



INVESTIGATE A LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

Connect with the Curriculum

Science, Social Studies/Civics,
Language Arts

AT A GLANCE: Investigate an environmental issue of concern in the community.

OBJECTIVES: Connect environmental issues to local examples in nearby habitats and communities.

MATERIALS: Reference materials about local environmental issues, Pennies for the Planet Educator's Guide, paper, pens or pencils

TIME: One or two class periods

WHAT TO DO:

1. Review with students the three Pennies for the Planet projects. Have students pay attention to the environmental challenges each project faces. Have students generate a list of them as you read, or make a list together as a class on the board.
2. As a class discuss the issues, asking students which are also environmental issues in their community, state, or region. Have students give specific examples. (For example: Water pollution is a local issue because it isn't safe to eat fish out of the river, or invasive species are a problem because kudzu kills native trees.) Circle those issues that have local connections and cross out those that don't. Invite students to suggest other environmental issues of local concern that aren't included on the list.
3. Explain that each student pair in the class is going to choose a local environmental issue, investigate it, and then report back to the class on it. Students need to narrow their chosen issue down to a specific problem. For example: Water pollution in the Ohio River. (A different student pair could choose water pollution in Bear Lake.) Once pairs have chosen issues, check that each is appropriately specific before they begin their research.
4. Direct students to research their issues, including the cause and history of the problem and how it is being dealt with in their community. Some information sources for the issues include: newspaper archives, local environmental groups, state wildlife or natural resource agencies and their publications, county or city park departments.
5. Have students present an "investigative journalism" report back to the class to share results. If one of the issues particularly captured students' attention, consider inviting in a speaker to talk about it.