

THE GLOBAL GOALS

introduction

On September 25th 2015, countries around the world agreed upon a set of global goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. These are known as the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

The SDGs were developed to build upon the success of the **UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**, which were established in 2000 with the overall mission of improving the lives of the world's poor by 2015. The United Nations considered the MDGs "the most successful anti-poverty movement in history," and the numbers back it up. Among other successes, the target of halving the proportion of people without access to improved water sources was achieved ahead of schedule in 2010, the goal of halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger was just narrowly missed, and the number of new HIV infections fell by around 40 percent between 2000 and 2013.

With the adoption of the SDGs, countries renewed their commitment to alleviating suffering for the world's poor, but also laid out a vision for supporting well-being for *all* the world's people, as well as the environment. The SDGs outline goals not only related to poverty reduction, but also things like affordable and clean energy, climate action, peace, justice, and strong institutions. There are 17 specific goals all to be achieved by 2030. Reaching these important goals will require commitments from governments as well as individuals around the world.

Vocabulary: gross domestic product, United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

materials

Part 1

- Student Worksheet
- Graphic Organizer (provided)

Part 2

- None



Studies For Our Global Future

concept

Attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, aimed to improve the well-being of the world's people, will require global cooperation, commitment from governments, and individual action.

objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain the overall aim of the Sustainable Development Goals in their own words.
- Research a specific SDG and create a visual display to effectively communicate information about their goal to classmates.
- Describe the focus, importance, and reasoning behind at least three other SDGs, in addition to the one they research.
- Analyze the Social Progress Index as a tool for measuring countries' success in meeting the SDGs.

subjects

AP Human Geography, Geography, Environmental Science (General and AP), English Language Arts, Economics

skills

Critical thinking, understanding cause and effect, researching, synthesizing research, visually communicating research

method

Students research and create a visual display summarizing a Sustainable Development Goal then consider the role of social progress in meeting the SDGs.

Part 1: Understanding the SDGs

procedure

1. Introduce the SDGs by either reading the Introduction aloud or by having students watch this short video: "[Emma Watson introduces The World's Largest Lesson 2016 #2 - The Global Goals.](#)"
2. Explain that in pairs, students will conduct research to become an expert on one of the global goals. Their research will include not only what the goal is, but also its targets, why the goal is important to accomplish, its relationship to other goals, and ideas for ways the goal can be achieved.
3. Divide students into pairs, and either assign one SDG to each pair or allow each pair to choose a goal that interests them. If students choose which goal to research, be sure a wide range of the goals are represented.

Sustainable Development Goals:

- No poverty
- Zero hunger
- Good health and well-being
- Quality education
- Gender equality
- Clean water and sanitation
- Affordable and clean energy
- Decent work and economic growth
- Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Reduced inequalities
- Sustainable cities and communities
- Responsible consumption and production
- Climate action
- Life below water
- Life on land
- Peace, justice and strong institutions
- Partnerships for the goals

4. Distribute the Student Worksheet, one per student, and direct students to the [Sustainable Development Goals website](#). Students may want to supplement their research with other reputable sources, like the websites of the United Nations, World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, etc. Tell students that after recording their findings on the Worksheet, they will create a visual to help their classmates learn about their SDG. The visual can be in any format they choose: print or online poster, PowerPoint, video, live performance, etc.
5. Allow students plenty of time with their partner to complete their research and create their visual.
6. After all the visuals are complete, set up stations around the room with one SDG represented at each station and provide each student with three copies of the Graphic Organizer.
7. Instruct students to complete a gallery walk, where they will visit three or more stations. Students should fill out a new Graphic Organizer at each SDG station they visit to record their learning. Any group who has prepared a performance can present to the class after the gallery walk portion is complete.

discussion questions

1. Do you think the 17 SDGs address the UN's three ultimate objectives – ending extreme poverty, fighting inequality, and combating climate change? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

2. Are there some SDGs that would be difficult to achieve without the success of others? Which ones and why?

Answers will vary. Examples could include that climate action could be hard to achieve without affordable and clean energy, or zero hunger would be difficult to achieve without ending poverty.

