

projectgreenchallenge

pgc
2013

CURRICULUM

LESSON PLANS
FOR A
conscious
lifestyle

PAPER

Introduction

How many times a day do you touch paper? Newspapers, textbooks, cereal boxes, receipts, printer paper, catalogues... items that have a big presence in your lives. But the use of paper and paper goods comes with a very real price: trees. The loss of forests in the US (where over 30% of the trees cut down are made directly into paper) and internationally contributes to climate change, water pollution, and decreased biodiversity and animal life. Furthermore, paper making is one of the most resource-intensive and highly polluting of all manufacturing industries. Besides fiber, the primary inputs into the paper making process are water, energy and toxic chemicals.

The average American consumes over 700 pounds of paper a year, the highest per capita use in the world. But you can do something about that! Every ton (approximately 220,000 sheets) of paper that is recycled saves about 17 trees. Think of it like this: recycling a single run of the Sunday New York Times could save over 75,000 trees. Using less paper (email school assignments, cancel junk mail, buy in bulk, and say NO to receipts and flyers, etc.), switching to post-consumer recycled paper (advocate for that on your school campuses and in your offices), and recycling the paper that you do use (make sure you have or introduce accessible recycling bins) are easy ways to reduce your impact and heal the planet. When in doubt, go paperless!

Resources

- [*Pinterest Board*](#)
- [*Project Green Challenge 2012 Resources*](#)
- [*Project Green Challenge 2011 Resources*](#)
- [*TTG Conscious Paper Toolkit*](#)

Objectives

In today's lesson, students will:

- Learn to differentiate between virgin paper, pre-consumer waste paper, and post consumer waste paper
- List the various uses of paper students encounter throughout their day and discover more ethical and sustainable alternatives
- Create and implement a no-paper media campaign to increase recycling throughout the school

Materials Needed

- Included handout
- Included powerpoint
- Computer lab

Lesson Plan

Start of Class: 5-10 minutes

Begin class by showing the brief video called *Unchopping the Tree*. This will help students begin to link their paper consumption to our depleting forests. Following the video, ask students to share their reactions in a short discussion.

Can You See the Difference?: 10 minutes

In this activity, students will distinguish between virgin paper, pre-consumer waste paper, and post consumer waste paper. Use the attached *PowerPoint*

Paper Log Activity: homework activity/worksheet

Using the provided worksheet, have students think about all of the types of paper they interact with on a given day. They will make lists of every single paper item they use. Then, they must select a more environmentally friendly alternative. This could be a greener product or even a reusable strategy to minimize waste. To minimize paper consumption, students could complete this assignment online, and email it to you or submit it on a flash drive.

Project Recycle: 1 day

Americans discard 4 million tons of office paper each year. This is enough to build a 12-foot wall from Los Angeles to New York City! According to RecycleWorks, 36% of any typical landfill is comprised of paper... that means a huge percent of the paper we use is NOT recycled. Since schools use a lot of paper, students should make recycling a priority. To help encourage good recycling practices, the students can launch a campaign to promote recycling on campus.

However, the students will need to be creative in designing their campaign, since no paper should be used. Students will work together to develop slogans and marketing plans to get this message out to the school community. Paperless campaign options include using the school website, putting the information in morning email announcements, writing slogans on chalkboards in the classrooms of other teachers, or any other great innovative ideas the students have.

Assessment/Checks for Understanding:

In the final activity of the lesson, students will use what they have learned to enact change on their campus or in their school. Have the students investigate whether the paper products used at their school (specifically printer/copy paper, toilet paper, and paper towels) are 100% post consumer recycled. If not, the students have work to do! Ask students to do the following:

- Research the paper usage in the school with whomever does the purchasing
- With that information write emails to the school administration urging them to consider the environmental impact of the school's paper usage.
- Ask students to explain the benefits of using 100% post-consumer recycled paper and cite at least two facts they learned.
- Also, ask the students to include an eco-option that is similar in price to the products currently used. State the name of this company and its environmental features and certification.

Paper Handout

name: _____ period: _____ date: _____

Daily Paper Log

Directions: Record every paper item that you used or came into contact with for one day. Examples include sheets of paper, tissues, paper napkins, paper towels, paper plates, cardboard, etc.

At the end of the day, add up how many items you used. Select eight of the items you touched during the day and brainstorm an alternative that uses less paper or an alternative product that doesn't use virgin fiber at all.

To minimize paper consumption, students could complete this assignment online, and email it to you or submit it on a flash drive.

Items You Use	Ways to Use Less Paper

Paper Handout cont.

name: _____ period: _____ date: _____

What are the three changes you are most likely to make to use less paper? Explain.

1.

2.

3.