

Telling Others about Energy



Citizenship

OVERVIEW

As students have progressed through Units 1-4, they have learned about energy, how energy is used, where energy comes from, the importance of renewable energy for the future, and the value of using energy wisely and making sound decisions personally and for the community. This unit will focus on developing a service learning project with students so that students can share this learning with others and develop citizenry action skills.

OBJECTIVE

The objective for this unit is for students to experience what active citizenship is like by participating in one or more projects for their school and/or community.

TIMEFRAME AND MATERIALS

Timeframes and materials will vary depending on the project and the scale of the project undertaken.

1. Energy Saver Posters

Have small groups or pairs of students make posters for the school with energy saving reminders such as (Earthchild, 1991):

- use small pots and pans for cooking when possible.
- use cold water for cleaning fruits and vegetables, and other small jobs. Using less hot water will help to save the energy necessary to run your hot water heater. During the day, turn your hot water heater dial to “pilot” and, in ordinary circumstances, the heated water will last most for the day.
- decide what to choose from the refrigerator before you open it.

- when refrigerating leftovers, allow them to cool at room temperature first.
- put your leftovers or lunch in reusable containers.
- choose reusable cloth kitchen towels and napkins in place of paper, especially for hand drying. Not only are many trees cut down to make paper towels and napkins, but energy is consumed and pollution is added to our waterways as a result of the manufacturing process.
- whenever possible, choose a manual appliance over an electric one.
- turn off lights when you leave a room for more than five minutes.
- keep the thermostat at an energy saving level.
- carpool and use mass transit whenever possible.
- use a clothesline instead of an electric dryer when practical.

2. Watt Watcher Teams

Create teams of “Watt Watchers” that help the school save energy. The program is designed to help schools save energy and money by getting students involved. Students patrol the halls of the schools reducing energy waste by turning off lights and leaving “tickets” for empty classrooms with the lights on. Go to www.wattwatchers.org for more information and a free kit.

3. Xeriscape Gardens

In Texas, a lot of residential water used is applied to landscape and lawns. Xeriscape can reduce landscape water use by 60 percent or more. So work with students to adopt a small, manageable plot of garden at

the school. Plan and design the garden by inviting a landscaper or expert gardener from your school community to come and talk to students about the types of plants, soil, and mulches they should choose (i.e. low-water plants, compost or manure, woodchips). Make sure it's in a place that can get water efficiently and at the right time. Maintain the garden by weeding, pruning, and fertilizing properly.

4. Authors Chair

Have students write a book about renewable and non-renewable energy either as a whole class, in small groups or in pairs. Bind the books and place them in the school library to be shared with others.

5. Solar Recipes

As a class, design and write a recipe book that only includes foods/drinks that can be made with solar power including smores, sun tea, dried fruits and hot dogs (<http://www.eia.doe.gov/kids/classactivities/SolarCookingIntermediateActivity.pdf>), shish kabob (<http://www.backwoodshome.com/articles/shober28.html>). Use your imagination! When you're done, sell copies of your recipe book at the next parent night or PTA meeting. Use the money for more renewable energy activities and projects.