



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute

1999 Volume VI: Human-Environment Relations: International Perspectives from History, Science, Politics, and Ethics

Are You Balanced With Your Environment?

Guide for Curriculum Unit 99.06.07

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There is a whole world out there to be seen. Yet human beings are the one species that can decide the fate of so many others. Our children will inherit a legacy that is both sweet and bitter. Acid rain, rainwater polluted by the chemicals that factories spew into the air, has made hundreds of lakes in the US and thousands in Canada unlivable for fish. Over hunting has made the gray whale scarce in waters off California and Oregon's Coast. Habitat destruction and over fishing have devastated the populations of the Ozark big-eared bat and the Northwest's sockeye salmon.

Can students make a difference while they are still young, so that the planet they inherit is healthier because of them? Yes! And it is up to us to help children make responsible choices to save our Earth.

Protecting the environment is a key part of this unit. There is always more to learn. Opening children's eyes to the interrelationship between the natural world and the human-made one while fostering a sense of the difference a caring and informed person can make to keep the world safe for all creatures. That's the viewpoint of Sharon Goldstein, Education Coordinator of the Rachel Carson Homestead in Springsdale, Pennsylvania.

This Unit is designed to assist teachers in developing among their students an awareness of ecological principles and basic concepts of environmental science. The use of critical thinking skills is encouraged as students are guided to analyze problems and suggest solutions.

The unit also provides suggestions for discussion questions to initiate class participation in the study of environmental issues with simple activities divided according to student's level, integrates environmental science with other subjects.

(Recommended for Environmental Awareness, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and ESL, grades K-4.)

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