

## TEKS-Based Activity for Grade 5

# Lessons of the Lorax

### Description:

In the first part of this activity, students read *The Lorax* and analyze and interpret the events in the story that led to the damage of the environment. In the second part of the activity, students compare the events in *The Lorax* with real-life events concerning the brown pelican.

### Time Frame:

2 lessons (45 minutes each)

### Correlation to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills:

During this activity, students will be exposed to the following Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills:

**Note:** Some TEKS statements below end with a ; or *and* and nothing thereafter—this indicates that further TEKS statements follow but are not included here.

**(5.9) Science concepts.** The student knows that adaptations may increase the survival of members of a species. The student is expected to:

- (A) compare the adaptive characteristics of species that improve their ability to survive and reproduce in an ecosystem;

**(5.11) Science concepts.** The student knows that certain past events affect present and future events. The student is expected to:

- (A) identify and observe actions that require time for changes to be measurable, including growth, erosion, dissolving, weathering, and flow;

**Note:** The TEKS listed here are the main content TEKS for this activity; however, this activity may also cover additional content and process skills included in other TEKS.

### Materials:

*The Lorax* (at least 1 copy per class)

Comparing *The Lorax* and the Brown Pelican chart (included at the end of this activity)

Computers with web access

Student journals

### Resources:

Dr. Seuss. *The Lorax*. New York: Random House, 1971.

“Eastern Brown Pelican.” *Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*.

[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd\\_bk\\_w7000\\_0013\\_ea](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_bk_w7000_0013_ea)

stern\_brown\_pelican.pdf (Date retrieved: October 18, 2006.) Copyright 2006, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

“Brown Pelican.” *All About Birds, Cornell Lab of Ornithology.*

[www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Brown\\_Pelican.html#conservation](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Brown_Pelican.html#conservation) (Date retrieved: October 18, 2006.) Copyright 2003, Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

### **Background Information for the Teacher:**

There is rarely only one opinion about a problem and how to solve it. The participants involved usually hold different opinions and positions on the problem, each of which are shaped by individual beliefs and values. It is important to introduce students to multifaceted issues in an easy and understandable manner so they can understand who the participants are and what they each support. For example, in *The Lorax* the Once-ler valued money more than the environment, while the Lorax valued the environment more than money.

The real-life issue of the endangered brown pelican has had several participants over the years with differing points of view. Years ago, many farmers held the position that they had the right to use effective pesticides like DDT to protect their crops, despite the danger to bird populations. Many biologists held the position that several bird species would become extinct unless DDT was banned. The people who lived in the coastal areas affected by this controversy had their own beliefs about the brown pelican issue. Some people valued the birds; other people valued their jobs and other economic factors even if it meant using the pesticides. In 1972, the Environmental Protection Agency banned the use of DDT. Since the ban, the number of brown pelicans has steadily increased.

### **Part I**

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#### **Procedures:**

1. Read aloud *The Lorax*, by Dr. Seuss.
2. Have students list in their journals the changes they observe during the story.
3. Ask students to analyze and record in their journals the message *The Lorax* attempts to convey.
4. Lead a class discussion about the problems portrayed in the story and events they see happening in their own environment.

### **Part II**

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#### **Advance Preparation:**

1. Prepare copies of the Comparing *The Lorax* and the Brown Pelican chart for each student group.

2. Prepare a transparency of the Comparing *The Lorax* and the Brown Pelican chart.

**Procedures:**

1. Review *The Lorax* with the class, rereading it aloud if necessary. Divide the class into small groups and distribute the Comparing *The Lorax* and the Brown Pelican chart to each group. If you have more than one copy of *The Lorax*, distribute copies or make them readily available to student groups.
2. Have groups briefly research the issue of the brown pelican and the use of DDT. Students should be able to identify the primary problem, the participants, and the participants' opinions. The websites listed in the Resources section may be helpful. If students seem to have difficulty finding information, help them research the facts and/or provide missing information.
2. Using the transparency of the Comparing *The Lorax* and the Brown Pelican chart as a guide, lead the students in a discussion comparing the events in *The Lorax* with events concerning the brown pelican that they learned in their research.
3. Working in groups, students complete the Comparing *The Lorax* and the Brown Pelican chart with information from the discussion.

Part II adapted from: Ramsey, John. (1997) "The Lorax and Sustainable Development." Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/resources/activities/lorax.phtml](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/resources/activities/lorax.phtml). (Date retrieved: October 24, 2006.) Adapted with permission.

## Comparing *The Lorax* and the Brown Pelican

Issue Component	<i>The Lorax</i>	Brown Pelican Issue
<b>Issue</b> (What is the disagreement about the problem?)		
<b>Participants</b>		
<b>Participants' Opinions</b> (What are the participants' personal beliefs about the issue?)		