



How We're Connected

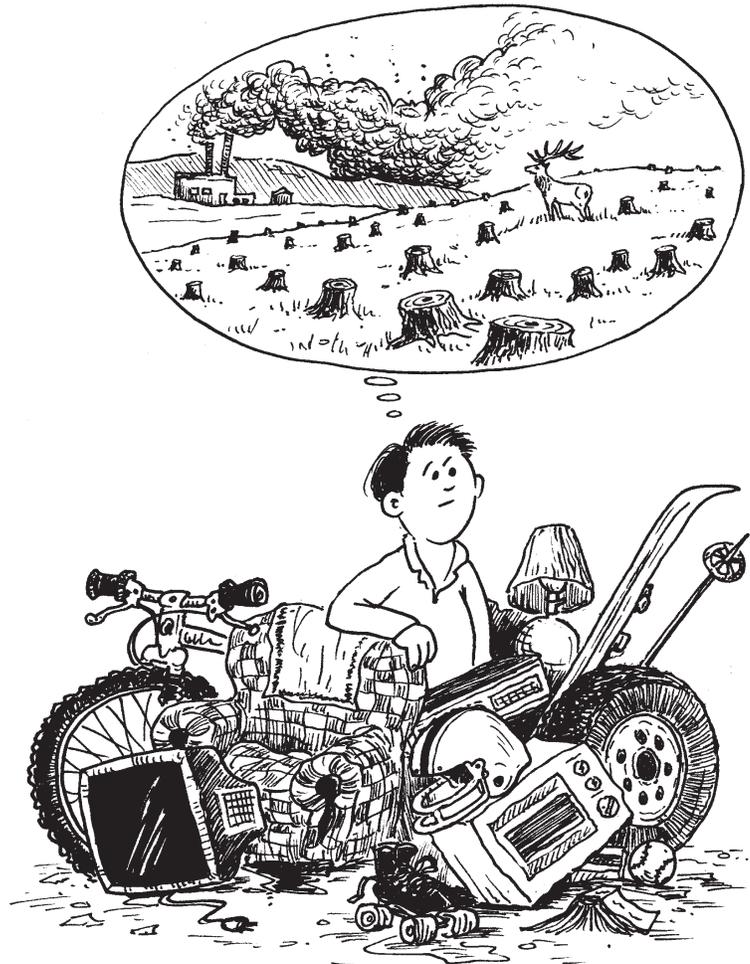
It's easy to look outwards, to try to fix blame on others who you think might be at fault - whether we're referring to endangered species or to other things in life. In this activity students are encouraged to take a hard look at their life-style choices and the impacts of those choices...

Materials

- overhead projector and screen
- overhead of the graphic on this page

Instructions for the Teacher

1. Ask the students
 - **Name some of the things you use in your daily life. These could be food, water, toys, school materials, etc: anything that touches your hands during a typical day.** Record this list on the board without comment.
2. Ask the students to define the word "need", and ask each student to use it in a sentence.
3. Ask the students to define the word "want", and ask each student to use it in a sentence.
4. Go through the list of words on the board and circle those items that students agree that they all feel they actually need in order to survive (needs are things that are required to sustain life: these should be variants of food, water, shelter, air, and space). Are there any needs that aren't included (for example, students may feel that love, family, etc. may constitute needs). If so, add them to the list and circle them. Tell the students that the items not circled should be those things that are nonessential wants (television, bicycle, etc.).



5. Next, ask the students for their assistance in circling all of those needs that a wild animal also has. Students should realize that most wildlife uses only the basics - unlike most of us humans.

6. Show students the graphic of the thinking boy. Ask students:

- **What do you think the boy is thinking about?**

Students should realize that this individual has made a connection between his lifestyle (as shown by all the goods surrounding him) and the impacts of his lifestyle on nature (as shown by the homeless elk, the clear-cut forest, and the belching smokestacks of the plant generating electricity.

Ask students to focus on the items inside the thought bubble. Ask them

- **Think about the people who cut down the forest or who are operating the plant. Are they bad people?**

No! They are simply employed in businesses whose job it is to provide things like paper and electricity to people like... school students! But while we persist in our patterns of consumption (e.g. generating electricity by burning coal, or buying things that we don't really need) the jobs these people do will have an impact on the environment.

- **What do you think the environmental cost is of all the things that you identified as wants, not needs?**

This may be the hardest question that you have ever asked them! It is difficult to calculate the environmental cost of, say, building a television set. Have students imagine where the metal came from (probably a mine). The plastics were made out of oil resources, and the electricity required to manufacture it and to operate it is generated (in Alberta) by burning coal. And of course there are other costs...

7. Tell students:

- It just so happens that if you want to help nature and to protect endangered species, then one of the best ways we can do that is to look at your lifestyle - which is environmentally very costly - and *find ways to change our lifestyle to decrease these environmental costs*. This then puts less demand on our environment: less trees are cut, less coal is burned, etc. For example:

- choose to NOT buy new goods (such as a new computer game or the latest kind of sneakers)
- ride a bike more often, rather than accepting rides
- look for ways to use less paper
- practice the three R's. They come in order: Reduce consumption, Reuse that which you are forced to consume, and then Recycle rather than throw it in the garbage. (Students may know more 'R' words, such as repair - have students help you decide where these new 'R' words fit in the order).

8. Have students fill out the living lightly checklist, which tells them how much environmental impact they have. As a consequence of this lesson, suggest to students that they review their checklist results and make a written commitment that states how they'll try to decrease their impact (encourage them to be reasonable and feasible!).

Please note that these commitments look good in a letter to a decision-maker - encourage students to describe how they're trying to model environmental responsible behaviour before they ask a decision-maker to be equally responsible!

9. Have the students brainstorm to come up with a list of other actions they could do to help endangered species - either their own endangered species or one which the class has chosen to adopt as a whole. Suggestions may include education component (i.e. making posters), collecting information, making phone calls, writing letters, planning a fund-raising campaign, etc.

Living Lightly Checklist

Mark the answer that is closest to the right answer for you:

N ... stands for **never** or **no**

R ... stands for **rarely**

S ... stands for **sometimes**

U ... stands for **usually** or **yes**

Food consumption

- | | N | R | S | U |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I bring all of my lunch to school in reusable containers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I get refunds from bottles and cans | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I compost apple cores and vegetable waste | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I "vote with my wallet" and don't buy overpackaged food | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Household Energy

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I turn off lights, TV., etc. when no-one is in the room | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I decide what I want from the fridge before I open the door | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I regularly walk or bicycle instead of asking for a ride | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Water

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I limit my shower to 5 minutes and keep the volume of water low | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I turn off the water when brushing my teeth | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Waste Reduction

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I recycle everything that is accepted for recycling in my community | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I use both sides of a sheet of paper | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I repair or re-use things instead of throwing them away | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I reuse plastic and paper bags | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Natural Contact

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I spend time in a natural area at least once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I know what colour the sky is today | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| When I hear a bird singing I try to see it and identify it | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Taking Action

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I pick up litter when I see it in a park or a natural area | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I write letters to decision-makers about the environment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am a member of an environmental club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

add a question here:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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For a perfect score (which is impossible for anyone to attain) all your answers should fall in the right hand column. Where your answer falls into another column, look at those questions and consider if you could make a commitment in this area to help minimize your impact. *Remember, every little bit helps!!*