

The Environment and the World Around Me **Understanding My Wants, Needs, and Natural Resources**

Provided by the [Integrated SS/ELA Curriculum, Putnam | Northern Westchester BOCES](#)

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Purpose: To be used by teachers and/or families to explore Key Ideas and Practices from the New York State Social Studies Framework (K-2), and encourage safe alternative outdoor activities for young students and their families.

Key Ideas: K.1, K.4, K.7 and K.9 1.5, 1.6, 1.9 and 1.10 2.5 and 2.8

Practices:

- A. Gathering, Interpreting and Using Evidence
- B. Chronological Reasoning
- C. Comparison and Contextualization
- D. Geographic Reasoning
- E. Economics and Economic Systems
- F. Civic Participation

Overview: Connecting students to the environment and their surroundings is critical. April marks the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day and brings a heightened awareness of how people and their environments impact and affect each other. The environment includes the spaces within our homes, neighborhoods, the broader community, and the great outdoors. Current events and supply shortages have placed a special focus on people's wants and needs, and decision making. This is a great opportunity to explore the relationship between students, their families, natural resources, and the environment. Exploring their surroundings, nature, and the environment will help students to continue to connect to their broader world. This Mini Unit offers two choices for culminating activities.

Resources to Frame the Mini Unit and Assist in Social Studies Instruction:

We've included the ["Daily Dose of Nature Challenge"](#) from PNW BOCES Center for Environmental Education to encourage students to get active and immerse themselves in the natural world.

[Benchmark Universe](#): Access grade-level texts with Social Studies content

[News Resources to Enhance Instruction](#) from PNW BOCES EdTech

Resources for Speaking to Students About COVID-19:

[National Association of School Psychologists](#)

[CDC](#)

[PBS](#)

[AACAP](#)

[UNICEF](#)

[Children's Hospital Los Angeles](#)

Key: **K Assignment/Task** **G1 Assignment/Task** **G2 Assignment/Task** **Optional Tech Component**

Lesson Plan (may be presented formally or adapted):

1) PLAY VIDEO OF [What Kind of Environments?](#)

Review the important places in our surroundings. The term environment can mean what is around us or it can refer specifically to the natural world, and how it is affected by people.

Questions to ask:

- Where do we live? What does our environment look like? Discuss the difference between “people-made” or “built” environments and natural environments.
 - What are some of your favorite things about where you live?
 - What are some of the things that you notice in the environment? Which things are created by people? Which things are natural?
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2) Introduce the concept of natural resources. PLAY VIDEO OF: ["Natural Resources"](#)

Questions to ask:

- What is a natural resource?
 - What are some natural resources that people use every day?
 - Which natural resources have you used today?
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3) People use natural resources to satisfy their wants and needs. One of the ways that we can conserve (protect) natural resources is by limiting our “wants” and focusing on our “needs.”

PLAY VIDEO OF: ["Wants and Needs"](#)

Questions to ask:

- What is a want? What is a need?
- Can you guess which natural resources are used to produce our wants and needs?

Have students think about their own wants and needs. Encourage them to engage in a scavenger hunt and look at their own habits when it comes to their wants and needs. Students can complete this [organizer](#).

This file is View Only. Go to “File” and select “Make a Copy” and save to your Google Drive. Push out to students by sharing or posting on Google Classroom.

Discuss with students which wants and needs they listed on their organizer. This video: [“Resources: Welcome to the Neighborhood”](#) is geared toward 2nd graders and does a great job of connecting what students use in their daily lives to natural resources around them.

PLAY VIDEO OF: “Not For Me, Please!” This will help students connect how their wants and needs, and the decisions they make, can have serious impacts on the environment.

Questions to ask:

- What were some of the ways that people’s actions hurt the environment in the story?
 - How did the main character try to help the environment?
 - What are some examples of ways that you can help the environment?
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4) Culminating Task: What Can I Do For The Environment?

