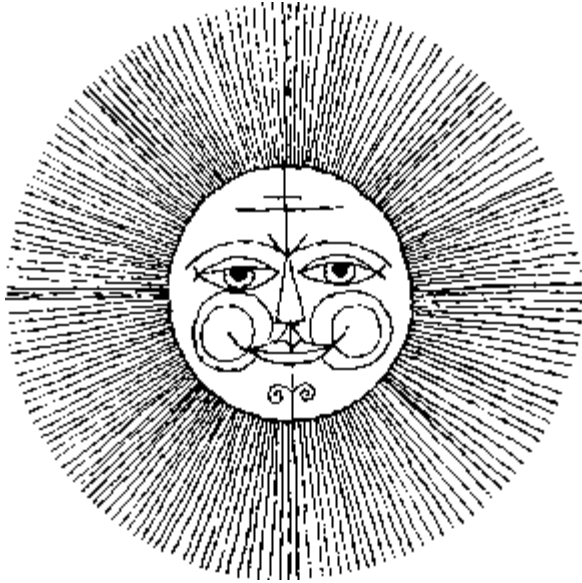


Teacher's Guide

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT SS600



This unit contains a variety of activities dealing with wastes, the Greenhouse Effect, ozone depletion, energy, deforestation and species extinction. Each section has a text to explain the issues and a crossword to reinforce the vocabulary. There are several diagrams with questions which can be used as handouts or as transparency masters.

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Each year Americans throw away 3 million tons of disposable diapers and 3.2 million tons of tires. The amount of solid wastes thrown away averages 3.2 pounds for each person each day. This does not include industrial, mining and farm wastes or junked cars.

The United States has a serious problem in finding places to put all this waste. 55% of the solid wastes now are dumped into 2,400 landfills or garbage dumps. In the past fifteen years 5,000 dumps have been closed. Newer dumps are larger but are still filling up.

Some large coastal cities dump their garbage in the ocean increasing ocean pollution. Many of the garbage landfills are dangerous because the rotting garbage produces methane gas which burns and contains toxic chemicals which can leak into the ground water.

Solid waste is a problem in the industrialized countries of North America, Europe and Japan. Production of a large variety of consumer goods and high average incomes that enable people to buy the goods create a garbage problem. 38% of the garbage in the United States is paper and nearly half of the paper is packaging materials.

Much of the garbage can be recycled or used again. Paper, glass bottles, aluminum and other metals can be used to make more paper, glass and metals. Japan recycles more than 50% of its trash, Western Europe well over 30%. The United States recycles 27% of the waste it produces.

Wastes can also be burned to generate electricity. West Germany uses 30% of its unrecycled wastes to produce electricity. The United States uses 6%.



Questions

1. If there are 260 million people in the United States, how much garbage is produced each day?
2. Why is solid waste a problem in industrialized countries?
3. What will the United States eventually have to do to find a place for its garbage?
4. Why do you think that the United States recycles less of its garbage than other countries?