

Think like an Ancestor SESSION 3 (Future Thinking) [KS3, 50 mins]

Learning Objective:

To understand the impact of 'short termism' on the health of our planet and societies, and to explore the benefits of taking a longer view on how we work and live.

Key Environmental Concept: Future Thinking

Short termism is at the root of many of the challenges we face as a Planet, from overconsumption, instant gratification, to habitat destruction and social injustices. By growing our capacity to care for the long term, we can inspire better action today, the positive impacts of which will reverberate long after we're gone.

KS3/4 History Curriculum Statement:

- National Curriculum History KS 3/4: Ideas, political power, industry and empire: Britain, 1745-1901; e.g. 'Britain as the first industrial nation – the impact on society'

KS3 PSHE curriculum

- Money and Careers L3: to set realistic yet ambitious targets and goals

Assessment Statements

By the end of this unit...

- ⇒ all students should understand the difference between short-termism and long term thinking.
- ⇒ most students will be able to name at least one 'ancestor' who has made a difference.
- ⇒ some students should be able to draw connections between natural history, industrial heritage and current challenges including the Earth crisis.

Resources: Paper, pen

Key vocab: 7 Generations Principle, Ancestor,

Session Plan:

1. Review key concepts & learning from sessions 1 & 2 [10 mins]

- a) From the carbon and nature conservation stories, which events did the group feel had the best and worst impact on future generations?
- b) Did the group find any examples of long time thinking locally?

2. The Earthshot Prize [15 mins]

- a) Watch two videos which introduce the Earthshot prize (see slides).
- b) Watch the video about 'Low Carbon Materials' to see how a finalist to the Earthshot prize is reducing our use of Carbon (see slides).
- c) Teacher leads a group discussion to respond to these questions:
 - How does this technology reduce our use of carbon?
 - How might this technology improve the lives of the future seven generations?

3. Role Play activity: [20 mins]

- a) Meet Ancestor 1 Octavia Hill: in small groups of 3-4, students will role-play a conversation between Octavia Hill and a present day person. (See Appendix E for instructions and Appendix F for character sheet below).

4. Individual reflective writing [5 mins]

- a) Students asked to write for 2 minutes about how you feel after doing this activity.
- b) Students talk in their small groups to share reflections.

7 Generations Principle
Decisions being made about our energy, water, and natural resources should be sustainable for seven generations in the future. The 7 Generations Principle originates with the Haudenosaunee, a group of First Nations people in North America.

Questions to simulate discussion:

- Have you heard of other technologies which protect the health of the Earth for seven generations?
- Do you use any technologies which support long time thinking?
- Do you refrain from using some technologies in order to support long time thinking?

Taking it outside:

Go to a local outdoor space with both natural and human-made elements. List everything you can see and estimate/research how long it has been there and reflect upon the impact for future generations.



APPENDIX E: THINK LIKE AN ANCESTOR - ROLE PLAY SCRIPT FOR OCTAVIA HILL

Based on a ritual called The Seventh Generation from Joanna Macy's Coming Back to Life.

Activity: Meet your Ancestor: in small groups, students will role-play a conversation between an ancestor and a present day person. Students will be provided with a character sheet (Appendix F) describing the ancestor, and a script with prompts for the conversation about that ancestor's concerns, actions and long term impact.

- Step 1: choose who will play the character of the ancestor. This person is given the Character Sheet (Appendix F) and decides who they will play. Everyone in the group is given the Script Sheet and finds the one for the chosen character.
- Step 2: the chosen student reads their character sheet to become familiar with their character
- Step 3: the group starts the discussion using the script.
- Step 4: after taking your leave from the ancestor, students move onto activity 2

SCRIPT - MEET YOUR ANCESTOR - OCTAVIA HILL

OH: Octavia Hill // PDP: Present Day Person

PDP: Hello ancestor, who are you?

OH: I'm Octavia Hill, what year is this and who are you?

PDP: We are _____, and this is the year 2024. What year are you talking to us from, and what are you up to?

OH: This is 1895, and I have just founded the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty with Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley. I have been working for nature conservation and against poverty in our cities for many years now.

PDP: It sounds like you had similar problems to ours! What is your biggest concern right now in 1895?

OH: My biggest concern is that: *[choose from one of the 3 concerns below:]*

- Nature is being destroyed to provide fuel and space for the factories of the industrial revolution, polluting our rivers and damaging the countryside
- The people who work in the factories are living in appalling cramped conditions
- Our cities are growing and there is no access to nature within them, which is bad for people's health

PDP: Tell me more, what motivates you to try and solve this problem?

OH: _____ [Imagine Octavia Hill's response, who or what is she drawing inspiration from, where does she find the courage and motivation to continue despite the challenges?]



PDP: What was your first step for creating the National Trust?

OH: My first step was to campaign for open spaces together with the people from the Commons Preservation Society - all over London common lands and greens were being sold and built over. So far, we've successfully campaigned to preserve Parliament Hill Fields, Vauxhall Park and Hilly Fields in London. Tell me please, do they still exist?

PDP: They do!

OH: Oh how marvellous. Can you describe the world of 2024 to me? And the National Trust, does it still exist?

PDP: [Describe the world of 2024 to OH in your own words, explaining to her that The National Trust now cares for over 250,000 hectares of farmland, 780 miles of coastline and 500 historic properties, gardens and nature reserves, and is working to improve access to them for everyone.]

OH: Thank you for sharing your challenges. I'm glad the work I did could help a little, and that others have made it their own to grow and improve.

PDP: Goodbye Octavia. Thank you.

APPENDIX F - THINK LIKE AN ANCESTOR CHARACTER SHEET

CHARACTER SHEET 1: OCTAVIA HILL

Who was Octavia Hill?

Octavia Hill (1838-1912) is one of the founders of the National Trust, a conservation charity that protects and cares for landscapes, historic buildings and the works of art and design they contain. Octavia Hill was a social reformer who worked hard to improve urban housing and to protect green spaces. She believed access to nature was important for human wellbeing and campaigned to stop the destruction of the natural landscape.

Source and further info: please note some of Octavia's view on social welfare would be controversial today

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/discover/history/people/octavia-hill-her-life-and-legacy>



What were her main concerns?

Like many social reformers of the Victorian era, she witnessed incredible poverty, and the destruction of the landscape which went hand in hand with the expansion of Britain's industrial capacity.

Her main concerns were:

- Nature was being destroyed at a rapid rate to fuel the industrial revolution
- Cities were expanding rapidly and working class people's living conditions were dreadful - with poverty and disease rife.
- Need to preserve access to nature for wellbeing - especially for working class people in cities

What did she do that had a significant impact on life in 2023?

She founded the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty in 1895, which now cares for over 250,000 hectares of farmland, 780 miles of coastline and 500 historic properties, gardens and nature reserves, in Great Britain, and is working to improve access to them for everyone.

What year is she talking to us from?

She is talking to us from 1895, just after the foundation of the National Trust. She has no idea whether it will have the long term impact she hopes for, but she's determined to try and make it work.