

Consumption and Needlessness



INTRODUCTION:

Standard of living and Quality of life are two important phrases when we talk about sustainable development. Standard of living is wealth and material comfort where as quality of life is the level of health, comfort, and happiness of an identifiable group of people. Buying stuff can make one happy for a short time but more often it leads to seeking more pleasure by buying even more. It is important that the individual consumption is rationalized and that would also help more equitable distribution of resources to meet basic need.

The needlessness or being able to identify consumption which is unnecessary is an important step to being a mindful consumer. Frugality is one word that is associated with sustainable consumption and is seen as a quality of being sparing, thrifty, prudent, economical or restraining in the consumption of consumable resources such as food, time or money, and avoiding waste, lavishness or extravagance. The lesson would help students reflect on their consumption habits and see the difference in consumption at individual level and country level.

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- explain consumption and the idea of needlessness.
- identify individual consumption habits.
- compare consumption across different countries.
- analyse what was useful and what was wasteful.

Eco-Schools Steps: Environmental review, Develop an Action Plan, Inform and Involve

Curriculum Linkage: Science/ Environmental Studies/Social Science



Eco-Schools

13-16
Years

Time required/ Duration:

- **Classroom session 1:** 45 minutes to set the context and brainstorm with students.
- **Home Assignment:** Six hours over eight days in total for students for the household consumption audit and reflection and action worksheet.
- **Classroom session 2:** 45 minutes to discuss the findings.
- **Classroom Session 3:** 45 minutes for classroom interaction for consolidating, analysing and discussing subsequent to the response received from the counterpart school.

Resources Required:

- Writing material
- Resource 2: Observation sheet for household consumption
- Resource 3: Reflection and Observation worksheet
- List from the counterpart school to share learnings
- Internet



Activity

Classroom session 1

- Give a background introduction and organise discussions to help students understand sustainable consumption.
- Brainstorm with students to prepare a list of different types of products we consume.
- Communicate with the Eco-Schools National Operator, for counterpart schools in another country for joining the discussion.

Home Assignment 1

- Teachers should provide students a week to achieve the following two tasks
 - household consumption audit. Students should make use of the personal household consumption checklist.
 - Complete the reflection and action worksheet. (Resource 2 and 3)

Classroom session 2

- Discuss in class the household consumption checklist and the reflection and action worksheet prepared by different students and
 - arrive at a consolidated list to avoid overlapping products.
 - choose most suitable actions.

Twinning Assignment:

Note you might have to approach the counterpart school through Eco-Schools National Operator for your country.

- Share your school's consumption checklist with a school situated in another country.
- Share with the counterpart school, the process you adopted to arrive at this list.
- Await for the response from the counterpart school.

Activity

Classroom session

- Facilitate students to analyse and compare your school's list with that obtained from the counterpart country.
- Discuss how choices of products, packaging, usage, etc contribute to the difference in the lists of the two schools.
- Put up both your school as well as the counterpart school lists on the Eco-Schools bulletin board.

Presentation and discussion on the comparative list obtained from another country. During this discussion get students to understand

- How many types of products are purchased in a week?
- Usage of a product and practices in place with respect to reuse, recycling and disposal.
- How choices of products, packaging, usage, etc impact the environment?

Evaluation:

Ask the students to give a list of products that they will buy less or look for alternatives.

Resources 2 & 3

Resource - 2

Household consumption checklist

Fill in the observation sheet to note your household consumption pattern (over a period of a week)

Date of Purchase	Types of products purchased					
	Food and Drinks	Toys	Books	Clothes	Stationery	Others
E.g. 1/2/2018	Cookies packet	Blocks (Plastic)		2 shirts for father	Ball-point pen	Mop
	Bottled water					

Resource - 3

Reflection and Action Worksheet

Think about the following:

Refer to Task 1, think about the different heads mentioned in the table below and fill in with appropriate actions that you can take

Product	Could I do without this? Yes/ No	Materials used in packaging it	How will the packaging be disposed?	How will the product be used? Will it be consumed or have to be disposed?	If disposed, how?	Is there a better alternative option? Mention it	Could we explore the alternative option in future?
Bottled water	Yes	PET Plastic bottle	Sent for Recycling or landfill	Consumed and disposed	-	Install a water purifier	Yes/ Maybe
Shirt	No	Cardboard box Plastic cover Metal pins	Cardboard box - recycled Plastic cover and metal pins - landfill	Worn and disposed Worn and recycled	landfill	donate it to someone less privileged	Not sure