3. If you had to pick one goal for the world, what would it be and why?

Answers will vary.

Part 2: Achieving the SDGs

Many challenges lie ahead when it comes to meeting the SDGs by 2030. The good news is that governments around the world have committed to its success. But how do we do it? Could we achieve them using the same approach that was successful in meeting the MDGs? Will we need to develop innovative approaches? One economic expert, Michael Green, argues that the answer to conquering the SDGs lies not in increasing **gross domestic product (GDP)**, which was key in addressing the poverty reduction goals of the MDGs, but by focusing on the well-being of individuals. His organization, The Social Progress Imperative, has developed a Social Progress Index, which measures countries based on the well-being of their citizens. Scores take into account not only people's ability to meet basic needs, but also to have access to education and healthcare, make personal choices, and pursue information. Using this Index, Green shows both how the SDGs can be met and how the average citizen can hold governments accountable.

procedure

1. Play Michael Green's TED Talk, "[How we can make the world a better place by 2030.](#)"
2. As they watch, students should record notes on why Green thinks GDP isn't the answer to meeting the SDGs, characteristics of the Social Progress Index, and how the Index can help us achieve the global goals.
3. Show students the [Social Progress Index website](#). View the index of several countries (click the map to see the summary or view the scorecard from the same module), and be sure to include a range of development levels and geographic regions. A good sampling might be the United States, Niger, Thailand, Russia, Ecuador, Germany, and Uruguay.

4. After the video and exploration of the Social Progress Index, students should write a journal entry addressing one or more of the following questions:
- Do you agree that focusing on social progress, instead of increasing GDP, is the best way to achieve the SDGs? Why or why not?
 - Is the Social Progress Index a useful tool for assessing the progress of countries' success? Why or why not?
 - The United States has an overall grade of 85.7 (ranked 28 out of 163 countries in 2020). Where does it fall short? Do you agree with this rating? Why or why not?
 - Do countries with a high score, like the United States, have an obligation to assist countries with a lower score, like Niger, so that they can achieve higher social progress? Why or why not?
 - How can citizens of a high scoring country hold their government accountable for allocating the resources needed to meet the global goals worldwide? What about a citizen of a low scoring country?

assessment

Assess students' understanding of the SDGs based on their Student Worksheet answers, the quality of their visual display, and the thoughtfulness of their journal entry in Part 2.

follow-up activity

Ask students what percentage of the U.S.'s annual budget they think goes to foreign aid. If they're like most Americans, they will probably say around 25 percent. Students might be surprised to learn that the actual number is less than 1 percent. Have students conduct research to determine how this 1 percent toward international aid is spent and how the U.S. ranks in terms of aid compared to other developed countries. Students can then form an argument explaining whether they think the U.S. should increase its foreign aid budget. For more information on current foreign aid obligations, students can visit the [Foreign Aid Explorer](#) operated by USAID.

THE GLOBAL GOALS | student worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Assignment: Research your Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) by visiting the website: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals>. For your SDG, read the Facts and Figures and Targets, watch relevant videos, read the PDF fact sheet, and click on the relevant links. Then answer the questions below.

After completing your research, create a visual (a print or online poster, PowerPoint, video, performance, etc.) to teach your classmates about your SDG. Your visual must include the information on this worksheet. Classmates will be learning from your presentation, so be sure that the information is clear, interesting, and looks professional.

1. Our Sustainable Development Goal is: _____

2. Our SDG targets include:

3. Our SDG is important for these six reasons:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

4. Explain how at least two other SDGs are related to your SDG.

a. _____

b. _____

5. Identify one way the international community can help address your SDG.

6. Identify one way individuals can help address your SDG.

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Goal: _____

Summary of targets:



Why does this goal matter?



What can be done to achieve this goal?

Goal: _____

Summary of targets:



Why does this goal matter?



What can be done to achieve this goal?