

Articles and Activities about Protecting the Environment #1

Global Warming, Recycling, and Pollution

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Activities



Mission Impossible—Divide the class into four teams. Challenge them to compete to see which team can make the classroom “greener.” Over a determined time period, assign points to each team when they reduce waste, conserve power, or make other efforts to make the classroom more environmentally friendly. Points can be awarded for a variety of green actions, such as turning off the lights when everyone leaves the classroom, packing lunches in recycled bags, reusing school materials like paper and paper clips, bringing in a plant for the classroom, etc. At the end of the time allotted, tally the points that each team has earned and see which team is the “greenest.”



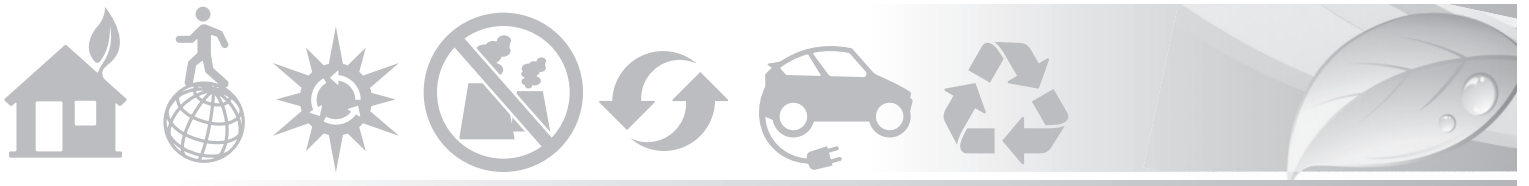
Teacher Challenge—Choose a day to set up an “anti-green” classroom. Stage a variety of environmentally unfriendly objects and practices throughout your room. These could be wasted paper spread around, using paper rather than a chalk board, drinking out of a paper or Styrofoam cup instead of bringing one from home, leaving electronic devices on, etc. Give students time to explore the classroom, looking for examples of anti-green conditions. Hold a discussion with the entire class. On the chalkboard, keep a tally of every environmentally unfriendly thing students discovered. Discuss ways to change classroom habits with the students. Be sure to explain anything the students missed.



Powerless Day—Designate one day for the class to go completely without power. This means no electricity: lights, overhead projectors, electric pencil sharpeners, etc. cannot be used. Instead of using paper for class work, use the chalk or dry erase board, or teach orally. If the day is a success, schedule more Powerless Days and encourage other classes to do the same.



Anti-Green Scavenger Hunt—Divide the class into teams and set them loose in the classroom, identifying any anti-green substances or practices. Examples might include: recyclable materials in the regular trash; lights or electronic equipment left on unnecessarily; the presence of older light bulbs instead of energy-efficient ones; etc. The group with the longest accurate list of environmentally unfriendly products wins. You might want to have a “green” prize for the winning team (writing pads/notebooks printed on recycled paper, for example).



Recycling



An important phrase to remember when going green is *reduce, reuse, recycle*. Recycling is using something old or no longer useful to make something "new." Recycling is very important because it keeps paper, metal, glass, and other materials that can be reused from being thrown away. It also prevents harmful chemicals and materials from being put in landfills and contaminating the Earth's soil and water.

Many people recycle lots of their garbage; however, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, we could be recycling up to 75% of our waste. Can you think of anyone who recycles 75% of their garbage?! Everyone could be doing a much better job at this.

Many businesses are focused on becoming green. Some stores carry reusable, environmentally friendly bags and reward shoppers with discounts and coupons for using them instead of plastic bags. Other stores charge a small fee to customers who use plastic bags instead of bringing their own. Newspapers are usually printed on recycled paper, and some magazines and books are printed on recycled paper as well.

You can help too! The next time you or your parents go to the grocery store, bring your own bags in which to carry food home. Another way you can recycle is by reusing plastic water bottles and filling them with tap water instead of buying new ones every time you need a drink. When throwing things away, be sure to recycle all possible materials – cans, bottles, and boxes that are recyclable are usually marked.

Along with recycling your own waste, you can help the environment by buying recycled products. Recycled paper for stationery or school work is fairly easy to find. Recycled materials are marked with the international recycling sign: three green arrows in the shape of a triangle.

