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National Standards Information

- NPH-H.K-4.1/5-8.1 Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- NS.K-4.3/5-8.3 Life Science
- NS.K-4.6/5-8.6 Personal and Social Perspectives
- NS.K-4.7/5-8.7 History of Nature and Science
- NT.K-12.6 Technology Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Tools

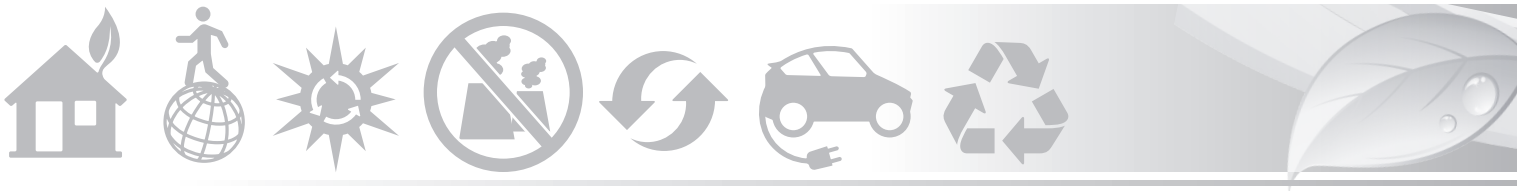
How To Use This Book

In recent years, “green” concepts have become extremely popular. Concern about global warming and its potential negative effects has increased, and the drive to improve and conserve the condition of our Earth is stronger than ever.

No matter what your opinions on global warming are, it’s essential that we, as human beings, take care of the world around us. One of the best and most effective ways of ensuring a brighter future for our planet is teaching young people about environmental issues and green practices. But how do you weave green concepts and practices into an already busy schedule?

It’s So Easy Going Green is the answer. The informative articles cover 12 important, global issues that impact our environment. These pages can be reproduced and distributed to students for review. Each article is complemented with several student-focused activities that will directly involve students in green practices and environmentally friendly initiatives.

Get started on your green journey by taking the simple survey on page 32. This will give you an idea of how environmentally friendly your classroom is, and give you some great starting points for discussion and activity. With each article/activity set, your class will learn new ways to help the environment, starting in the space directly around them. By the end of this book, we’re confident that your classroom will be as green as the beautiful Earth we all inhabit!



Global Warming/ Climate Change



Global warming is an issue that has been getting a lot of attention in recent years. Over the last 100 years, the air near the Earth's surface has risen nearly 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit. While it may not seem like a big change, scientists believe this temperature increase may be causing many of the natural disasters the world has experienced in recent years, like tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes, forest fires, and floods.

Other experts think this is not the problem. They argue that for thousands of years no one recorded the Earth's temperature, so scientists today have nothing to compare current temperatures to. However, it is alarming that 19 of the 20 hottest years recorded have happened since 1980.

Right now, the Earth is the perfect habitat for humans, animals, and plants; but if the Earth continues to get warmer, it could eventually lead to some very serious problems. Climates may change and some parts of the world might become uninhabitable. Glaciers could melt and cause flooding; oceans and rivers may become larger, washing away land and destroying homes and wildlife.

Whether the Earth's temperature is actually rising or not, it is still important for humans to take care of the planet we live on. It is our responsibility to do our part to protect the Earth and its inhabitants.

Humans contribute to global warming in many ways. Some of the most common ways we contribute are by creating pollution and by using too many of the Earth's resources, like trees and fossil fuels such as petroleum (gasoline). We can help the Earth stay cool by preserving these resources. For example, we can use cars that run on fuel that doesn't send pollution into the air. Also, we can help by recycling (reusing) materials instead of throwing them away, replanting forests that have disappeared, protecting wildlife, and buying non-toxic, environmentally friendly products.

Some of these things may seem difficult to accomplish, but there are small, easy ways we can help the Earth every day. By simply turning off a light when you leave a room, turning off the television or computer when you are finished using it, taking shorter showers or baths, not leaving the tap running while washing hands, and reusing things like note paper and water bottles, you can make a big difference. If you do your part to conserve the Earth's resources and encourage your friends and family to do the same, you are helping make the world a much better place now and in the future.

Other Tips to Keep the Classroom Green:

Reuse paperclips and thumb tacks, buy recycled school materials, avoid using plastic folders, use water-based paints, make your own non-toxic cleaning supplies for the classroom, check windows and water faucets for leaks, use biodegradable plates, cups, and eating utensils.



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).