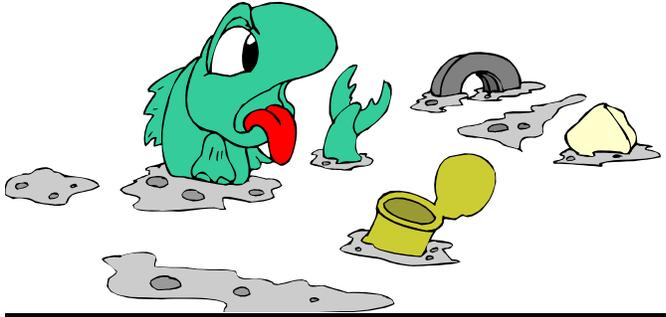


Pollution Patrol Activity



Activity Format

Grade Level: K-6

Subject/Topics: Pollution, Senses

Time: 60 minutes

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to define pollution, and describe several examples of pollution.

Materials: Chalkboard or easel paper, magazines, scissors, glue, construction paper, and copies of "What Makes It Pollution?"

Background

A smog filled city ... An oil spill ... An overflowing landfill ... It's easy to point to these as examples of pollution. But what does pollution mean?

Pollution is a human caused change in the environment that harms living and nonliving things. Most types of pollution, from oil spills to smog, cause physical damage. But some kinds (such as noise pollution) can also create psychological damage. In short, pollution is something that people do or add to the environment that changes the biological or chemical nature of the place for the worse.

Your students can go on a "pollution patrol" scavenger hunt to look for different types of pollution right in their own community.

Procedures

Begin the activity by asking the group what kinds of things come to mind when they think of pollution. List their ideas on the chalkboard or easel paper. Then use the background information to explain pollution. Ask the students if they want to add any other examples to their list or delete any that they suggested before.

Next, tell the group that they will be going outside to look for some of the types of pollution that you talked about. Tell them to be on the look out for signs of pollution in the air, in water, and on land. They should also keep noise pollution in mind.



For Grades K-2

1. Before taking the group outside, show the kids examples of pollution "evidence that they might find on their hunt. You might bring in things such as an empty beverage can, some litter from a fast food restaurant, an empty container of household cleaner and other trash. Or you could show pictures of cars, smokestacks and so on.

2. Once you are outside, tell the students that they should rely on their senses to help them locate and identify pollution. For example, they might smell exhaust, see oil spots on the road, or hear a noisy plane. You could have the children work in teams, with each focusing on just one type of pollution. Different teams could search for pollution they can see, hear, or smell. Or they could look for pollution on land, in water, or in the air.
3. Each time someone comes across some pollution, discuss where it came from and what effects it might have on wildlife and the environment.

For Grades 3-6

1. Before going outside, use the pollution examples listed under "What Makes It Pollution?" to make up a clue sheet. Give each person a copy.
2. Explain to the group that they can work in pairs to look for the signs of pollution from their sheets. They also might find signs that aren't listed.
3. Now take the students outside. Tell them to think about whether each type of pollution they find affects air, land, water, or some combination. Also tell them to think about whether each type of pollution affects people or wildlife. Finally, ask them to think about how the pollution they find could be reduced or eliminated.
4. When the students have finished their walk, go over the list. Have them take turns describing where they saw various signs of pollution, and then discuss the likely sources and possible effects of each type. Using the information under
5. "What Makes It Pollution?" for the discussion.

If there aren't many signs of pollution in your immediate area, have the students look for them around their neighborhood or on their way to and from school. Or have them do their scavenger hunt inside by searching for clues inside of magazines. They can work in small teams to cut out pictures and make pollution collages. They can include examples of things that could contribute to pollution as well, such as cigarettes or chlorine bleach. When they have finished, have the teams present their collages to the rest of the class.



Making a Difference

Plan a community clean-up campaign using what the kids found out about pollution in their community. For example, they could follow up their scavenger hunt with a litter pick-up project. And for local pollution problems that are more difficult to solve, the kids could write letters, work on a pollution fact finding mission or help educate others about pollution in the community.