

The Green News **Classroom Involvement Ideas for Teachers**

EarthTeam's monthly, student-created on-line newsletter, *The Green News*, can be incorporated into your classroom in many ways. *The Green News* can help you meet your technology, writing and reading requirements, while at the same time providing encouragement for your students as they see their work published and read by thousands of other Bay Area youth. Below are some suggestions of ways you can incorporate *The Green News* and other EarthTeam resources into your classroom. We hope that you will consider some of the ideas on this list, and that you will strongly encourage your students to submit their work to *The Green News*. We feel that the positive re-enforcement they will receive when they see their work published is the best motivator for continued hard work in the classroom and will likewise inspire them to become more environmentally aware. You can view current and back issues of *The Green News* by visiting www.earthteam.net and clicking on "The Green News".

The following activities are best suited to 9th-12th grade classes, although they can be adapted for any age group.

Art and Photo Teachers

- 1) Read an article in the current issue of *The Green News* and respond to it artistically. This can include drawings, paintings or photographs. Write a short paragraph describing the article you chose and how your artistic response relates to it. Submit your art and descriptive paragraph to *The Green News*.
- 2) Read an article from a reputable news source and respond to it artistically. This can include drawings, paintings or photographs. Write a short paragraph describing the article you chose and how your artistic response relates to it. Submit your art and descriptive paragraph to *The Green News*.
- 3) Artistically represent a topic from the list below in a photograph, drawing or painting. Submit your creation to *The Green News* along with a personal statement as to what the work means to you.
 - A major environmental issue – global warming, water, population, etc.
 - A controversial environmental issue
 - Environment and health
 - The current season
 - Urban, suburban or rural life
- 4) Find a piece of art that you feel speaks clearly about the environment. Explain your interpretation of what the artist is trying to say, how he or she attempts to do so, and how effective you feel the piece to be. Submit your response to *The Green News*.
- 5) Compare the portrayal of the environment in 2 different painting styles. How are they similar? How are they different? What is each trying to say about its subject? Which style do you feel is more appropriate for this subject? Why? Submit your response to *The Green News*.
- 6) Request an environmental expert speaker and create an artistic response to the speaker. Write a short paragraph describing your response and submit to *The Green News*

English Teachers

1) Read the current issue of *The Green News* or of a periodical of your choice for inspiration, then write a nature-based poem, short story or essay. Submit your work to *The Green News*.

2) Read the current issue of *The Green News*. Choose one article, poem, picture or story and write a letter to the editor responding to it. This can be praise, criticism (with rationally explained reasoning for the critique), an alternative viewpoint, or your own feelings on the subject. Submit your response to *The Green News's* "Rants and Raves" section.

3) Find an example of the environment portrayed in the media and comment on it. How is it portrayed? Do you feel this is an accurate portrayal? If not, why? How do you feel the media as a whole portrays the environment? Is this in line with your own feelings? Submit your response to *The Green News*.

4) Find an official document (press release, policy statement, official speech) relating to the environment and respond to it. What is the message? What support is given for this message? What are the different sides of the issue? Who will be most satisfied by this document? Who will be least satisfied? Does it appeal to both sides of the issue? Submit your response to *The Green News*.

5) Read an article in the current issue of *The Green News*. In a page, summarize the key points of the article and respond. What is the author trying to say? How does he/she make and support his/her case? What tools or devices does he/she use, and how effective are these?

6) Pick 2 media sources (book, newspaper, magazine, TV, etc.) and find a reference to the environment in each that takes a position on a controversial topic. These references could take the form of:

- a. A scientific report or other factually-based article supported by facts and figures.
- b. An emotional appeal
- c. An official document
- d. A call for action

Discuss the methods used to convey the authors' intent, comment on how effective each article was, and draw conclusions about the best methods to use when discussing environmental topics. Cite the sources, using appropriate bibliographical format.

7) Pick an environmental problem that you feel strongly about (acid rain, global warming, alternative energy, endangered species, etc.) and gather background information from 3 sources. Present your research in a 4-5 minute speech that you will deliver in front of the class, synthesizing the information found in your sources. While writing your speech, consider the following questions:

- What are your sources trying to achieve? Are they merely conveying information, or do they attempt to inspire action? How effective are they?
- Do your sources arrive at the same conclusion?
- Do your sources use similar methods to support their claims?

8) Create one monthly feature item such as the following: a) Rants and Raves, b) Pro and Con by Scott and Amy (for example), c) Specific Issue – Global Warming, Water or Your Choice c) Reviews – Book, Movie, Documentary or Music review d) Let's Brag – column about what is happening at various schools e) Reviewing Grist (www.grist.org). Grist is fun and environmental and written by young adults. f) Eco-hero of the Month g) Your idea

9) TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS: Contact EarthTeam to set up an in-class speaker through our Speakers Bureau.

STUDENTS' INSTRUCTIONS: Listen to the speaker and analyze his or her speech:

- What was his/her subject and main point?
- What devices or methods did he/she employ?
- How effective were these devices?

Journalism, Environmental Science, and Government Teachers

1) Select a topic from the list provided below. Briefly summarize the position or actions of the previous administration, relating to this issue. Briefly summarize the position or actions of the current administration relating to this issue. Compare and contrast. Cite your sources in a bibliography. Submit your response to *The Green News*.

- a) Global Warming
- b) The Endangered Species List
- c) U.S. National Parks
- d) Off-Shore Drilling
- e) Alternative Energy

2) Read the current issue of *The Green News*. Choose a problem which could benefit from a letter-writing campaign, research it and briefly summarize the nature of the threat and what is currently being done to address it. Then find the appropriate congress person and write a model letter addressing this issue.

3) Research the actions of Gov. Schwarzenegger (or Pres. Bush, CA legislature, etc.) which affect the environment from the time he took office until the present. Pick one specific issue and write a detailed description of the issue and the actions Gov. Schwarzenegger has taken relating to it, using at least 3 sources. Then state whether you agree or disagree with his decisions and why. Cite your sources in a bibliography. Submit your response to *The Green News*.

4) CLASS-WIDE EXERCISE: As a class, choose an environmental topic. Compile a questionnaire relating this topic which will measure a subject's knowledge of the issue, it's ramifications, and any actions being currently undertaken which relate to this issue. Have every student interview 2 people of their choosing. As a class, draw conclusions about the level of awareness in your community relating to this subject. Submit your conclusions to *The Green News*.

5) Read a newspaper and find an article relating to the environment. Summarize the key points of the article. Find a reference to this issue in an online source. Compare and contrast, considering the following questions:

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each media? Can one media employ tools that the other cannot? If so, does it do so in this case?
- What are the target audiences of each media?
- Which media do you feel is the more appropriate forum to discuss this issue? Why?

Be sure to cite your sources.

6) Create one monthly feature item such as the following: a) Rants and Raves, b) Pro and Con by Scott and Amy (for example), c) Specific Issue – Global Warming, Water or Your Choice c) Reviews – Book, Movie, Documentary or Music review d) Let's Brag – column about what is happening at various schools e) Reviewing Grist (www.grist.org). Grist is fun and environmental and written by young adults. f) Eco-hero of the Month g) Your idea