

# Conservation in the Classroom



## Cultivating Change: Conservation Agriculture & Advocacy

Grade Levels: 9-12

Duration: Approx 90 minutes

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will:

1. Understand the importance of soil and water conservation in agriculture.
2. Analyze key points from the article "Soil and Water: Why We Need Conservation Agriculture."
3. Discuss the role of conservation agriculture in environmental sustainability.
4. Develop a social media advocacy campaign promoting conservation agriculture practices.

### MATERIALS

- Copies of the article ("[Soil and Water: Why We Need Conservation Agriculture](#)"). - 1 per student
- [Cultivating Change Slideshow](#)
- Reading Guide Worksheet (1 per student)
- Advocacy Campaign Rubric (1 per group)
- Large poster paper, markers, and/or access to digital presentation tools.

### NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS)

- Earth and Human Activity: HS-ESS3-1, HS-ESS3-4
- Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science: HS-ETS1-1, HS-ETS1-3

### ILLINOIS STATE LEARNING STANDARDS

- Reading Informational Text (RI): RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.2, RI.9-10.4, RI.9-10.6, RI.9-10.8
- Writing (W): W.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.6, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8
- Speaking and Listening (SL): SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.4, SL.9-10.5
- Language (L): L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.3, L.9-10.4, L.9-10.6

### AFNR CAREER CLUSTER CONTENT STANDARDS

- Career Ready Practices: CRP.02., CRP.04., CRP.05., CRP.06., CRP.08. CRP.11.
- Education, Communication, and Leadership: ECL.04.
- Environmental Sustainability Systems: ESS.03.
- Foundational Pathway Skills: FPS.01., FPS.04., FPS.06., FPS.08.
- Natural Resource Systems: NRS.01., NRS.02.

## Lesson Outline



### INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

**Ask:** “*Why do we need to conserve soil and water in agriculture?*”

- Have students write a short response individually, then pair up to share their ideas.
- As a class, discuss their responses.

**Purpose Setting:** Introduce today’s goal—to understand the importance of conserving soil and water in agriculture and how we can advocate for sustainable practices.

### READING ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES)

**Distribute** the Reading Passage: "Soil and Water: Why We Need Conservation Agriculture" (1 per student) and the Reading Guide (1 per student).

**Encourage** students to complete the Reading Guide while they read the article. Students can work independently or in pairs to annotate the key ideas and answer the questions on the Guide.

**Facilitate** a class discussion by asking questions:

- *What surprised you most about the article?*
- *How do conservation efforts benefit future generations?*
- *What are some ways we can encourage farmers and communities to adopt conservation practices?*
- *How does this article relate to Earth Day?*

### APPLICATION (30 MINUTES)

#### Conservation Agriculture Advocacy Campaign

Divide students into small groups and distribute the Advocacy Campaign Rubric (1 per group). Explain that each group will be developing a short advocacy campaign encouraging the adoption of conservation agriculture practices. Campaigns can include Instagram posts, Twitter threads, TikTok videos, Facebook infographics, or other social media content.

Key elements of the campaign:

- A strong message or slogan
- Key facts from the article
- A call to action (What should people do?)
- Visual appeal and clear organization
- How their campaign connects to Earth Day

## Lesson Outline



### APPLICATION - *continued*

Review the rubric with the class to ensure they understand how to earn full points, and share that each group will present their campaign to the class, explaining their creative choices and message.

### GALLERY WALK (20 MINUTES)

Have groups either post or present their campaigns to the class in a Gallery Walk format. Optionally, you can have the class (or another class!) vote on their favorite campaigns. Establish ground rules and expectations of appropriate feedback, then allow each group the opportunity to share what they have created.

### EXIT TICKET

Either as a group discussion at the end of the class or as an exit ticket, encourage students to answer the following question:

- ***“What can I personally do to promote conservation or protect the planet for future generations?”***

### EXTENSION & ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- **Community Involvement:** Have students post their campaigns on school social media or present them to local agriculture and/or conservation groups.
- **Guest Speaker:** Invite an agriculture communications expert or conservation advocate to discuss digital advocacy.
- **Hashtag Challenge:** Have students create a class-wide hashtag to promote their campaigns online.

# Reading Guide: Understanding Conservation Agriculture

## BEFORE READING

1. **Prediction:** Based on the title "*Soil and Water: Why We Need Conservation Agriculture*", what do you think this article will discuss?

## DURING READING

As you read, take notes on the following key topics:

### 2. **Threats to Soil and Water:**

- What are the main challenges facing soil and water in agriculture?
- List at least two examples mentioned in the article.

### 3. **Conservation Agriculture Practices**

- What are some farming methods that help protect soil and water?
- How do these methods benefit both the environment and farmers?

### 4. **The Role of Farmers and Policymakers**

- How can farmers help conserve soil and water?
- What role do governments or organizations play in promoting conservation?

## AFTER READING

### 5. **Earth Day Connection**

- How does conservation agriculture align with the goals of Earth Day?
- Why is it important to consider long-term environmental impact in farming?



# Conservation Agriculture Advocacy Campaign

## INSTRUCTIONS

You will be developing a short advocacy campaign to encourage the adoption of conservation agriculture practices. You can create Instagram posts , X (Twitter) threads , TikTok videos, a Facebook infographic, or other social media content.

### **Your campaign must include:**

- 1.A strong message or slogan
- 2.Key facts from the article
- 3.A call to action (What should people do?)
- 4.Visual appeal and clear organization
- 5.How their campaign connects to Earth Day

Review the rubric to make sure your group earns the full points.

# Conservation Agriculture Advocacy Campaign

## RUBRIC

Criteria	Excellent (5 points)	Good (4 points)	Satisfactory (3 points)	Needs Improvement (2-1 points)	Score
<b>Message &amp; Slogan</b>	Clearly defined, compelling, and memorable message or slogan.	Strong message but could be more compelling.	Message is present but lacks impact.	Message is unclear or missing.	/5
<b>Use of Evidence</b>	Strong use of facts from the article, well-integrated.	Uses some facts but could be stronger.	Limited use of facts or not well-integrated.	Little to no use of supporting evidence.	/5
<b>Call to Action</b>	Clear, actionable, and persuasive.	Call to action present but could be stronger.	Vague or weak call to action.	No clear call to action.	/5
<b>Visual Appeal &amp; Organization</b>	Highly engaging, well-organized, visually appealing.	Mostly clear and visually engaging.	Somewhat clear but could be improved.	Disorganized or lacks visual appeal.	/5
<b>Creativity &amp; Impact</b>	Exceptionally creative, leaves a strong impression.	Creative, but could be more impactful.	Some creativity, but lacks engagement.	Minimal creativity, does not engage audience.	/5

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 25