



Let's give them something to talk about...

Most of your students have probably heard about the environmental initiatives being pursued today. But how many of them have actually paused to consider the effects of such things on their own lives.

Have they ever really thought about it? Have they formed their own opinions about things? Have they gotten involved in related projects? Are they interested in pursuing some environmental initiatives of their own?

These are a few hot topics to consider introducing to your class. You certainly do not have to be an expert on the topics yourself. There is basic info provided, and several links to articles on each topic.

WINDFARMS: Wind farms are a means of creating a renewable source of energy. Wind turbines are built on flat open land with wind speeds of roughly 22.5km/hour (14 miles/h: Alliant Energy). Wind farms are already in use in many countries and seem to be growing in popularity with the growing concern of pollution and decreasing supply of alternative non-renewable energy means such coal. There are concerned opinions about noise, use of land and appearance.

<http://www.tbsource.com/Localnews/index.asp?cid=115293>

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article5594182.ece>

http://www.alliantenergykids.com/stellent2/groups/public/documents/pub/phk_ee_re_001502.hcsp#TopOfPage

<http://www.livescience.com/environment/080924-pf-wind-energy.html>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/feb/26/sciencenews.renewableenergy>

BULLFROG POWER: Bullfrog Power injects power from "clean, emissions-free sources like wind power and low-impact water power" (Bullfrog Power) into the energy grid. The subscriber still receives their power from the power grid, but knows that the amount they use is being replenished by Bullfrog Power sources. The current Bullfrog Power rate is 8.9 cents per kilowatt hour. The current Thunder Bay Hydro rate is 5.6 cents per kilowatt hour.

<http://www.bullfrogpower.com/>

<http://www.tbhydro.on.ca/pages/residential/rates.htm>



Here's How

Start your class off with an informal discussion. Get everyone thinking and create an open atmosphere for sharing ideas.

Have your students share their opinions on the topic you choose.

Post the word on the board and see the reaction of your students – they may have previous background knowledge of the topic already. Find out what they know.

Read one of the related articles to your class to help initiate the discussion.

Consider providing the topic and having your students research the topic.

Provide students with the related articles for their own research.

Hold a debate considering opposing opinions of a topic.

You may have to offer up some of your own ideas to get things going. You may have to offer alternate opinions, especially at first. The idea is to get everyone thinking about what we can do today.

LIGHT BULBS: Compact fluorescent bulbs use about 75% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs and last up to 10 times longer. They are also known to contain a small amount of mercury and require safe disposal.

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls_mercury

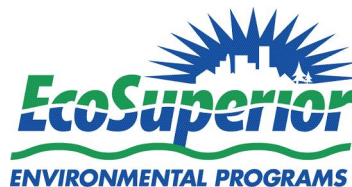
<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/4941>

http://www.ecosuperior.ca/mercury_fluorescent.shtml

EARTH HOUR: Brainstorm ideas of how your class can reduce energy consumption to help fight climate change. It's all fine and good to come up with the ideas, but will everyone actually try to do it? Also consider that Earth Hour is only for one hour. Makes for a good discussion of feasibility of the ideas we always hear floating around and if it's really worth all the hype.

(consider the awareness that is raised by the program and that some may become more conscious of their everyday energy consuming actions)

<http://www.earthhour.org/>



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