

Natural Resources!



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Natural Resources

Natural resources are materials that come directly from nature and are used to produce goods and services. Examples include trees, water, coal and fish.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Definition/Background

Natural resources, such as land, are “gifts from nature.” They are present without human intervention. All raw materials used in production originally come from natural resources. This sometimes creates confusion when classifying resources because raw materials are not necessarily natural resources. For example, lumber used to build a house is considered an intermediate good. Lumber is not a natural resource because it does not come directly from nature; trees have been altered by man to form lumber. Trees are a natural resource. Producers use natural resources, human resources, and capital resources to make goods and provide services.

Teaching Ideas

1. Have students write and illustrate a haiku, a poem having three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables, about their favorite natural resource.
Example:
The sun shines each day
It brings warmth, joy, light, and hope
Plants grown in the sun
2. Call out the names of natural resources. Instruct the students to raise one hand if the natural resource is a plant, two hands if it is a mineral and to quickly stand up/sit down if it is an animal. (Typical list: tree, cow, gold, silver, corn, coal, chicken, sheep, wheat, goat).
3. Have the students write the lyrics to a song based on natural resources. Use a well known tune such as “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush,” “The Farmer in the Dell” or “Row, Row, Row, Your Boat.”
4. Discuss what natural resources were needed to make today’s school lunch. (Remember that ingredients like flour, sugar, chocolate chips do not exist in nature. They are intermediate goods.)
5. Assign each student a natural resource and have them write five facts and five opinions about it.

Lessons & Resources

Print Lessons

Focus: Economics Grades K-2, Lesson 3: Gifts from Mother Nature (elementary)

Master Curriculum Guides in Economics: K-2, Lesson 7: Gifts from Nature (elementary)

Spotting Economics: from Africa to Ice Cream, Lesson 2: When Benny Spends his Pennies (elementary)

Middle School World Geography: Focus on Economics, Lesson 1: What are Productive Resources? (middle)

Online Lessons

The Giving Tree (elementary)

http://www.ncee.net/resources/lessons/childrens_lit_sample.pdf

Water, Trees, Fish (elementary)

http://www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/lessonPlans/50sq/2007/_k01-2.pdf

There is Something in the Water (middle)

<http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/index.cfm?lesson=EM308&page=teacher>

Fed Resources

Lemonade for Sale (elementary)

http://www.richmondfed.org/education/for_teachers/lesson_plans_and_classroom_activities/index.cfm

Tortilla Factory (elementary)

http://www.stlouisfed.org/education_resources/assets/lesson_plans/TortillaFactory.pdf

Literature

- **From Dawn Till Dusk** by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock. Houghton Mifflin, 2002. Natural resources are part of every season on a Vermont farm. [Grades 3-5]
- **Lemonade for Sale** by Stuart J. Murphy. Harper Collins Publisher, 1998. The Elm Street Kids’ Club decides to produce and sell lemonade so that they can earn enough money to fix up their clubhouse. [Grades 2-6]
- **The Tortilla Factory** by Gary Paulson. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1998. This book tells the story of the life cycle of corn, from seed to plant to tortilla and back to seed again. [Grades K-2]
- **G Is for Goat** by Patricia Polacco. Penguin, 2007. This rhyming alphabet book features everything there is to like about goats. [Grades K-3]
- **Scat** by Carl Hiaasen. Random House Children’s Books, 2009. Nick and Marta go into Florida’s Everglades to help find the solutions to environmental mysteries. [Grades 4-8]

VIRGINIA COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC EDUCATION

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