

1206 – Oaxaca’s Indigenous Guardians of the High Forests

<https://intheamericas.org/works/1206-oaxacas-indigenous-guardians-of-the-high-forests/>

Objective	Discussion Prompts	Lesson Activities	Vocabulary
Students will learn about sustainability practices of Indigenous communities in Oaxaca.	What environmental and educational practices contribute to making the Oaxacan landscape one of the most sustainable in the developing world? Use examples from the video to support your responses. Why do you think the video is titled <i>Guardians of the High Forests</i>? Explore ideas for a compelling new title for the video that emphasizes the sustainability and conservation practices of Indigenous communities.	Create a two-part diagram like a T-chart. List all the ways the community reduces carbon emissions, then list how the community uses the resulting carbon credits to obtain resources that benefit the community. Write a paragraph analyzing your findings. Imagine you live in a remote Indigenous community in Oaxaca? Write a personal narrative about how your daily life might be different from your life today. Include what you are learning in school, what type of job your family does and how you spend your free time.	annually authorized carbon eco-tourism initiatives integrity productivity quasi-miracle regulated revenue
Social Studies Standard:	It is stated in the video, “In this community, private property does not exist.” What does this mean and why is the concept of buying and selling land unfamiliar to these communities? What are the advantages and disadvantages of community land ownership?	Create a promotional leaflet that includes 3–4 key facts about the Oaxacan land, highlighting the natural beauty of the area and inspiring visitors to support sustainable tourism.	
Culture: C, D	Compare your town or city’s efforts to reduce global warming and promote sustainability with that of the Indigenous communities in Oaxaca. How do your local policies measure up to the initiatives highlighted in the video?	Imagine you are spending the day at an Oaxacan market. Create a written and visual account of your experience, describing what you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch as well as what you do describing what you do, what you eat, who you meet, and the activities you take part in. Incorporate details that engage all five senses to bring the market to life for your audience.	

Much of the Mexican state of Oaxaca lies in forested mountains, some reaching over 12,000 feet in elevation. Indigenous communities for millennia have inhabited towns deep within the forests, even at the highest elevations. Many of these communities guard their forests as part of their inherited rights. Some of them are now being rewarded for their accomplishments in sustainable forestry.