

Chapter 4: It's Easy Being Green!

Inquiry 2: The Green Economy - Wants and Needs, Rights and Responsibilities

- < **Provocation** – Game: Journey to a New Planet
- < **Question Generation** – Does It Fit?
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A. Provocation

To hook student interest, introduce the provocation to initiate student thinking.

[Journey to a New Planet Game](#) (refer to pages 27-29)

The following activity is adapted from "GEAR, (Global Education Activity Resource) for grades 2 to 8, developed by World Vision Canada, (adapted from Defining Peace and Conflict, UNICEF, 1995).

In this game students will be told they are taking a journey to a new planet with their partner. There are many collaborative decisions that need to be made so students will have to work together.

Objectives:

Students will differentiate between wants and needs, generate, gather and exchange ideas, use critical thinking skills and demonstrate understanding of basic human rights.

Preparation:

- Prepare a simple drawing of the solar system and a spaceship (optional).
- Collect and have available a stack of magazines that students can cut up for pictures of items to take on their journey.

Instructions:

1. Explain that Mission Control (which you represent) has discovered a new planet and each pair will go there to start up a new community. Set the mood by naming the planet and the reasons for going there.
2. Ask the students to close their eyes and imagine the new planet. How long will it take to get there? What does it look like? Do other people live there? Where will they set up the new community? Tell them to form a picture of this community in their minds.
3. With their eyes still closed, ask students to think about the things they will want and need in their new community. Have students open their eyes and discuss their ideas with their partners.
4. Students, working in pairs, have a designated amount of time (30 minutes) to find and cut out 20-30 pictures from magazines of items that they would take with them on their journey to a new planet.

5. Next, explain that Mission Control will provide each pair of students with the number of items they could bring with them to set up their new community. Ask them to spread out their images. Using a T chart, divide the images into two categories, *Wants* and *Needs*.
6. Announce that Mission Control says space on the journey is limited. The students can now take only 16 items on the spaceship. Partners negotiate to eliminate some items and set them aside. As they are completing the task, announce that Mission Control has changed their mind, now allowing only 12 items. Again, students negotiate with each other to decide which items to set aside.
7. Finally, inform the students that Mission Control has issued an emergency announcement and there is even less space available. Students may now take only 8 items with them. Partners negotiate to eliminate four more items, leaving only the eight most essential for their survival.

Post Activity Discussion:

Questions taken from ([GEAR](#), p. 27)

- What was difficult about doing this activity? What was easy?
- Which items were easy to discard first? Why?
- Were some items harder to eliminate than others? Which ones? Why?
- What is the difference between a want and a need?
- What do we need for survival?
- What do different people, communities, contexts need to survive?



B. Question Generation

At this point in the inquiry, we want to harness students' curiosity and build off of the provocations that have captured their interest by generating meaningful questions to continue to drive the learning process. This section will outline pathways for question generation depending on the provocation(s) that your class engaged with.

Students will use the [Does It Fit?](#) strategy to make decisions from a variety of options available to them.

Example Activity:

You and a partner are planning your [Journey to a New Planet](#) trip. Each pair has a copy of the 21 Needs and Wants cards (p. 28-29). There are also 3 blank cards if you feel you want to include something that isn't in the cards.

Consider these 3 perspectives when asking if the item is appropriate:

- **Ideal:** - How well does each item fit with what you think would make life on the new planet ideal? Discuss why this item would make life ideal;
- **Criteria** - How well does each item fit the criteria of what you need or want for a good life on this new planet? What is your criteria for a good life (older students)
- **Personally** - How well does each item fit with your personal understanding of needs and wants?

Once you have made a decision of which items are “wants” and which items are “needs”, you must narrow down your choices to the most important items to take to the new planet.

How do you and your partner decide?

Are there any other items you would add or take away? The following videos may create some ideas that promote discussion and generate more questions on the difference between needs and wants.

Videos:

- [Needs and Wants for Kids](#): A basic description of the differences between needs and wants.
- [Needs vs Wants](#): Learn the difference, when it comes to economics, between your needs and your wants.
- [Need vs Want](#): Understand how paying attention to your needs helps you work towards your wants.



C. Knowledge Building

At this stage, students may be ready to engage in a group knowledge building activity. It will encourage students to open their minds to many alternative ways of thinking about the provocations and ideas that have been generated thus far in the inquiry process.

Following the exercises on understanding the differences between “needs” and “wants”, engage students in a [knowledge building circle](#) to explore the differences between “rights” and “responsibilities”.



D. Determining Understanding

Use responses to inform and guide the learning process. They can provide insight into which concepts need clarity, what many students are already well informed about, and a general direction that many students want to pursue.

After the knowledge building circle play a second game from GEAR, called **The Rights Balloon** (p. 30-31). This game is played individually.

