

Litter Concerns

Summary

Students will observe and record examples of litter. They will discuss what is and is not litter, why it is there, and there is a need to be concerned. Students will draw a picture, illustrating their main litter concern and present these to the class.

Objectives

Students will be able to develop their own definitions of litter using inquiry-based methods. They will also be able to illustrate and verbally support their conclusions and concerns relating to litter.

Background

Many people, especially children, simply do not “see” litter. By looking for litter and making observations, their awareness and understanding of the problem is increased. Consult *Quick and Dirty Fact Sheet: Litter* or visit DEQ’s web site for students: www.deq.state.va.us/kids/kids/html.

Procedure

1. Ask students to predict two specific places where they might see litter in their community. Collect the predictions and rank them by frequency.
2. Assign the following homework to last at least three days, but no longer than than a week. Explain to the students that they should record all the places they see litter on the way to and from school and while going around town with their families and friends. The students should keep a running diary of their sightings. It should include

<i>Example:</i>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Litter</u>
	on the side of the road where I live	2 aluminum soda cans
	corner of Main Street and First Ave	3 fast food bags, 1 paper cup

3. After 2-3 days, start recording their observations on the blackboard or somewhere the whole class can see them. Continue adding observations the full length of the assignment.

Alternative: Make a slide show of travels around the school area to include some of the roads the students travel to school, shopping centers they might go, and other nearby places that have litter. Have the students write the instances of litter they see during the slide show. Then write these observations on the blackboard.

4. Have the students discuss the places where they saw the most litter, make a list of the places. Count the number of times a place was listed and add appropriate numbers by their first mention. Examples: around the curbs on Main Street - 14; the parking lot of the grocery store - 9; the road along the football field of the high school - 16, etc. The observations can be graphed by frequency. Note the students’ original predictions and ask how they compare with their actual findings.

5. Have each student or small group of students choose one littered location that they personally are concerned about. They should draw a picture that illustrates the litter issue in that place. Explain to the students that they will present their drawings to the class, telling why theirs is particularly important and what should be done about it. Note: If doing a shorter presentation, choose several students to share their drawings.

Target Level:
Grade 3

SOLs:
Science: 3.1, 3.3, 3.6,
3.10

Materials Needed:
Paper and crayons or
markers

6. Post the drawings on a class bulletin board after the presentations are made. Have the students write a definition of litter and propose ten ways to prevent littering based on their observations and discussions.

Extensions

Have the students create a public “display” with their drawings and solutions. These might be posted in the local library, a restaurant or grocery store. Students might invite their parents, local supervisors and state legislators to visit their exhibit.



Example:

Place

on the side of the River Road where I live

Litter

2 aluminum soda cans