Connect Student Action and Environmental Conservation/Protection through Action Civics

Individuals, families, neighborhoods, towns/cities, counties, states, the United States of America, and the world are all responsible for protecting the environment. Individual and group efforts are necessary to allow for people to live in harmony with the natural environment, and allow for the responsible and sustainable use of natural resources.

These articles from [Scholastic.com](#) and [Ronitbaras.com](#) outline a wide range of civic action activities that students could engage in to help protect the environment and educate others. One of the NYS Framework Practices is Civic Participation. **Action Civics** is the application of civic education when:

- Students' voices are encouraged, valued, and incorporated to the fullest extent possible.
- Experiences, knowledge, perspectives and concerns of students are centered to the fullest extent possible.
- Students are challenged to identify an issue of concern or problem, and take informed action to attempt to solve the problem and/or educate others about it

Once you have introduced the idea of action civics, walk students through the following 5 step action process.

- Identify an issue that impacts the natural environment
- Describe how the issue impacts the environment
- Develop a plan of action to solve the problem/or issue
- Create a campaign to recruit others to participate/help them understand why it is important
- Describe what the environment would look like after your actions

PLAY VIDEO OF “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle!” This may help students brainstorm actions they could take as part of their project.

This final project could be completed in a variety of ways. Using available resources, have students create an action civics plan/campaign. This project could be a poster drawn on paper, a Google Slides presentation (see below), an essay, a recorded presentation, designed on the computer, etc., based on the available resources. Creativity is encouraged here. Allowing students to engage in this component as an arts and craft project would be beneficial. **ALLOW FOR CREATIVITY AND FLEXIBILITY!**

Students may also develop their civics plan/campaign related to the environment using this Google Slideshow if they (or the teacher or parent) have a Google account.

The Slide Deck can be found: [What Can I Do For The Environment? Slide Deck](#)

Additional Directions can be found: [here](#)

These Google Slides could also be printed and used to make a copy and paste map.

- ❖ **Kindergarten:** Students should produce drawings of the different steps in the process and ask an adult to help them scribe a simple description.
- ❖ **First Grade:** Students should produce drawings of the different steps in the process and a single sentence description for each.
- ❖ **Second Grade:** Students should produce drawings of the different steps in the process and a 2-3 sentence description for each.

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Creative Writing Extension Activity: [Writing Project Extension \(W1/W2\)](#)

Inquiry Extension Activity: [C3 Inquiry on Needs and Wants](#) (designed for K, but could be adapted)

Alternate Culminating Task to be continued from Step 3:

4) Now that students understand what natural resources are and how their habits connect to their usage, it is time to explore how resources can be found in various environments. Model a map or image(s) of a natural space (park, forest, river, lake, mountains, beach, etc.). (Teacher/parent may demonstrate how to draw a map or have a pre-made map for modeling purposes). [MAP](#)

Questions to ask:

- What is this a map of? How do you know?
 - What are some of the natural resources on this map?
 - How could this map be helpful to people? Could it help them to fulfill their needs? Give examples.
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5)Culminating Task: Making a Map of the Environment

Have students access and explore: [Virtual Tour from Yellowstone from NPS](#)

Students can explore Yellowstone National Park and make note of all of the different environments and resources within the park. Point out to students that our National Parks were created to protect unique natural environments and the resources found in them. This can help students generate ideas for their map task.

Using available resources, have students create a map of a natural space (park, forest, river, lake, mountains, beach, etc.). Maps can be drawn on paper, made 3D, designed on the computer, etc. based on the available resources. Creativity is encouraged here. Allowing students to engage this component of the lesson as an arts and craft project would be beneficial. Examples of materials may include: paper, pencil, markers, tape, glue, paper towel/toilet paper rolls, old food/shoe boxes, Legos, blocks, sticks/twigs, grass, rocks, etc. ALLOW FOR CREATIVITY!

Students may also create their map of natural space using the template provided.

[Create an Environment Map Template](#)

This file is View Only. Go to File and select Make a Copy and save to your Google Drive. Push out to students by sharing or posting on Google Classroom.