The following is an excerpt from GEAR, (Global Education Activity Resource) for grades 2 to 8, The Rights Balloon is adapted from Children Changing the World by SOPAR, 2002. 1, chemin des Érables, Gatineau, PQ J8V 1C1. (www.sopar.ca) Conflict, UNICEF, 1995).

Objectives:

Students will understand the difference between rights and wants, and prioritize various rights in their lives; brainstorm and communicate ideas in collaboration with others and apply critical thinking skills.

Preparation: Photocopy a class set of [The Rights Balloon](#) (page 31).

Instructions:

1. Ask students to brainstorm things they need or enjoy having in their lives. Write their responses on the board or chart paper.
2. Hand out The Rights Balloon activity sheet to each student and explain that a right is something every person is entitled to for survival and a good life.
3. Ask students to close their eyes and imagine they are alone in a hot-air balloon floating high above the ground. Describe what they might see and ask them to choose a destination (e.g. another country or visiting a friend) Tell them they each have 10 rights on board and each one weighs 2 kilograms.
4. Suddenly the balloon begins to drop. To stop descending they must throw one right overboard. Ask students to open their eyes and, without discussion, select one item from the list they are willing to give up. Instruct them to write number 1 in the “Me” column beside their choice.
5. Tell students to close their eyes again. They can continue imagining their journey now that the balloon has safely levelled out. After a few seconds tell them the balloon is descending again and they must select another item to throw overboard. Write number 2 in the “Me” column beside the second right they surrender.
6. Continue in this way, with students choosing rights to throw overboard each time the balloon descends and numbering their choices until only one item remains in the balloon. The last right—the one most important to them—is numbered 10.
7. Ask students to share responses with a partner. Discuss each other’s decisions. If necessary, agree on a new ordering of the rights, and record this new order in the “Us” column. Reassure them that the way they prioritize their choices may differ from their classmates.

Post Activity Discussion ([Global Education Activity Resource](#), p. 30)

- Which rights were easiest to give up? Which were the most difficult?
- What is the difference between the things you need (rights) and the things you want?
- Are there any rights so basic you would never give them up? Which ones and why?
- How would you define a basic or universal human right?

The concept of human rights is based on the belief that we have rights simply because we are human beings. A right is something you are entitled to in order to survive and have a meaningful, healthy, satisfying life.

- What responsibilities come with the rights on the Rights Balloon list? (e.g. the right to go to school and the right to learn about your own culture, comes with the responsibilities to getting to school on time, doing your homework, supporting practices that promote your culture)

- Debate this statement: “Those who have rights should speak out for those whose rights are denied.”



E. Pursuing Learning: Understanding Rights and Responsibilities

At this stage, students may begin research to pursue some of their questions, or some of the following activities could be integrated into the process to ensure that students have an understanding of foundational climate science. The activities listed below will enrich the understanding of rights and responsibilities of citizens.

Explore the [12 Rights of a Canadian Child](#) from [Children First Canada](#).

“What if we taught our children, not that they have rights to land, but that they have responsibilities to the land? You would have children who would know how joyful having a purpose would be. Children would know their purpose in the world which would be to find their gifts and give them back! That’s reciprocity and that’s an empowering stance!”

Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2021.

Based on this quote from Robin Wall Kimmerer, have children explore their strengths/”gifts” and how these strengths can provide direction for how they can understand their role in responding to climate change and deciding on actions to take that will make a difference.

What Are My Strengths:

“To help kids thrive, recognizing their strengths is just as important as working on their challenges”. (Amanda Morin, 2018) Have students [identify kids’ strengths](#) by creating a paper chain, called a [strengths chain](#)”.

Along with the understanding of the differences between “needs” and “wants”, extend this idea by exploring “rights and responsibilities”.



F. Consolidation

This step is designed to encourage students to integrate and synthesize key ideas. When students make connections and see relationships within and across lessons, it helps them to solidify knowledge and deepen their understanding.

[Write a persuasive letter](#) that demonstrates your understanding of the responsibilities that go with rights.

Example Activity:

Students write a letter to a parent or caregiver explaining that they understand the responsibilities that go along with having a right. For example: I understand that the right to

own a pet goes along with certain responsibilities. I believe that I would make a great owner of a _____ because I would be responsible for its health and well-being. I would take these responsibilities seriously because I would...(list all of the responsibilities that would go with maintaining the health and well-being of an animal.



Assessment Idea

Teachers will assess learning at different points throughout the inquiry using multiple methods. The following assessment provides an alternative evaluation method to standard quizzes and tests, that can be used after consolidation or at any point in the lesson to check for understanding.

Use the [I Used to Think...Now I Think...](#) strategy as an Exit Ticket for students.

Example Activity:

Students write one sentence explaining how their thinking about needs and wants has changed (with a personal example) and one sentence about how their understanding of rights and responsibilities has changed (with a personal example) as a result of this inquiry.



