



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1997 Volume VII: Environmental Quality in the 21st Century

The Environment Around Me

Guide for Curriculum Unit 97.07.10
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In this unit, students use knowledge and skills they have gained through their study of Science, Mathematics, and other subject areas. Students are presented with several source materials (e.g., maps, charts, or graphs, newspaper or magazine articles on various environmental technology) related to a significant issue. Students begin with a discussion about environmental research. The purpose of this collaborative activity is to give students the opportunity to begin thinking about the environment and to share their ideas with others before starting the task. They read the source materials to gain information about the environment and to consider various perspectives on the issue. Students then use the information they have gained from their readings as well as their prior knowledge to take a position on the issue. They will participate in a persuasive writing project, in which they will state their positions and support them with information from the source materials.

This curriculum presents students with a variety of research problems that each student will attempt to solve. Students will use writing skills to solve problems that are developmentally appropriate. Students will acquire the skills used to examine data and to process ways of analyzing the data in order to write about it. Consequently, writing and problem-solving abilities of the students will improve as they practice multiple approaches (newsletter/brochure) to the problem.

Students will experience writing using the scientific method, solving problems to the best of their ability, and analyzing old and new information. They will receive a variety of guided explanations and demonstrations on problem-solving, along with reviewing basic language skills. They will learn to monitor their own progress.

In today's quickly changing world, students need to have the ability to think critically, solve problems, make decisions, and communicate their ideas to others. The purpose of this curriculum is to develop students' ability to apply these skills in a realistic and interdisciplinary context. This curriculum unit was developed with the Connecticut Mastery Test and CAPT Test in mind.

(Recommended for Earth Science and Environmental Science, grades 4-12)

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