Maps should include:

- Title
- Natural Resources
- Compass Rose
- Key

Questions to ask:

- What is this a map of?
- Is this an actual location or an imaginary natural space?
- How is this similar to where you live? How is it different?
- What are the natural resources you chose to include? Why?
- Why would a Compass Rose be important? (discuss cardinal directions)
- Why would a Key be important?

6) Imagine that you are a tour guide or park ranger and someone is visiting your map location for the first time. Think, draw, discuss, and/or write about the following questions:

- What will you tell them about the place represented by your map?
- How could the natural resources on your map be used by people?

Create a poster to welcome people to your map space. You can even have someone in your family record a video of you welcoming someone new to the environment you created on your map.

RESPONSES WILL VARY BY GRADE

❖ **Kindergarten:** Students should produce drawings of the different natural resources shown on their map. Have the student write the name of the resource on the picture. An adult should ask the student how people use the resource and write their answer on the picture.

❖ **First Grade:** Students should produce drawings of the different natural resources shown on their map. Have the student write the name of the resource on the picture. The student should write a one sentence explanation of how people use the resource on the picture.

❖ **Second Grade:** Students should produce drawings of the different natural resources shown on their map. Have the student write the name of the resource on the picture. The student should write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) explaining how people use the resource and how people affect the environment by taking or using the natural resource.

Questions to ask:

- Why did you choose to tell the visitor about _____ on your map? Can you explain to me why that is important to you or other people?
 - How could taking/using resources from the location on your map affect the environment?
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7) PLAY VIDEO OF “Natural Resources and Conservation”

People impact the environment. Students can take specific actions to minimize negative impacts. Our wants and needs directly impact how we use resources from the environment.

Questions to ask:

- Think about the natural resources that you had put on your map. Why did you include them? How do people use these resources?
 - What are some of the ways that people can have positive impacts on the environment?
 - What are some of the ways that people can have negative impacts on the environment?
 - Why is it important for people to take care of the environment?
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8) Use index cards or post-its to add descriptions to how people could positively or negatively impact their environment as shown on the student’s map. Students should look at the resources they included on their maps and consider how they could be positively or negatively impacted by human action.

Examples:

- Student draws trees as a resource. Negative: cutting down too many trees could mean that animals lose a food source and a place for them to have their homes, Positive: planting trees can create new homes and food sources for animals
- Student draws water as a resource. Negative: polluting rivers, lakes, streams, etc. can limit drinking water for people, animals, and plants, Positive: protecting water sources ensures that people, animals, and plants have the water they need to survive

Students may also label positive and negative impacts on a map using the template provided in Step #5.

RESPONSES WILL VARY BY GRADE

- ❖ **Kindergarten:** Students should produce descriptions (3-4) of how people impact their environment. Have the student write the name of the resource in the environment affected and the action taken by people (example: “*river → throwing trash into it*”). An adult should ask the student how this will impact the environment and write their answer on the picture (example: “*Throwing trash in the river means that fish can’t live in it.*”).
- ❖ **First Grade:** Students should produce descriptions (5-7) of how people impact their environment. Have the student write the name of the resource in the environment affected and the action taken by people (example: “*river → throwing trash into it*”). The student should also write a one sentence explanation describing how the action impacts the environment (example: “*Throwing trash in the river makes it hard for fish to breathe and live.*”).
- ❖ **Second Grade:** Students should produce descriptions (5-7) of how people impact their environment. Have the student write the name of the resource in the environment affected and the action taken by people (example: “*river → throwing trash into it*”). The student should also write a two-three sentence explanation describing how the action impacts the environment (example: “*Throwing trash in the river makes it hard for fish to breathe and live. You can’t eat fish from a polluted river. It can also make the water unsafe for plants, animals, and people to drink.*”).

Questions to ask

- Can you tell me about the descriptions you added?
- Are people more likely to help or hurt the environment in your opinion? Explain.

Each student should share their creation with their family and/or teacher/classmates virtually utilizing pictures, video, Zoom, etc.