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“Media literacy is more important than ever, so I adamantly hope [the Paley Center's] great work will continue and expand.”

- **Martina Madden, Stuyvesant HS, teacher**

Please consider making a donation for this work to continue in these challenging times.



THE PALEY CENTER FOR MEDIA

PALEYEDUCATION @Home

What We're Watching



Greetings from The Paley Center for Media's Education Department!

Welcome to the latest installment of “What We’re Watching,” a weekly Paley Education@Home guide. During this unprecedented time, we thought we would reach out to our community with some tips and ideas for consuming media with your kids! It’s inevitable that screen time is going to increase in the coming months and so we’re here to help! Each week we are highlighting a different theme that connects to two selected programs, one for younger kids and one for older kids, each with related activities.

Consuming media with your kids is a perfect jumping-off point to making media literacy a part of your everyday lives. Familiarizing yourself with the basics is a great first step. In case you missed it, you can view [our first newsletter about media literacy best practices](#). We also recommend the [National Association for Media Literacy Education's Parents Guide](#)—it’s a terrific introduction!

Weekly Zoom Meet-ups Thursdays, 3:00 to 3:30 pm ET

You can join us at our weekly Zoom Meet-up, **Thursdays from 3:00 to 3:30 pm ET**, to chat about the episodes we are watching this week or whatever else is on your mind regarding media literacy and at-home learning.

For connection details, please RSVP to eduny@paleycenter.org.

What We're Watching: Earth Day

Earth Day was founded by US Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin as an environmental teach-in first held on April 22, 1970. Each year people celebrate the day through park clean-ups, beach clean-ups, planting, composting, or simply getting outside to enjoy nature. Being limited to the indoors this year, it is a good opportunity to think about what we can do to reuse, reduce, and repair items inside our homes as a way to help the planet. This week, in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of Earth Day, we are watching programs that inspire stewardship of the environment and that encourage us to take an active part in speaking up for endangered species.

This Week's Recommendation for Younger Kids: The Lorax

The Lorax (1972)

Recommended for Grades 1+. Available to stream on Hulu

Based on the iconic book by Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax* is a musical animated short which first aired as a television special in 1972. The story is about the danger of human destruction of the natural environment, using the literary element of personification to create relatable characters for industry (the Once-ler), the environment (Truffula trees) and activism (the Lorax). It encourages involvement in making the world a better and healthier place to live. Because the environment cannot advocate for itself, the Lorax becomes its voice by saying repeatedly, "I am the Lorax. I speak for the trees." This phrase has become a rallying cry for environmentalists everywhere.

Pre-Viewing Questions

Look around your house and make a list of all the things your family uses that come from trees. Remember that wood, paper, and (some) food come from trees.

- How many items are on your list?
- Which items do you use the most?
- Rewrite your list in order from most used to least used items.
- What items on your list are recyclable? Which items can you reuse for another purpose? Which items can you use less of? Which items can you stop using all together?

- Based on your list, how important would you say trees are to your life?

Post-Viewing Questions

- Describe the setting/environment at the beginning of the story. What does it look like? Who do you see living there? What plants and animals are living in the environment? What does each animal species depend on the trees for?
- Who comes to visit from out of town and what does he make from the trees?
- How does the environment change as more and more trees are made and more and more trees are cut down?
- What replaces the trees in the landscape? Where do the Brown Barbaloos, Swomee Swans, and Humming-fish go?
- How does the Lorax respond to what he sees happening in the environment and what does he keep asking the Once-ler to do?
- How does the Once-ler respond to The Lorax's requests?
- Describe the Once-ler. Why do you think we never get to see his face? What do you imagine it looks like? What kind of "person" is he?
- What happens to the Truffula trees in the end? What happens to the environment as a result of this deforestation or the absence of trees?
- Why do you think the Once-ler puts the word "unless" in the bricks surrounding an empty plot of land towards the end?
- How do you think we are supposed to feel at the end?
- What do you think the moral of this story is? What would you do with the last Truffula seed?

Read more about trees:

Call Me Tree/Llamame Arbol by Maya Christina Gonzalez

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

Luna & Me: The True Story of a Girl who Lived in a Tree to Save a Forest by Jenny Sue KostECKi-Shaw

Learn more about trees on the web:

[Why trees are important](#)

[New York City's Street Tree Map](#)

[New York City Street Tree Identification](#)

Use [this guide](#) to help you identify common flowering trees around New York City.

[Learn more about climate change with Bill Nye](#)





This Week's Recommendation for Older Students: Virunga

Virunga (2014)

Recommended for Grades 9+. Available to stream on Netflix

This documentary tells the story of a small team of park rangers—including an ex-child soldier turned ranger, a caretaker of orphan gorillas, and a dedicated conservationist—fighting to protect Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), home to the world's last mountain gorillas, from war, poaching, and the threat of oil exploration. A note for older students: it would be a good idea to watch *The Lorax* and this film to engage in a compare/contrast viewing exercise.

Discussion Questions

- What did you learn about the challenges faced by the Virunga National Park's management team? What is happening in the park and how are they responding?
- Is this problem new for the people who live there? What do we learn at the beginning of the film about the history of the Congo and foreign interests there?
- In what ways is the gorillas' caretaker Andre similar to the Lorax? What other people featured in *Virunga* are similar as well?
- Why do you think the park rangers do what they do when it puts their lives in danger?
- In what ways are the park rangers and journalists similar to other activists you may know about from history?
- How has the legacy of colonization and subsequent globalization affected conservation efforts in the Congo (and across the continent of Africa)? What specific lasting effects did you notice while watching the

- film, even if subtle? (Loss of habitat, over hunting, poaching, exploitation of natural resources, etc.)
- How important do you think journalism is in holding corporations accountable?
 - How important do you think documentary filmmaking is in helping spread awareness about social issues?
 - Did you find *Virunga* an effective call to action? If yes, what happened in the film that made you the most concerned, want to learn more, or do something about the problem?
 - What do you think will happen if people do nothing about this problem?

[Learn more about Virunga National Park](#)

Watch films about the environment:

Darwin's Nightmare, directed by Hubert Sauoer (2005)

Gorillas in the Mist, directed by Michael Apted (1988)

Read about climate change:

Losing Earth: A Recent History by Nathaniel Rich

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson

The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming by David Wallace-Wells

The World without Us by Alan Weisman

Become a climate activist!

[The Climate Museum](#) has launched a project combining civics, science, and art-making for students at all grade levels: Climate Art for Congress. Their goal is to provide pathways into learning, engagement, and creativity during physical distancing by encouraging students to voice demands for a climate-safe, livable future with members of Congress as they pass legislation in response to COVID-19. [Here are instructions on how to participate.](#)

Paley Online Classes

Explore these rich, full online classes, with complete thematic descriptions, clips from the Paley Archive, pre- and post-viewing questions, associated vocabulary, further online resources, and more.

[Tooned In to Animation](#)

[The Fine Art of Persuasion: Television and Advertising](#)

[The Thirty-Second Candidate: Political Advertising on Television](#)

[Red Scare: The Cold War & Television](#)

As always, if you have any questions, thoughts, or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out to us at eduny@paleycenter.org.

Happy viewing,

Rebekah Fisk, Director of Education

Caroline Quigley, Senior Manager of School & Family Programs

Support the Paley Center

We hope this inspires you to watch and learn together in a new way at home! The Paley Center is here for you and, now more than ever before, we would deeply appreciate your support.

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