

How Can We Contribute to a Healthy Environment?



Focus: Students recognize that living things depend on their environment to fulfill their needs. If the environment does not meet their needs, they will have to move to a new area in order to survive. Students identify simple actions they can do to help maintain a healthy natural environment.

Specific Curriculum Outcomes

Students will be expected to:

- 40.0 recognize that living things depend on their environment, and identify personal actions that contribute to a healthy environment [GCO 1/3]

Performance Indicators

Students who achieve these outcomes will be able to:

- explain why it is important to maintain a healthy natural environment
- list ways in which they can contribute to maintaining a healthy natural environment

NOTES:

Attitude Outcome Statements

Encourage students to:

- be sensitive to the needs of other people, other living things, and the local environment [GCO 4]
- be open-minded in their explorations [GCO 4]

Cross-Curricular Connections

English Language Arts

Students will be expected to:

- speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences [GCO 1]
- interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies [GCO 5]
- create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes [GCO 9]

Getting Organized

Components	Materials	Before You Begin	Vocabulary
• <i>The Very Hungry Bear</i> (Read Aloud) • Science Card 10 • IWB Activity 9 Literacy Place: • <i>The Bug Hotel</i> (Shared Reading–Synthesizing Strategy Unit) • <i>How to be an Eco Class</i> (Shared Reading–I Can Make a Difference Inquiry Unit)	• print or video news stories about animals found in unexpected places due to loss of habitat • large scrapbook or binder to make class book of Focus Animals • construction paper • markers and/or crayons and/or paint • scissors • glue	• Gather news items from print or video media about animals being found in unexpected places due to loss of habitat.	• compost • habitat • native plants • recycle • reduce • reuse

Science Background

- With their knowledge about their own needs, as well as the needs of other living things, students can appreciate why maintaining a healthy environment is important for everyone.
- Humans can negatively affect the environment in many ways, including through development, pollution, logging, and greenhouse gas production leading to climate change.
- Humans can also help the environment. Even small acts such as turning off a light or planting a garden with native plants can help support a healthy environment.

Possible Misconceptions

- Students may not realize that there is a hierarchy implied in the “reduce, reuse, recycle” mantra. The best option is to reduce, because then you are not using any energy or material resources in the first place. The next best option is to reuse, because then you are not creating demand for new products. Recycling is better than throwing items in the garbage, because it allows materials to be repurposed, and diverts waste from landfill, but it still requires energy and produces waste through the processes of recycling.

ACTIVATE

In the News

Read or show a print or video media story or stories about animals found in unexpected places—black bears, polar bears, moose, caribou, coyotes or wolves wandering into urban or suburban areas. Ask questions such as:

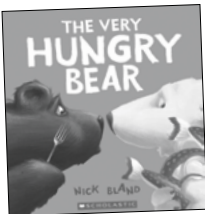
- **Why do you think the animal left its home?**
- **How would the animal meet its needs in the city/town/suburb?**
- **What problems might this cause for the animal and for people living nearby?**
- **What might be some ways to prevent this from happening?**



Have students ask their own questions about the stories and post them on the I Wonder Wall.

CONNECT

Read Aloud: *The Very Hungry Bear*



Summary

What happens when an animal can no longer live in its environment? In this story, a brown bear tries to help a polar bear who needs to find a place to live.

Before Reading

Show students the front of the book and read the title. Tell students that the story is about a bear trying to find a new home. Ask:

- **Why do people move from one home to another?**
- **Have you ever moved from one home to another? How did you feel when you moved?**

Prompt students to think about what they know about black bears and polar bears. Ask:

- **How are their needs different?**
- **How are their needs the same?**

Ask students to listen as you read to decide what information in the story is factual and what is fictional.

