

Environmental Awareness

Syllables

en•vi•ron•ment•al a•ware•ness

Pronunciation

en-**vahy**-ruhn-muhnt-ool uh-**wair**-nis

Definition

Being alert and responsive to the needs of our planet and ecosystems.

(Because of her **environmental awareness**, Dana read articles about pollution and did her best to keep her neighborhood litter-free.)

Simply put: Taking care of Mother Earth.

Related Terms

Ecology: The relationship between living things and the environment.

Fundamental Question:

Who in the world is responsible for this planet of ours?

Students will investigate the idea that we can all do things to improve our environment.

Objectives

Each student will:

1. Select – and, through a service project, respond to – any one of the following from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Tbilisi Declaration of 1978:
 - Awareness and sensitivity to the environment and environmental challenges
 - Knowledge and understanding of the environment and environmental challenges
 - Attitudes of concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain environmental quality
 - Skills to identify and help resolve environmental challenges
 - Participation in activities that lead to the resolution of environmental challenges

Before you begin

- Print out one copy of *Extinction is Forever* for each student.

Note: Allow from several days to several weeks for the completion of this project.

Suggested Sidebars:

Speaking of Environmental Awareness (Discussion Idea)

Discuss: The differences between plants and animals that are endangered (in danger, but there's still time to help) and those that are extinct (gone forever).

Taking It to the Next Level

Don't wait until Earth Day to celebrate the Earth! Have a Planet Party – utilizing as many reused and recycled products as possible.

Environmental Awareness

Procedure

1. Say: "Open your mouth as wide as you can, like this." (Demonstrate.) "Next, silently extend your lips into the shape they would make if you were saying 'oo.' Repeat. Open. OO. Open. OO. Open. OO. Very good. Now that your mouths are all limbered up, help me count to 1,000 ... by ones." (This may be done in a variety of ways. Count together slowly as a class. Go around a circle with each child calling out the "next higher number" in turn. Gently toss a beach ball back and forth with the catcher announcing the next consecutive number. Have teams of children count out 1,000 beans or buttons.)
2. When the class has finally reached 1,000, say: "One thousand is a pretty big number, isn't it? What do you think the number 1,000 has to do with the Shortnose Sturgeon, an orchid called the Small Whorled Pogonia, the Fresno Kangaroo Rat, the American Burying Beetle, the Mission Blue Butterfly, and the Black Lace Cactus?" (Write the name of each species on the board or display their pictures as you go through the list. Allow time for thoughts and ideas.) "One thousand is about the number of species of plants and animals that are endangered or threatened ... in the United States alone!"
3. Distribute the *Extinction is Forever* sheets and review the directions with the class. Afterward (over the course of the next day or two), meet with students individually to set specific goals and firm up project plans.
4. **Follow Up:** For materials (free at the time of this writing) from the Environmental Protection Agency, click onto <http://www.epa.gov/students/teachers.html>. They also offer an Environmental Kids Club at <http://www.epa.gov/students/>.

Name _____

Reminder: Environmental awareness means being alert and responsive to the needs of our planet and ecosystems.

Extinction is Forever

How can you help our planet and those who live on it? There are lots of ways!

First, pick a topic from Hot Topics.

Then pick an activity from Cool Projects.

Combine the two and, voila! You're on your way to helping save the Earth!

Hot Topics

acid rain

air quality

amphibians

arachnids

birds clams

conifers and cycads

crustaceans

dangerous chemicals

ecology

endangered species

the environment

erosion

ferns and fern allies

fishes

flowering

plants

insects

lichens

mammals

pollution

rain forests

recycling efforts

reptiles

snails

Write one of your own! _____

Cool Projects

Hold a fair to show others about _____

Take a tour to learn more about _____

Contact your senator or governor about _____

Take a class to learn what is being done to help solve the problems of _____

Join a local campaign to help solve the problems of _____

Teach a class about _____

Write to many different organizations to see what they have to say about _____

Build a model to show something about _____

Raise money to help solve the problems of _____

Start a club about _____

Make up one of your own! _____

Today's Thought: *To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival.* — **Wendell Berry, cultural critic, and farmer**