



Bridging Futures Art and Essay Contest Classroom Discussion Guide

The following information is intended to guide your lesson plans for educating students on safety issues surrounding wildlife and highways. Providing background information will prepare students as they gear up to participate in the eighth annual Bridging Futures Art and Essay Contest.

Introducing the topic

Q: How do you know when it is safe to cross the street?

A: Obey all traffic signs; use crosswalks; stop, look and listen; walk, don't run; use crossing guards at school; wait until there is no traffic to begin crossing; keep looking for traffic until you have finished crossing. It is safe to cross when the roadway is clear in all directions.

Q: Ask students to imagine what it would be like to cross a busy road without those helpful tools.

A: Allow student discussion.

Q: How do animals know when to cross the road?

A: Allow student discussion.

Q: What kinds of fish and wildlife live in the Cascade Mountains?

A: Bears, deer, elk, cougars/mountain lions, fish, wolverines, lizards, frogs, salamanders, bugs, bats, squirrels, flying squirrels, etc.

Q: How can people help wildlife cross highways and roads?

A: After some discussion, explain that the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is planning to build wildlife overcrossings and undercrossings along the highway to reconnect animals with their habitats.

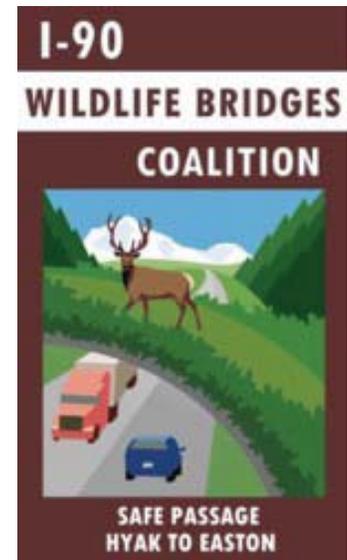
Q: How will wildlife bridges benefit people?

A: Explain how wildlife bridges protect people while allowing animals to safely cross the highway. Building wildlife bridges on I-90 will reduce the number of animals on the roadway and the number of vehicle and animal collisions.

(Depending on time, show the design visualization video and/or the I-90 Project video on our websites.)

Q: Do you have any specific ideas for how WSDOT can reconnect wildlife with their habitats?

A: Encourage students to share their feedback and let them know WSDOT wants to hear their ideas too!





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Student Feedback

Students may ask the following questions:

Q: How will animals know how to use the wildlife bridges?

A: WSDOT will install special fencing near the highway that will guide the wildlife to the wildlife bridges, keeping them off the highway and keeping drivers safe from collisions.

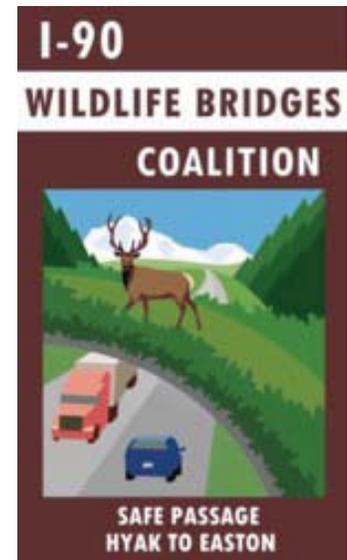
Q: How does WSDOT know where to put the bridges?

A: WSDOT and the I-90 Bridges Coalition have been studying and monitoring the different wildlife in the Central Cascades for several years. We've also tracked how wildlife crosses the highway - whether it's by using culverts or directly crossing the road. There are many different ways to monitor wildlife, including tracking footprints in the mud and snow, collecting hair samples, and using heat sensor cameras. After the monitoring is complete, researchers compute all the wildlife data and share it with highway engineers. The engineers use this data to design wildlife crossing structures into the I-90 Project.

Explaining the contest

- Discuss the contest (drawing and essay portion) with your students, letting them know that WSDOT wants to use their ideas and knowledge to help educate the public.
- WSDOT also needs their help to plan future highway designs that make travel safer for people and wildlife.
- Remind students that the wildlife bridges can go under, over, or through the highway!
- WSDOT and the Bridges Coalition will honor the winners of the contest with an awards ceremony at their school and possibly at a community event at the Suncadia Resort in Cle Elum. The contest winners will receive a framed version of their artwork and fun prizes. Their artwork will be displayed in businesses and rest areas along the I-90 corridor. The winners' teacher will receive a \$200 cash prize and other prizes to be used for their classroom.

Contact Meagan McFadden, WSDOT Communications, to schedule a presentation for your class, 509-577-1618 or McFaddM@wsdot.wa.gov.



Picture of deer captured from wildlife monitoring camera



Picture of bear captured from wildlife monitoring camera