During Reading

Prompts for discussion during reading could include:

- **Why is the polar bear looking for a new home?**
- **The brown bear can't resist the offer of fish. To him it is like an offer of a chocolate éclair! What is a chocolate éclair? What kinds of food do you find it hard to resist?**
- **Why is the brown bear's cave not suitable for the polar bear? Why is it a good home for a brown bear?**
- **Why was the mole's tunnel not suitable for the polar bear? Why is it a good home for a mole?**
- **What kind of home does the polar bear need?**

After Reading

Ask students to think about the parts of the story that were fictional and the parts of the story that were accurate. Ask:

- **Would a brown bear really have a fire in his cave?**
- **Would a mole really have a painting of the sky in his tunnel?**
- **What other parts of the story were fictional?**
- **Do bears love to eat fish?**
- **What other parts of the story were accurate?**

Tell students that because of human actions, polar bear habitat really is being threatened. Ask:

- **What are some reasons that animals might leave their homes?**
- **Why is it a problem when animals lose their homes?**
- **Why is it important for people to help protect the environment?**



Literacy Place Connection:

Revisit or read *The Bug Hotel* by Beverly Scudamore with students, and discuss how a boy observes all the different ways his backyard provides habitat for a variety of insects.



IWB Activity:

- Invite students to use
- Activity 9: *Sorting trash* to sort objects
- to recycle, compost,
- donate, or throw in
- the garbage (see the
- Teacher's Website).

Ways to Help

Use Science Card 10 as a jumping-off point to explore what students can do to protect or improve the health of the environment at school, at home, in the community, or in nature. Ask,

- How do these actions help ensure animals and plants can meet their needs?
- In what other ways can we help maintain a healthy natural environment?

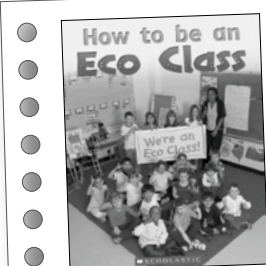
The card shows (clockwise from top left):

- cycling to school instead of being driven, which reduces harmful emissions from cars that contribute to pollution and global warming and also helps create healthy bodies;
- composting kitchen and yard waste, which reduces the amount of garbage going to the landfill and produces valuable nutrients to add back to the soil;
- planting native trees, which helps maintain or create habitat for animals;
- reducing water use to conserve water;
- a birdfeeder, which helps create a welcoming habitat for birds in urban areas, and helps local birds survive the winter;
- turning off the lights and other electrical devices when not in use, which reduces energy use (all forms of energy generation affect the environment);
- recycling plastics to reduce the amount that goes to landfills and allow materials to be used again.

CONSOLIDATE

School Environmental Audit

As a class, walk around the school looking for ways harm is being done to the environment and suggesting ways to improve the situation. On returning to the classroom, brainstorm a list of “to-dos” for a more environmentally friendly classroom and school. Students can then produce collages with “eco tips” to post around the school.



Literacy Place Connection:

Revisit or read *How to be an Eco Class* with students and discuss the list of tips for reducing, reusing, and recycling in the classroom. Ask:

- Which of these tips are we already following in our classroom?
- Are there any tips we should try?



Focus Animal Wrap-up

Allow students access to the Curiosity Centre and Reading Centre to research the kind of habitat required by their Focus Animal. They should make notes of what they find out in their Science Journals.

Provide paper and craft supplies. Each student can then use the information they have gathered throughout the unit on their Focus Animal to make two one-sided pages with drawings, cut-out pictures, and information on their animal. Glue the pages into a class Focus Animal scrapbook.

EXPLORE MORE

Eco Action at Home

Students can take photographs of things they do at home to help the environment (e.g., recycling, turning off lights, etc.). They can present these images to the class or small group as a slide show with recorded voiceover or live commentary.

WRAPPING UP THE UNIT



Revisit any remaining questions posted on the I Wonder Wall and have students discuss answers in small groups or with a partner. If there are questions which cannot be answered at the time, these can remain on the I Wonder Wall for students to research independently. Discuss what the students have learned about the needs and characteristics of living things.