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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1996 Volume II: Environmental and Occupational Health: What We Know; How We Know; What We Can Do

Environmental Health Hazards and Children

Guide for Curriculum Unit 96.02.05
by Susan Norwood

Environmental Health Hazards and Children is a resource-based curriculum unit designed to teach children the effects that humans have on the environment and how various changes to the environment can affect our health.

The unit is an introduction to ecology and discusses topics such as environmentalism, ecosystems, the food chain, oil spills, nuclear power, hazardous wastes, pesticides, and lead. The unit contains nine activities that include writing, researching, and hands-on science experiments.

The main objective is to make students more conscious of what they are doing to the environment and how it affects them, and provide them with information on what they can do to prevent health risks caused by environmental hazards.

The unit is intended for fourth and fifth grade students, but certain parts can be introduced to other grades. It should take two to three weeks to thoroughly complete the unit. The unit can be used as an impetus to research other related areas with students. Other related areas that I recommend studying are plastic pollution, litter, soil erosion, acid rain, and global warming. Research of endangered species extinction can also be explored.

(Recommended for Environmental Science, grades 4-5)

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