



Character Education



Self-control

High School - March, 2006

International Earth Day 2006 falls on the spring equinox, which is March 20th this year. International Earth Day reminds us that we need to practice **self-control**, especially when it comes to protecting our environment. We all need to control the amount of waste we generate, fossil fuels we burn, and garbage we throw away. The following activities reinforce the **self-control** measures we can take pertaining to our fragile environment.

Activity 1: International Earth Day Research Paper

As Americans, we tend to think of our own issues and not pay particular attention to what is going on elsewhere in the world. Have students research environmental issues in other regions by using the Internet, periodicals, and books. Environmental magazines such as *Sierra Club*, *Nature Conservancy*, and *National Geographic* are excellent resources. Students should research all areas, including Asian & African countries, Antarctica, the Middle East, Australia, Central America and South America. A good idea would be to assign a particular country or region to students so that they focus their research on that area.

Have students research the current environmental issues of the particular region selected, including waste disposal, air pollution, water pollution, deforestation, and any other environmental problems that persist in the area. Students should research how the local government or residents are handling the environmental issues, and report on what successes have been made in the region selected, as well as what proposals have been made to clean the environment in the future. Have students look into how local groups are trying to make a difference in the area. Some examples may be college run environmental groups, religious groups, or charities. The students should be as creative as possible in researching participants involved in solving some of the problems.

Students should also research their country's involvement with the global warming issue by reporting if they belong to the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol is taking steps to mitigate future climate change conditions. This will introduce students to the Kyoto Protocol as a whole, and will reinforce the issue of global environmental problems and solutions.

Once all research has taken place, have the students write a research paper with all their findings. Teachers should grade the papers based on how creative and how much effort went into the research itself, what was reported in the paper, and the basic grammar skills used. Have the top five papers read in front of the class so that all students can be educated about what is taking place all around the world.



News from the Environmental Education Council of Broward County

The Environmental Education Council of Broward County, in cooperation with the South Florida Water Management District, is now accepting nominations for the annual Environmental Educator of the Year awards.

This prestigious award is given to an outstanding elementary, middle, and high school teacher, as well as an administrator who demonstrates: a focus upon problem solving; a diversity of viewpoints; use of the outdoors as a classroom; participation in environmental education; and skill building as it relates to current environmental issues.

Nomination forms are due to Pat Crawley, Academy Programs, by March 1, 2006. For more information or a nomination form, please visit www.igfa.org/EEC.asp.

If you have any questions regarding these activities or have any comments, call 954-519-1220 or e-mail airoutreach@broward.org. You can also visit our web site at www.broward.org/kids/environment.htm.

Activity 2: Open Burning Group Role Play

Source: Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control

Overview of the activity: Students will develop a strategy to convince and influence public opinion towards using composting as an alternative to open burning. This will be done by dividing the class into cooperative learning groups of four students per group. Each group will write a strategy and then will give an oral presentation. Each group will grade the others based on the table below.

Open burning is any outdoor fire or outdoor smoke producing process from which the products of combustion are emitted directly into the air. Open burning is typically conducted using burn barrels, backyard incinerators, or the "piling up" of refuse, trash, and yard trimmings. Unlike incinerators, which burn hot and clean with temperatures approaching 2,500 degrees Fahrenheit, burning outside typically produces a lot of smoke because it burns at a low 400 to 500 degrees. As a result, inefficient combustion occurs, causing much higher levels of air pollutants to go up in the billowing smoke.

Composting Basics: First, you must set-up an outside area for your compost to live. Find a spot with good drainage away from direct sunlight. Start with a layer of course material like twigs or leaves. Add a layer of dry grass clippings and leaves, mixed with kitchen waste like egg shells, fruit and vegetable scraps, and coffee grounds. Add more materials as they become available, taking care not to make any one layer of the same type of material thicker than six inches. Turn the mixture on a regular basis (weekly) to provide air space. Keep the pile moist, but not soggy. When the material inside turns dark brown and crumbly, it is ready for use. Remove the material from the bottom of the pile. Choose different types of materials in your compost pile. This will provide a good carbon/nitrogen mix and allows the compost to decompose more readily. The compost pile acts like an oven. It's easy because the real work is done by soil organisms, bacteria, mold, fungi, beetles, and earthworms to name a few. These helpers decompose complex organic compounds into simpler substances, making a rich, organic soil-like material called humus. This material helps replenish the earth and adds nutrients to the soil which helps plants grow.

Group Role Play Activity

Imagine that you are employees of the Broward County Environmental Protection Department. Using the above composting information, describe a strategy you might use to influence public opinion toward the use of composting as an alternative to open burning. Be as specific as possible. For example, if you would use a TV time spot, describe the arguments or facts you would present to the public. After writing the strategy, your group will do an oral presentation to the entire class (10 minute presentation). This presentation will be graded to the scoring rubric below. Tally up the scores after the presentations, and determine which group made the most compelling presentation.

- 4-The oral presentation is clean and convincing
- 3-The oral presentation is clean and somewhat convincing
- 2-The oral presentation is vague and somewhat convincing
- 1-The oral presentation is vague and not convincing

	0	1	2	3	4	
1. Explanation of Compost Recipe	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	x 5 = _____
2. Reasons for not burning trash	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	x 5 = _____
3. Arguments to use composting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	x 5 = _____
4. Supporting details	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	x 5 = _____
5. Use of visual aids	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	x 5 = _____

GRADE _____