlining, and how do we see its effects today?

Materials: Google slides, paper, coloring utensils (markers, pencils, crayons)

Program Session Schedule [65 - 70 hours]:

Self Introduction & Group Check-ins: 5- 10 mins

Discussion of lesson topic: 30 mins

Activity: 20 mins

Review & Wrap-Up: 10 mins

Lesson Implementation

Self Introduction & Group Check-ins (5 - 10 mins): Take this time to introduce ourselves and our organization, who we are, what we do, and our goals for today's lesson.

Guided Discussion (30 mins):

*To engage students, have them volunteer to write their shared answers on the board, use sticky notes, or use Mentimeter to share them aloud.

- What is urban forestry?
 - “What does an urban forest look like?”
 - Allow students to think about this term and try defining it before providing this definition:
 - A forest or collection of trees that grow in a city and are being taken care of.
- “What is Tree Equity?”
 - Tree Equity ensures fair access to the benefits of trees, especially in low-income and minority communities. It addresses disparities in tree distribution within communities.
 - Tree equity: the importance of trees in all neighborhoods.



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- Show the image of the benefits of trees and ask students the questions below. Be sure to add context to any or all of the benefits on this slide.
 - A few example benefits:
 - Provide valuable ecosystem services, such as air pollution removal, carbon storage, oxygen production, and runoff prevention.
 - Which of these benefits are you familiar with?
 - Which of these benefits are you not familiar with?
 - Which of these benefits do you still have questions about?
- What happens to ecosystems without trees, and how does that affect the people living there? Why do we need trees?
 - Ecosystems suffer from increased air pollution, disrupted water cycles, loss of habitat for wildlife, and decreased biodiversity, which degrades overall environmental health and resilience.
 - Trees allow us to clean our air, cool our neighborhoods, and improve our mental and physical health.
- Use all proceeding slides and information on them to provide a deeper dive into the benefits discussed earlier.

*Keyword: *Urban Heat Island Effect* = When heat is trapped in cities' concrete, they release greenhouse gasses and air pollution, and temperatures increase.

- What is redlining?
 - A discriminatory policy withholding resources and functioning from neighborhoods is considered “hazardous” to investment. Designed to harm racial and ethnic minorities and low-income residents
- How do we see its effects today? What do you see in these images? Are there any trends?
 - Show an example image of redlining from the Google slides
 - These effects of redlining are seen today in several underserved communities throughout multiple cities. This includes Boston!

Activity (20 mins):

1. Draw a picture that displays urban spaces without trees and their effects and “a tree in action.”
 - a. This picture should show the benefits of a tree.
 - i. Examples: a tree on the street reducing heat, cleaning the air, or someone picking up fruit from a tree.



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Example Image:



Review & Wrap-Up (10 mins): Allow students to show what they each drew and have a few share their work for a group discussion.

Reflection questions:

1. What did you draw and why?
2. What benefits do you view as most important in your community?
3. In what ways do you think Redlining has most harmed poor communities and communities of color?
4. What else did you learn today?