

The Problem with Litter

GRADES K-5

OVERVIEW:

This lesson will present the issue of SOLID WASTE.

Students will define solid waste and learn related terms.

Students will identify the need for a system of handling solid waste, and understand that solid waste can be a problem if not handled correctly.

DURATION:

25 - 40 minutes

VOCABULARY:

Environment

Litter

Trash

Solid waste

Rubbish

Refuse

Garbage

Pollution

Problem

Solution

Waste Stream

MATERIALS:

The book: The Wartville Wizard by Don Madden (Aladdin Paperbacks, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 1986), available from your school library or contact Clark County Solid Waste for a copy. The book is also available by order at most book stores or online ISBN 978-0-689-71667-6.

A copy of the Teacher Discussion Guide

PROCEDURE:

Practice reading this story prior to reading to your class. This is a long story and fluency is recommended for time management. You may also decide to read the story in two class periods.

Prepare the story telling area by littering the floor with several crumbled pieces of paper. Place a recycling bin nearby.

Prepare the students to listen to a story.



Introduce the term ENVIRONMENT. The environment is everything around us. The environment at school is different from the environment at home. Ask students to name objects from their home and school.

Introduce the terms LITTER and WASTE. Explain that litter is waste that is put in the wrong place, such as on the ground, on a road, etc. Waste, or SOLID WASTE, means something leftover or not used wisely and is also called TRASH, RUBBISH, REFUSE or GARBAGE. Invite the students to pick up the paper “litter” around the story area and place it in the recycling bin.

Read aloud the book The Wartville Wizard. The story takes place in the town of Wartville. The Wartville citizens are illegally dumping their trash and litter. Everyday the trash pile continues to grow. One man cleans the town litter, until one day he realizes he has the power to send each piece of litter back to the person who dropped it.

Use the Discussion Questions provided to emphasize the importance of keeping the environment clean and putting solid waste in the correct place.

This story also illustrates the idea of “*not in my backyard.*” This is when a person does not act on issues until it affects him/her personally. The people of Wartville did not worry about where their waste went until it stuck to them, and then they held a meeting. They wanted to blame the wizard (a magic person). But then they learned that the trash was actually their own litter. They felt embarrassed and ashamed. Eventually the people of Wartville learned to take responsibility for their actions.

This concept can be explained by directing the student back to the idea that there is no “away” in “throw away.” When you “throw away garbage” or “put out the trash” it does go somewhere. Encourage students to predict where it might go and who it might affect. Students are challenged to think about how their actions affect other people. This concept is not intended to be mastered at this level, but introduced into the student schema.

ASSESSMENT:

Students should be able to describe the effects of littering and realize that putting solid waste in the proper place has many benefits.

Students should understand that there is a system for handling solid waste. And that solid waste is a serious problem if not handled correctly; it can affect public health and the environment.



EXTENSIONS:

1. Have students recap the story in 3 – 5 drawings. Students may add text or dialogue balloons.
2. Plan a litter art fair. Students must design a character using trash or litter. Display the characters at school or a local business partner.
3. Read the story in two parts. Ask the students to complete the story in a picture board or writing assignment. Finish reading the story and compare the author's ending with the students endings.



TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Show the book cover. Ask students to infer what might be in the bag. Ask the students to describe the expression on the man's face.
2. Where was all of the litter that the old man found coming from?
3. How did he feel about all the litter? How would you feel if this was your town?
4. What did the old man do with the litter?
5. What happens after the old man finds that he has power over the litter?
6. How would you feel if you had power over the litter? How can we have power over litter in our own town?
7. How would you feel if the litter stuck to you?
8. What can you do in your town to prevent other people from littering? What can you do yourself to put litter in its place?
9. What does litter do to our environment?
10. What does "pollute" mean? Can you think of an example of pollution that you have heard about?
11. What does the term "*not in my backyard*" mean? Alternately, ask "What would happen if the litter kept sticking to people forever? (compound)

Main Concept Review:

Define *solid waste* as litter or trash

Define the *environment*

Describe a *system* for handling waste

Explore *responsibility* for actions



EALR CONNECTIONS

SCIENCE:

1. The student understands and uses scientific concepts and principles.
 - 1.1 use properties to identify, describe, and categorize substances, materials, and objects, and use characteristics to categorize living things

SOCIAL STUDIES:

CIVICS

4. The student understands the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the principles of democratic civic involvement.
 - 4.1 understand individual rights and their accompanying responsibilities
 - 4.3 explain how citizen participation influences public policy

READING:

2. The student understands the meaning of what is read.
 - 2.1 comprehend important ideas and details
 - 2.2 expand comprehension by analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing information and ideas
 - 2.3 think critically and analyze author's use of language, style, purpose, and perspective
3. The student reads different materials for a variety of purposes.
 - 3.1 read to learn new information

COMMUNICATION:

1. The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.
 - 1.1 focus attention
 - 1.2 listen and observe to gain and interpret information
 - 1.3 check for understanding by asking questions and paraphrasing
3. The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.
 - 3.1 use language to interact effectively and responsibly with others
 - 3.2 work cooperatively as a member of a group
 - 3.3 seek agreement and solutions through

MATH:

3. The student uses mathematical reasoning.
 - 3.1 analyze information
 - 3.2 predict results and make inferences
 - 3.3 draw conclusions and verify results

HEALTH & FITNESS:

3. The student analyzes and evaluates the impact of real-life influences on health.
 - 3.1 understand how environmental factors affect one's health
 - 3.4 understand how emotions influence decision making



ARTS:

2. The student applies the creative process with arts knowledge and skills to reason and solve problems.

2.1 use the senses to gather and process information

3. The student uses at least one of the art forms

(visual arts, music, drama, and/or dance) to communicate ideas and feelings.

3.2 reflect and respond critically to the use of the arts in all forms of communication

OSPI ENVIRONMENTAL/ SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES:

EE Goal I. The student will develop knowledge about the components of the environment and understand their interactions within natural systems.

Objective C: The student will evaluate interactions occurring between humans and the environment.

EE Goal II. The student will understand how social and natural systems are fundamental in supporting our lives, economy, and emotional well-being.

Objective A: The student will explain the relationship between health and the environment.

EE Goal III. The student will recognize how individual decisions and actions impact the environment.

Objective B: The student will analyze how personal decisions and actions alter the outcomes of environmental topics.

EE Goal IV. The student will develop and utilize the knowledge and skills necessary for cooperative action to maintain or enhance the environment.

Objective A: The student will evaluate the usefulness of effective communication and participation in resolution of environmental topics.

