

Lesson at a Glance

Students will create a collage of their ecological footprint and brainstorm ways they could reduce it.

Grade

1-3

Time

Two to Three 30-minute sessions

Core Connections

- Fine Arts 1.1 *Explore a variety of art materials while learning new techniques and processes*

3rd Grade Social Studies

- 1.3.a *identify ways people use the physical environment*
- 1.3.c *Describe ways to conserve and protect natural resources*

Materials

- Poster board
- Construction paper
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Magazines
- Glue sticks or dots

Background

The way we live leaves a footprint. How we get to work or school, what we buy at the grocery store, what we wear, watching television, where we live, surfing the internet, everything leaves a mark. All of these activities use electricity or fuel, create waste or use the earth's natural resources.

Today our footprint is global because we get what we need from faraway places. Clothes are made in China, gas comes from Saudi Arabia and our vegetables come from California and South America.

It is important that when we get the things we need, we take into account what wildlife needs too. There is only so much room on the planet and everyone needs to share.

Activity

1. Have each student trace the outline of their footprint on a piece of construction paper.

2. Have them cut it out and glue it on the construction paper. Around their foot have them cut out pictures of the things they need to survive (food house, computer, school, clothes, games, etc.)
3. Now, have students research where all of these things come from (where did the wood for their house come from, the food on their table, where does the energy come from to turn on their lights, where was their computer made, etc.). Have them make a list of as many places as possible that have contributed to their ecological footprint.

Climate Change Connections

What simple changes can you make in your life that would positively impact the environment and maybe even mitigate climate change?

Conclusion

As a group discuss where all of their “needed items” came from. Have the students brainstorm some ways they could reduce their footprint (unplug the television or computer when not in use, grow vegetables, walk to school, turn off the lights, etc.)

Extension:

- Make a large picture of the Earth and stick it up on the wall. Each time a student takes an action that reduces the size of his/her carbon footprint, have him/her write it on a piece of notepaper and draw a small footprint around it. Tape it on the earth and see if your class can fill the earth with lots of positive actions!
- At the end of the month, count how many actions the class has completed. Share the easiest ones with the rest of the school and encourage other classes to follow suit.