



# Citizen Action

---

**In a nutshell:** After visiting the sanctuary, students will be able to describe different ways people can be an active citizens. They will also be able to discuss different conservation issues the sanctuary deals with as a rescue facility. In the classroom, students will divide into groups and discuss different issues they think are interesting, then learn different categories and examples of actions that people can take and implement one of them, locally.

**Grade Level:**

7<sup>th</sup> +

**Time Required:**

1hr – 4 weeks

**Materials:**

- A copy of the five categories of action for each group of students
- Access to materials to create actions (e.g. posters and letters)

**Procedure:**

Students may have already started their work on a conservation issue during their tour. This would occur during tours of over one-and-a-half hours in length. In the classroom, have the students list issues they are working on. If they have already picked how they are going to act, allow time for them to get into their groups and work on their projects. Have the students describe to you the category of action they are taking and what method they have chosen. Allow time throughout the week for the students to research their issue and implement their projects. Once the actions have been completed, assign the students to write out what issue they chose to address and why, what action they implemented, and how it affected the community. Emphasize that there does not need to be a large effect on the community. Instead, point out how a poster allows a passerby to be educated and encourage action of their own at a later time.

If the students had not begun work on their project during their tour, begin with the following steps. Review what the students learned on their conservation tour. List different issues the sanctuary or its animals face on the board. Allow people to voice their own opinions on the various issues. For example, one conservation issue the sanctuary is a part of is working towards the reintroduction of the Mexican wolf. During their tour, students will have learned that there are two sides to the issue: wildlife enthusiasts who want wolves back in the wild and ranchers who are dependent on their cattle who can be prey for the wolves. Make all possible attempts to keep a balance between different points of view. After they all have brainstormed what they

learned on the tour, list the five categories of action and give examples of what each means. (“5 Categories of Action” located on page 3).

Explain that some actions are harder to take locally and brainstorm appropriate actions for the local level. Consider persuasion. Appropriate persuasive actions may include making a poster or writing to the local newspaper. Have the students get into groups, choose an issue to address, and decide on an action. This may take one or two sessions as the students should research issues to make sure they have all the facts. Have the students think about any alternative actions available. Is the action method chosen the most effective? What are the consequences of these actions? Are their values consistent with this action? Do they have the time needed to complete this action? Do they have the resources needed to make this action effective?

List how to create their plan of action by having the students answer the following questions:

1. What are the roles of each of the members?
2. What are the steps required to achieve the action?
3. What is the time frame for each step? (Teachers might want to give the students a time limit in which their actions must be completed).

Allow time for the students to get together and work on their action as a group. After the actions have been taken, have the students complete a short write-up detailing the issue addressed, the different steps of the project, and the action taken. Make sure they reflect on the action by including a discussion of what they accomplished and if it created an immediate or delayed response in their audience.

*5 categories of action (By Harold Hungerford an associate at Southern Illinois University):*

**1. Persuasion:** A logical or emotional appeal to motivate other human beings to modify their values and take positive environmental action (Ex: posters, newspaper articles, advertisements, radio/tele, announcements, verbal discussions, speeches, letter writing, debates, newspaper articles, magazine articles, and modeling behavior)

**2. Consumer action:** Economic Action:

a. Direct Boycott: refusing to buy a negative environmental impact in order to eliminate their production, (ex: refusing to buy non recyclable materials)

b. Indirect boycott: refusing to buy products from a company that the company it's self is engaging in negative environmental impacts, but not the produce it's self

c. Conservation: Reducing consumption of a product that despite its negative impact is still needed by people (ex: electrical energy)

d. Monetary and volunteer support: contributing money or energy to an organization that is focused on positive impacts, or conservation.

e. Economic patronage: buying positive impacting products.

**3. Political action:** An action to persuade an electorate, elected official, or executive governmental agency to conform to the values held by the person or persons taking that action. (Voting, running for office, campaigning)

**4. Legal action:** taking legal or judiciary action that is aimed at some law enforcement or legal restraint on some environmental behavior perceived as undesirable.

**5. Ecomanagement:** Positive physical action by an individual or group that improves or maintains some part of the environment. (Ex: ecosystem restoration, trail maintenance)