

What's an Environment?

LEVEL: K-1-2-3-4-5-6

SUBJECT AREA(S): Health, Social Studies, Language Arts, Science

OBJECTIVE: Students will understand what *environment* means and will be able to distinguish between elements of a pleasant and an unpleasant environment.

TIME: 40-50 minutes

MATERIALS

- φ Bulletin board or chart paper
- φ Markers
- φ Tape or tacks
- φ Figures 1-1 through 1-6 (pictures of pleasant and unpleasant environments)
- φ Figure 1-7 (picture of a complex pleasant and unpleasant environment)
- φ Answer Key to Figure 1-7

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss the meaning of the word *environment*.
Discuss and compare the classroom environment and the outside environment.

For Your Information

- ★ *Environment:* whatever is around a person indoors or outside.
- ★ *Classroom environment:* desks, blackboards, chairs, walls, etc.
- ★ We know what our environment is like qualitatively from our sight,

smell, touch, hearing, and, where appropriate, touch. We know it quantitatively through measuring and counting. Sometimes we enjoy our environment, sometimes we don't.

Engage students in a discussion of what they enjoy seeing, smelling, touching, and hearing outdoors and what they do not.

2. Draw a smiling face (pleasant) and a frowning face (not pleasant) on a piece of chart paper, drawing a line between the two to make two columns. Distribute one figure to each of six students (Figures 1-1 through 1-6). Ask them to show the pictures one at a time to the class and to state whether, in their opinion, it shows a pleasant or an unpleasant environment. Then have students attach the picture in the proper column on the chart paper and discuss why.
3. Take a walk around the school neighborhood, looking for pleasant and unpleasant aspects of the environment. Ask students to look, smell, listen, and, where appropriate, touch. Encourage discussion. When students notice something pleasant or unpleasant, discuss it. Ask questions. Ask students if the unpleasant environments can be changed. How?

For Your Information

- ★ Items students might say are found in an unpleasant environment: graffiti, litter, oil residue from motor vehicles, loud machine noises, smoke, rundown buildings
- ★ Items students might say are found in a pleasant environment: flowers, grass, trees, blue sky, fresh air, birds, bird songs, well-maintained buildings, healthy animals

ASSESSMENT

Distribute Figure 1-7. Have students circle the items that are unpleasant.

For Your Information

- ★ The picture shows a factory giving off unpleasant smoke and dumping liquid pollutant into a stream. Cars and trucks streaming exhaust are in the parking lot. On the pleasant side, it shows birds, fish, trees, flowers, and a clean garbage can that says "Recycle."

EXTENSIONS

1. Have students write and illustrate a book that describes pleasant and unpleasant aspects of their environment, perhaps those encountered on a walk near school or home.
2. Have students cut pictures from magazines or draw and color pictures depicting pleasant and unpleasant environments.
3. Have students take home the books or illustrations they created to share with their parent(s)/guardian(s).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please refer to the following topics in the *Additional Resources* section in Appendix Three: **Air Quality / Environmental Activism.**

Pleasant Features

Pond
Fish, Fishing
Birds
Butterfly
Recycling collection can
Flowers
Trees
Grass
Mountain

Unpleasant Features

Auto Exhaust

Garbage in Pond

Garbage decomposing on ground

Factory runoff spilling into pond

Factory smokestacks may be putting out air and water pollutants