



Nature | Education

GET TO KNOW
CONNECT • CREATE • CELEBRATE

GRAB N' GO ACTIVITY:
Sustainable Economics

INTRODUCTION

Walking the Talk

Sustainable Product Choices

This lesson focuses on the concept of responsible purchasing using a sustainable economic framework. Students explore where things come from and where things go to make connections between product choices and social, economic and environmental impacts. By applying their understanding, students develop a sense of environmental responsibility which can lead them to become stronger citizens within a broader community.

One way in which students can apply these concepts is through eco-fundraising. Eco-fundraising involves students, teachers, parents and the general public contributing to worthy social or environmental causes that benefit local and global communities.

While raising money for school programs, students are also encouraged to care more for the environment, promote sustainable living, and support environmental education. Schools earn money by reselling Get to Know fundraising products, which are designed and manufactured according to sustainable principles, have minimal packaging, teach people about their wild neighbours, and inspire people to experience nature regularly. All proceeds from the sales of these fundraising products go to the school community and youth environmental education programs.

Submit your work to the Get to Know Contest for a chance to win wild prizes & go to

GETTOKNOW.CA

to find more free resources and activities

MORE RESOURCES:
www.gettoknow.ca/education

Ages: 5 - 12

Time: 60 - 90 minutes

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze patterns, causes and impacts from the production, consumption and disposal of everyday items;
- To appreciate the ethical dimension of reducing the social and ecological impacts of consumption;
- To appreciate the importance of changing the patterns and impacts of consumption;
- To identify principles of sustainable consumption;
- To help students make connections between choices and impacts on environment, social and economic conditions.

MATERIALS

- An item of student clothing for each small group (e.g. wool sweater, nylon jacket, cotton shirt, polar fleece vest) OR for 6 small groups: 2 CDs, 2 cell phones, and 2 soccer balls
- Long strips of paper (at least 25 cm wide) for time lines and poster paper for Venn diagrams
- Coloured markers
- 2 copies each of EPA's Life Cycle of a Soccer Ball, Life Cycle of CDs and DVDs, and Life Cycle of a Cell Phone
- 1 copy each of World Watch product back grounders

PREPARATION

To prepare for this activity, you will need to determine which approach best suits your students. When exploring prior knowledge, you may wish to select items that are easily accessible and allow students to generate more questions than they may have answers for. Alternatively, you may prefer to have students explore prior knowledge of items, and student-friendly back grounders have been provided to assist you with this.



Nature | Education

GET TO KNOW

CONNECT • CREATE • CELEBRATE

GRAB N' GO ACTIVITY: Sustainable Economics

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Explore what your students already know about how products are made and what happens to things when they are no longer needed.

Option A

Have students select an item of clothing they are wearing and lead a class discussion.

Option B

Form small groups. Provide an item of student clothing to each group. The items can be identical or each group could explore items made from different materials. Have students discuss what they know and think they know about the item, using questions to guide their discussion.

Option C

Form six small groups. Provide each group with either a cell phone, CD or a soccer ball. Have students discuss what they know about the item, using questions to guide their discussion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where is the item made?
- How far did it travel to get to you?
- What is it made from?
- What else was needed to make this item?
- How often and for how long do you expect to use this item?
- How much did it cost to purchase?
- How much does that mean each use cost?
- When you no longer need this item, where does it go?
- What will happen to it then?
- How is this a problem?
- What else could be done?

TIPS FOR ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE

Walking the Talk at School - Have students apply their understanding of sustainable choices to a real-life initiative in their school. Either by proposing changes to an existing one or creating a new one for a cause that matters to them. Visit the Get to Know website, request a fundraising package and review the products to identify what fits with the goals of their cause and propose their recommendations.

BUILD A WEEE BOY

Ask the class to bring in a range of e-waste related products that they throw away at home (packaging, paper, cans, mobile phones, printer cartridges, etc.) Based on the WEEE man, have students demonstrate important messages about sustainable product choices to others in the school community by constructing a WEEE boy.

<http://www.weeeman.org/html/do/education/pdf/WEEEboy.pdf>

Compare Product Pairs – Study real-life products and form conclusions about the pros and cons that are revealed.

SENIOR ELEMENTARY

<http://www.weeeman.org/html/do/education/pdf/productpairs.pdf>

SECONDARY

http://www.weeeman.org/html/do/education/pdf/Product_comparisons.pdf



Nature | Education

GET TO KNOW
CONNECT • CREATE • CELEBRATE

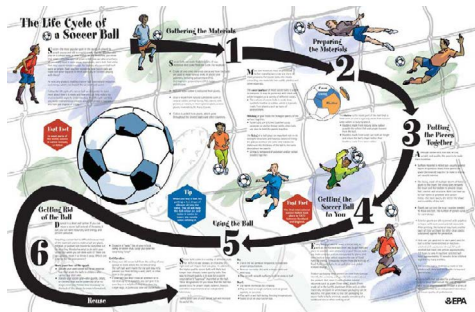
GRAB N' GO ACTIVITY:
Sustainable Economics

PROCEDURE

PART A

1. Hand out the appropriate copy of the life cycle posters to each of the groups.
2. Have students review the poster to compare their ideas with the information provided.
3. Have students create a time line that shows the story of production, consumption, and disposal by including information about how much energy, water and waste was used along the way.
4. Have each group tell their story to the class. As a class, discuss the concept of product life cycle using questions like:
 - What did you learn?
 - What was most surprising?
 - How does that relate to Environment? Money? People?

Extension: Display the time lines for another class to see. Visiting classes would walk to three different products while hosts talk about their product, from “cradle to grave.”



<http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/pdfs/life-soccer.pdf>



<http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/pdfs/life-cell.pdf>

PART B

1. In small groups, have students draw three large circles to fill a page of poster paper such that each circle overlaps with one another and all three overlap in the middle. Add the labels “environment,” “people” and “money” along the outside edges of the circles.
2. Hand out a different product backgrounder to each group.
3. Have students read to find good news and bad news related to either environment, people or money.
4. Have students discuss the five most important points and the best place to record info bits on the diagram. For example, a sustainable practice might fit between two areas or occupy the space right in the middle.
5. Have students record the key point using one color for good news and another for bad news.
6. Ask students to highlight what surprised them.
7. In groups, discuss the connections between environment, people and money. Inform groups that when products are made with consideration of these connections, sustainable principles and practices are being used.
8. As a class, discuss a fundraising initiative in the school (existing or planned) and how this relates to selecting products that are sustainable.
9. Review students ideas about the importance of ‘walking the talk’ by selecting products that are in keeping with the goals of the cause that the funds are being raised for.

Product Backgrounders

CDs and DVDs

<http://www.worldwatch.org/system/files/GS0005.pdf>

chocolate

<http://www.worldwatch.org/system/files/GS0007.pdf>

coffee

<http://www.worldwatch.org/system/files/GS0010.pdf>

clothing

<http://www.worldwatch.org/system/files/GS0009.pdf>

paper

<http://www.worldwatch.org/system/files/GS0021.pdf>

soap

<http://www.worldwatch.org/system/files/GS0025.pdf>