

projectgreenchallenge

pgc
2013

CURRICULUM

LESSON PLANS
FOR A
conscious
lifestyle

HOME AND SPACE

Introduction

Our living space has a huge impact on our lives both mentally and physically. We spend hours at home each day surrounded by a ton of stuff! It is important to understand what all of this stuff is made of and how to make our living spaces as healthy as we can.

The choices you make in your space determine what you are exposed to. Furniture, storage solutions, bed, bath and body products, school supplies and e-gadgets impact both how you experience your day and your health! This lesson will help show you how conscious living can contribute to personal and environmental health.

Resources

- *[Pinterest Board](#)*
- *[Green Dorm Room](#)*
- *[Project Green Dorm](#)*
- *[Project Green Challenge 2012 Resources](#)*
- *[Project Green Challenge 2011 Resources](#)*

Objectives

In today's lesson, students will:

- Learn to differentiate between items in their living spaces" that are healthy and sustainable from those that are not
- Apply that knowledge of sustainability to plan and design an eco dream house

Materials Needed

- Computer lab
- Paper and materials for sketching and creating
- Magazine pages with pictures of rooms in them (in case students are unable to bring in a picture of their rooms)

Lesson Plan

Start of Class: 40 minutes

It's time for a crash course in green living! The night before, have students take a picture of a room in their home, preferably their bedroom, and have it accessible either electronically or on paper. Head to the computer lab, and give each student twenty minutes to circle all of the eco-friendly items and cross out the items that are toxic or harm the environment. Then, on their picture, the students should write a one-sentence explanation of why each item is eco-friendly or not. To guide students through selecting the appropriate items and explaining their choices, begin class by showing your students how they can use online resources, such as [green your home](#) or other resources included in this lesson plan. This will help plant the seed of what sustainable living options look like, and will give the students the necessary tools to visualize these options in their own spaces.

Possible categories of items for students to look for include energy-efficient electronics, organic or sustainable bedding or fabrics, recycled or upcycled items (also heirlooms and hand-me-downs). This activity might be challenging for some students, but it will encourage them to think critically about the place where they spend much of their daily lives.

Following the exercise, students will pair up to share what they learned about their rooms. After everyone has shared, students will each count up the number of items they identified and explained, to see who labeled the most!

Each student should also be sure to brainstorm at least five items that are eco-friendly alternatives to items that are currently in their rooms, and explain why each of these items is a better choice. This will allow students to put their knowledge of a more eco-friendly living space to the test, while also educating them about sustainable brands and products.

Green Building Transition: 10 minutes

Screen the following [TED Talk](#) by Catherine Mohr.

Watching this video will help prepare students for the larger project of designing their ultimate sustainable space. Students can share their reactions to the video in a brief discussion.

Assessment/Checks for Understanding: 3 days of class time

Have your students design an eco dream house! In teams of three, students work together to build a dream house from the ground up. Think about construction, architecture, flooring, interior design, furniture, energy costs to run the house, and other things they feel are important.

On the first day, the students can research sustainable practices for creating living spaces and develop an introductory plan for their dream house. They can also use online resources such as [green building materials](#) to help them.

On the second day, students will create their dream house and draft a design on paper. Have them allow plenty of space to label and explain their houses. If needed, they will finish the assignment for homework.

On the third day, give students five minutes at the beginning of class to prepare for their presentation, and then each group will have five minutes to explain how they designed their eco dream house and what makes it eco-fabulous.

For an extra challenge, or to add an interdisciplinary component, give students a budget, so they must look for both affordable and sustainable items to curate their dream home. At a more advanced level, students could look into the ways they could fund a project like this, pay off loans, and obtain things like rent-to-buy solar panels.