Reducing Every Day Plastic Use

Students will research and write a persuasive essay about the effects of plastic in every day use. They will be encouraged to send these letters to officials who could make a difference.

Grade Level: 6 - 8th
Subject: English/Language Arts, Science
Length of Time: Multiple Class Periods

Common Core Alignment

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1 - Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Objectives & Outcomes

Students will be able to research the effect of plastic on the environment. Students will write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. Students will introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

Materials Needed

- The video clip at http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-bottled-water/ if your school computer won’t access it you may be able to download and email the video in advance from your home.
- Computer or library access for each student to research the topic, pencil, paper, any additional resources that the teacher or school has about plastic and the environment.

Procedure

Opening to Lesson

- Show the video from http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-bottled-water/
- As a class, discuss the video.
- Do the students drink bottled water? Why? What makes it easier?
- What other plastic do they use in their daily life?
  - Plastic bags, plastic containers...
- Who is responsible for the plastic consumption in the student’s every day life?
  - Their parents, the school, the grocery store, the city?

Body of Lesson
Guided Practice

- Ask students to think about the one way that they could personally cut down on plastic life in their life.
  - If it is easily solvable, like buying yogurt in bigger containers, think bigger.
- In what way will they need someone else’s help in cutting down on plastic?
  - For example, plastic bags at the grocery store, plastic bottles sold at school, unnecessary packaging on products that they buy at a store.
  - Pass out the graphic organizer and have students fill in as much as they can, based on their brainstorming.
  - They should be able to write their audience, topic, position, and at least 2 reasons without research.
  - As a class, brainstorm one reason why reducing plastic will help the environment in general and all students can use this example as one of their reasons.
  - For example, the energy that it takes to produce plastic, the waste that it creates, the landfills that it contributes to, how long it takes to break down...

Independent Practice

- As homework, or during computer or library time, students will use the internet and library resources to find evidence to support why reducing plastic will help the environment and complete the graphic organizer.
- Have students partner up and share their completed graphic organizer.
- Walk around and give feedback.
- You may wish to collect and check/grade the graphic organizers.
- Once they have a complete graphic organizer and are confident that their ideas are well thought out and researched, students will write a persuasive letter.
- Explain to students that they will actually send this letter to the appropriate person (the audience) in hopes for making a change. Encourage them to write clearly and convincingly.

Closing

Send or email the student’s persuasive letters to the appropriate person. As the responses come in, have students read them to the class and discuss the responses.

Assessment & Evaluation

Students will complete a well-researched persuasive letter to encourage the city and/or their family and friends to consume less plastic.

Modification & Differentiation

The teacher can work with students in small groups for those who need extra assistance. Students who are reluctant to participate can work with a partner. Teacher can provide verbal and physical cues to help students.

Download Attachments

- 7th grade Reducing Plastic Use Persuasive Letter
Related Lesson Plans

Extra, Extra, Read All About It

Students will read an article from a newspaper, magazine, or other similar content, identify main idea, and create a headline for the story.

The Classroom Lottery

Based on the short story, *The Lottery*, by Shirley Jackson, the students will be participate in a similar mock classroom drama using a different scenario for the “choosing”, while writing answers to thought-provoking questions.

Camouflage and Environment

Students will make butterflies of various colors and then they will experience the advantage that butterflies that are the same color as their environment have against predators.

The United States of Matter

Observe various substances to recognize different characteristics of solids, liquids, and gases. The students will work in pairs.