



UNC-CH Institute for the Environment 2009-10 Capstone Team Project – *Integrating the Environment into K-12 ENGLISH Curriculum*

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENGLISH PROJECTS

1. Take your students outside the school, in a safe area that overlooks the exit, parking lot, and recreational space. Have them write descriptive sentences about what they observe.
2. Form "exploration groups" of about five students. Starting with an opening line for a story about a car, pass the story around the group, each student adding a sentence or two to the story.
3. For a week, write a journal entry every time you ride in the car. Focus on where you have driven, how far the distance is, and how long the drive takes. Bring it back into class, where we will discuss the impacts of your family's driving patterns.
4. The fourth grade at your school has decided to elect a class president. Write an article for the class newspaper describing what kind of person would make a good president and why, and what kind of changes they should make in the school.
5. Describe a time that you have been exposed to pollution, and how it affected you.
6. Have each student look up ten words associated with idling in a dictionary. Ask each student to copy the word and its definition down on a sheet of paper, along with their guide words (the words found at the top of each page in the dictionary that tell the first and last words found on a page). Discuss with students the relationship between the words, and how it could affect them.

Word list: idle, exhaust, pollution, drive, asthma, gasoline, time, mileage, fume, respiratory

MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH PROJECTS

1. We are learning all the time. Some of our learning takes place in school and some outside of school. Write about something you have learned recently about the conditions outside of the school and how it has affected you.
2. Write a newspaper article, complete with lead sentence, regarding the current routine of school dismissals, including pick-ups, school bus loading, and overall student traffic patterns. What do these trends reveal, and what could their impact be?
http://www.jhuapl.edu/education/elementary/newspapercourse/forteachers/documents/newspaper_lessonplan.pdf
3. If your principal asked you to write your opinion about what changes should be made to reduce idling at your school, what would you write?
4. The gym teacher has just announced that field day will be at the end of the month, right next to the school parking lot. Write 3 - 5 paragraphs to describe any complications or risks that could occur because of this.
5. Your class has been studying ways of improving our environment. One of these ways is by using alternative means of transportation. This might be a bike, bus, scooter, walking, or even things like skateboarding. Write 3 - 5 paragraphs for your teacher explaining what precautions you would have to take before using one of these methods, and the impact that using it would have upon you, society, and the environment.
6. As a student familiar with this school, explain the procedure for school dismissal, bus ridership, and parent pick-up to a new student.
7. Imagine that you are a parking space in your school parking lot. Introduce yourself to a young child, explaining your typical day, your life processes, and the conditions you typically face.

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH PROJECTS

1. Write an essay about the significance of automobiles upon your daily life. Describe the effects that they have upon you and the world around you. Discuss the potential impact of using alternative ways of transportation, whether you utilize these transport options,
2. According to some people, drivers should be required by law to turn off their cars if they will be idling for over 30 seconds, as it causes unnecessary environmental, social, and economic costs. Discuss some of these consequences, as well as your opinion of the consequences of this policy. Explain what you think should be done and why.
3. Describe what an externality is, and how it relates to the free-rider problem. Drivers who idle their car for more than thirty seconds not only waste valuable fuel resources and damage their engines; their emissions also significantly contribute to climate change and health issues. Describe ways that you could mitigate this externality.
4. In order to improve health and safety, your principle is thinking about relocating student parking and drop-off/pick-up zones farther from campus, requiring students to either walk or ride the shuttles that will be provided. Discuss what factors most likely led to his concern, and what caused them to arise. To help your principle better make his decision, provide two arguments, one supporting the implementation of this change, and one supporting the status quo. Then provide a persuasive argument about why he should choose one of your described options over the other.
5. Most states allow people to get their driver's license at the age of 16. Some people feel that 16 is much too young for the responsibility that comes with driving a car and that teenagers should not be allowed to drive until the age of 18. Based on teenagers' role as one of the main sources of idling and accidents, what age do you feel that people should be allowed to drive, and why?