



## **The Air We Breathe: Everyone's Concern**

Pat Lowe, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### **Summary:**

This lesson will introduce students to the critical role clean air plays in life on Earth. Each person needs air to live and shares the responsibility to help keep the air clean.

### **Objectives:**

- Teach about the importance of clean air.
- Introduce students to the critical need to combat air pollution.
- Offer students an opportunity to experience informational content in a personal way.
- Give students the chance to show their understanding of specific subject matter in a creative way.
- Support Core Standards of Speaking & Listening and Writing.

### **Context:**

This lesson might be used as part of a science unit on air or a social studies unit advocating personal and community responsibility to protect natural resources. It could be adapted for use with any age student, K–12.

### **Materials:**

- *Every Breath We Take: A Book About Air*
- Sheets of paper to create individual student booklets
- Individual student notebooks/journals

### **Time Span:**

The material can be presented in multiple sessions of 20–30 minutes each, with time between for student reflection and writing. It could be a stand-alone lesson in a longer secondary time frame.



### Procedures:

1. Use a projector to record ideas as students brainstorm the ways they use air.
2. Ask students to respond in their writing journals to the prompt, “Air is...”
3. Read the text of *Every Breath We Take* together. Teacher could show the pages with a projector. Pause on the pages with milk and chocolate chip cookies and a boy smelling a red hibiscus flower.
4. As a class, talk about the health implications of having clean air to breathe.
5. Have students write in their journals about how clean air affects them personally.
6. Invite an asthmatic individual to speak about their experience on days of poor air quality. This could be accomplished via Zoom or a telephone conversation or recording.
7. Talk about ways to prevent air pollution.
8. Continue reading the book, including the informational pages at the end.
9. Ask students to record thoughts about how they can prevent air pollution.
10. Let students write about how air pollution affects them. They might choose to compare and contrast their personal experience with that of a person with asthma.
11. Have students share their work aloud.
12. Let them write in their journals about what they have learned and any commitment they choose to make for themselves.

### Extensions:

- Challenge students to identify ways they could teach and encourage others—peers, family, or neighbors—to be more conscious of clean air issues.
- Research air pollution in different locations or time periods of history. Students would share their findings with others.
- Lobby governmental agencies to improve air quality and regulations surrounding the issue.
- Write letters to the editor of a local newspaper about the importance of clean air.

### Rationale:

This book uses brief text and abundant pictures to describe air and its importance in our lives. It presents ways in which air pollution can be mitigated. When a great number of people make consistent, persistent efforts, the results have lasting impact.

### Resources:

Ajmera, Maya and Dominique Browning. *Every Breath We Take: A Book About Air*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2016.

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