Every "Litter" Bit Hurts Lesson Plan

This lesson addresses the ever-growing problem of litter. Students will rank items of litter from least harmful to most harmful. Students will realize that all litter is harmful to our environment and that littering is a bad habit that is "learned" and can be changed. This lesson plan is based on the “Waste in Place” curriculum copyrighted by Keep America Beautiful. It uses and adapts material from “Waste in Place” with permission from Keep America Beautiful. (Environmental Education)

Primary Learning Outcomes
1. What types of litter have harmful effects?
2. Why is litter undesirable?
3. What are the causes of litter?
4. How can litter be prevented?

Additional Learning Outcomes
1. Is littering a behavior that can be changed?
2. Does litter have a negative impact on our community?
3. What is litter?

Assessed QCC Standards:

Grade: 4
Social Studies
Core Social Study Skills
33
Topic: Information Processing
Standard: Determines sequences of events and identifies cause and effect relationship.
41
Topic: Problem Solving
Standard: Suggests alternative solutions to a problem.

Non-Assessed QCC Standards:

Grade: 4
Character Education
Citizenship
9
Topic: Citizenship
Standard: **Respect for the Natural Environment**: care for and conservation of land, trees, clean air and pure water and of all living inhabitants of the earth. 9.1 Conservation: avoiding waste and pollution of natural resources.

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**Procedures/Activities**

**Step: 1 Duration: 5 minutes**
Divide the class into small groups of four to six each. Give a "litter" bag of items to each group. See "materials" for list of items to use. Explain that the bag and the items are commonly littered items. Assure the students that their bags are filled with "clean" trash, and not items that were actually littered.

Note: each item can be placed in a separate clear baggie so the students do not have to actually touch the items.

**Step: 2 Duration: 10 minutes**
Instruct the groups to empty their trash bags and arrange the items so everyone can see them. Write a list of items on the board and don't forget to include the paper bag. Tell students to rank the items from "least harmful" to "most harmful." Ranking should be a group decision. The students might ask if they are to rank the items regarding the harm to people or the environment. Do not give any further guidelines on ranking the items. Let them discover their own criteria for labeling items. Students should also discuss (optional to write) why they chose one item over another as harmful.

**Step: 3 Duration: 15 minutes**
After all the groups have finished, have them report their decisions to the class. On the board, keep track of the reasons groups are giving for choosing items as undesirable. Look over and discuss the list of reasons on the board. Stress the fact that there is no "correct" ranking. All litter is harmful. Reinforce the concept that littering is an inappropriate behavior and a bad habit that people have learned. Define the word "litter" as: human-generated waste (or trash) that is discarded in an inappropriate place (streets, playgrounds, streams, etc.), or improperly stored trash which has escaped from its container (trash can, dumpster, back of truck, etc.).

**Step: 4 Duration: 10 minutes**
Ask the class to expand on why litter is undesirable. Many of the following points may be raised: litter is pollution; it is an eyesore that destroys the beauty of a place. Litter can be dangerous; broken glass or metal can injure. Litter is often eaten by wildlife and this can lead to injury or death. Litter
can be a threat to public health; illegally dumped tires are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and rodents frequent waste piles. Even the odor of trash piles can be offensive.

**Step: 5 Duration: 5 minutes**  
Have students brainstorm ways they can help prevent litter in their community. Write student responses on the board. Using a show of hands, have the students choose their three favorite ideas/methods for preventing litter. Consider choosing one or all three of the ideas to implement on your school grounds or in your school community. Contact your local solid waste agency or Keep America Beautiful affiliate for details on how to participate in community litter clean-ups or "Adopt-A-Road."

**Web Resources for Step 5**

**Title:** Keep America Beautiful Kid's Page  
**URL:** http://www.kab.org/partners.asp?id=200&rid=201  
**Annotation:** This link provides background information for the teacher to help facilitate the student brainstorming session. This link also lists ideas on how students can help take care of their environment.

**Title:** Keep America Beautiful Georgia Affiliates Listing  
**URL:** http://www.keepgeorgiabeautiful.org/local_affiliate.html  
**Annotation:** This link provides a listing of Georgia Keep America Beautiful (KAB) affiliates. Consider contacting your county (or closest) affiliate to get information on local opportunities for students to get involved and help keep their environment clean.

**Attachments for Step 5**

**Title:** Tips for Preventing Litter  
**FileName:** Tips for Preventing Litter.doc  
**Description:** Keep America Beautiful's list of reasons why people litter. This attachment also gives sources of litter and tips on how we can help reduce litter in our community. (This information is from the “Waste in Place” curriculum, copyrighted by Keep America Beautiful and is used with permission from Keep America Beautiful.)

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Materials and Equipment
One set per group of the following:
1. paper sack
2. disposable cup
3. small glass bottle
4. plastic six-pack ring
5. string
6. snack bag
7. cigarette butt (place in clear baggie)
8. banana peel
9. balloon
10. straw
11. beverage can
12. writing materials are optional

Standards (Local and/or National)

Total Duration
45 minutes

Technology Connection

Assessment

Using attached "student quiz," have students answer the following:
1. Name three sources that contribute to litter.
2. State three reasons litter is harmful to people, wildlife, and our natural resources.
3. Name three ways they can help "reduce" litter in their community.

Attachments

Title: Student Quiz For Every Litter Bit Hurts FileName: Student Quiz For Every Litter Bit Hurts.doc
Description: In this "Student Quiz" students answer three questions based on the background litter information presented in class. The answer key follows the student quiz. Feel free to assign any point values you feel appropriate.

Extension

Group the items into categories: items that could be reused, recycled,
or landfilled. Develop a presentation that will convince people not to litter. For a one-week period, instruct students to keep track of the number of times they see someone litter or see litter escaping from its container. For additional activities to extend students’ learning about litter and waste management in general, please refer to Keep America Beautiful’s “Waste in Place” curriculum supplement (see Web resource below).

**Web Resources**

**Title:** Keep America Beautiful’s “Waste in Place”
**Curriculum**
**URL:** [http://www.kab.org/wip2.cfm](http://www.kab.org/wip2.cfm)
**Annotation:** The Keep America Beautiful “Waste in Place” interdisciplinary curriculum supplement is for grades K-6 and has 33 lesson plans grouped by subject. You may order the curriculum online. Teacher workshops are also available.

**Remediation**

Take students on a "litter" hike and identify (and pick up with gloves, of course) littered items found along the way. Bring bag of littered items back to the class and illustrate proper ways to dispose of unwanted items.

**Accommodation**

For students with exceptional needs, what changes can be made in instruction and teaching delivery to enhance student participation and learning? Each area below is a direct link to general classroom accommodations.
**Non-readers**  **Physical Impairments**  **Sensory Impairments**  **Attention/Behavior**  **Gifted**

Each disability below is a direct link to general classroom accommodations specific for that disability.

- Autism
- Deaf - Blind
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Emotional and Behavioral Disorder
- Mild Intellectual Disability
- Orthopedic Impairment
Other Health Impairments:
Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Tourette Syndrome
Significant Development Delay
Specific Learning Disability
Speech - Language Impairment
Traumatic Brain Injury
Visual Impairment

Modification

For students with significant disabilities, what changes can be made in instruction and teaching delivery to allow students to participate in classroom instruction while working on IEP objectives and off grade level QCC standards. Below are suggested modifications correlated to the procedures of this lesson plan.

Have students demonstrate the proper way to dispose of trash in a trash can. Have students identify pictures of places as "pretty and appealing" or "ugly and unkempt."