Take Action

Allowing time for students to take action is an essential part of the learning process on climate change, as it empowers students and eases their eco anxiety. You might introduce the idea of students taking action by sharing the following YouTube [“Climate Change Song”](#).

If they need some ideas of simple and immediate measures they can implement you can share this document from Direct Energy. While it is written for parents, students can get the idea of something that would be attainable for themselves - or to share with their families!

[Ideas to Think Green](#)

Ideas for Taking Action:

- Model green behaviour - use a reusable water bottle, actively recycle, compost, bring your bags to the grocer, bring your mug to the coffee shop, repair things that need mending, buy second-hand when applicable, pack a litterless lunch, use cloth napkins, use toxic-free cleaners (or make your own), walk or bike instead of driving when possible - these are just some basic ideas. Check out [Ideas to Think Green](#) for more suggestions.
- Collect rainwater for the garden
- Compost your kitchen waste
- Try more plant-based foods
- Conduct a clothing drive
- Collect food donations for the local food bank
- Enrol in the EcoSchools program The core of the EcoSchools program is the EcoSchools Certification Application (ECA), our bilingual, online application platform that enables schools across the country to create and implement a customized environmental action plan that meets the needs of their community. At the end of

each year, school plans are submitted and assessed by EcoSchools staff, and schools are awarded a certification level ranging from Bronze to Platinum.

Action Project Examples

[Earth Ranger's Project 2050](#)

Welcome to **Project 2050: *Climate-friendly habits to change the world!*** This national movement, powered by [Earth Rangers](#) in partnership with EcoSchools Canada, is about connecting youth with the knowledge and skills needed to tackle climate change.

The program will provide an easy and fun way for youth and their families to contribute to the fight against climate change by adopting small but impactful climate-friendly habits.

To participate **select and complete at least three** of the following actions to contribute to Project 2050:

- Active and Sustainable School Travel
- Divert Textile Waste
- Heating and Cooling
- Meatless Mondays
- Reduce Your Food Waste
- Sort Your Waste
- Switch Off Lights and Devices
- Tree Planting and Maintenance at School
- Vermicomposting and School-based Composting
- Waste-Free Lunch

[National GOOS Paper Day](#)

GOOS stands for Good On One Side. GOOS paper is paper that has been used on one side, but is still blank and usable on the other side. Using GOOS paper means ensuring both sides of a piece of paper are used before it is recycled.

A GOOS paper bin collects and stores your GOOS paper in a convenient and accessible place to help ensure it can be used easily. Get creative and decorate your GOOS bins with a “goose” theme or other eye-catching styles.

Join students, teachers, workplaces, and families across the country on the **first Thursday in April** to celebrate National GOOS Paper Day.

On this day of action, get creative as you learn about responsible paper use and promote effective ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle paper.

[The \[Roberta\] Bondar Challenge](#)

Dr. Roberta Bondar is unique, not just for being the world's first neurologist in space, the first Canadian woman in space, or for her pioneering space medicine research. Academically one of the most distinguished astronauts to have flown in space, Dr. Bondar is also the only astronaut to use fine art photography to explore and reveal Earth's natural environment from the surface.

The Bondar Challenge is an opportunity for students to learn about the art of photography and to discover new perspectives on nature through a camera lens. The challenge is designed for students aged 6-18. Student entries will be judged in one of three age categories: 6-10; 11-14; or 15-18.

[Bullfrog Power Community Projects](#)

Activists and organizers across the country are working to transition their communities away from fossil fuels. We created our community-based green energy project grants to provide critical funding for these local efforts.

All bullfrogpowered customers help fund these small-scale, community-led projects, including solar panels on schools and in Indigenous communities, education and training programs, and a cleantech accelerator.

Some examples of education-related initiatives, including Canadian Rockies Public School solar project can be found at the link above.

[Young Reporters for the Environment](#) (For Grade 6 only):

YRE Canada is a national environmental education program that gives youth the opportunity to be part of the solution by producing creative and engaging environmental journalism. Participants (ages 11-14 and 15-18) investigate and report on environmental issues, and propose solutions, by using video, photography or writing.

YRE Canada is part of [Young Reporters for the Environment](#) – an international program by the [Foundation for Environmental Education \(FEE\)](#).

Each year there is a contest available to students with an April deadline. This Canadian National Competition is open to entrants in two categories: **ages 11-14**, and **ages 15-18**. Article, photo, or video submissions must meet a few criteria. Pieces should:

- Investigate solutions to a local environmental issue/problem based on this year's themes of **pollution**, **loss of biodiversity**, or **climate change** that have to be linked to a chosen [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\)](#).
- Report on the chosen issue through writing, photos, or video.

Students may submit more than one piece and can work individually or in groups of up to three people. Please note, winners in each category and age group will be publicly displayed and promoted on EcoSchools Canada's social media and website.