

DISCUSSION
GUIDE



I JUST DON'T **BUY THAT!**



Metro | *Making a great place*



I Just Don't Buy That!

videos use parody and comedy to introduce students to the idea that their consumer choices affect the earth. Video themes:

Cellular Hospital – Make your electronics last, avoid unnecessary upgrades.

Dusk – Recycling is not enough! Reducing the use of nonrenewable natural resources is key.

High School High – Examples of age-appropriate smart consumer choices.

Order Now! In the Court – Addresses the effect of advertising on our consumer choices.

Zombie vs. Ninjas – Explores the effects of peer pressure on teen consumer choices.

This companion guide provides discussion questions, activities, interesting facts and resources to build on the concepts introduced in the videos. Materials and resources are arranged by core subject area and can be selected as appropriate for your students' level:

Language arts – Analyze advertising

Math – Ecological footprint

Science – Natural resources

Social studies – Smart consumer choices

The back page, **Make a difference**, can be reproduced and posted on a classroom bulletin board or used as a handout for students.

Oregon academic content standards alignment

Science – Interaction and Change

7.2E.1 Describe and evaluate the environmental and societal effects of obtaining, using and managing waste of renewable and nonrenewable resources.

Social Sciences – Economics

SS.08.EC.02.02 Distinguish between needs and wants in the U.S. and other countries of the world, and the impact of the media.

Social Sciences – Geography

Understand how people and the environment are interrelated.

Additional Metro resources

Metro's free programs and materials can help teach students about the connection between individual choices and the world's diminishing resources. Free classroom presentations on the ecological footprint, composting, smart consumer choices and climate change are available for students in grades six through 12 in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties.

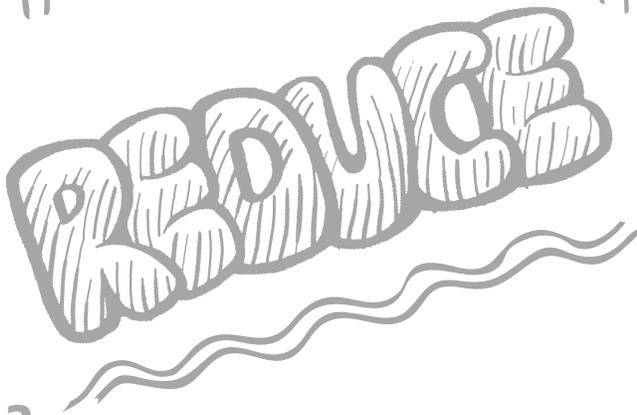
For more information, call 503-548-2648.

To view presentation descriptions, visit

www.oregonmetro.gov/schoolrecycling.

Oregon Green Schools program

Interested in becoming an Oregon Green School? The Oregon Green Schools Association can help you achieve your school's waste reduction goals. Learn more at www.oregongreenschools.org.



ANALYZE ADVERTISING

Students are bombarded by marketing campaigns selling identity and image through product affiliation.

Understanding the mechanisms of an ad can help youth make more informed decisions about what they want to buy. Thoughtful, smart consumer choices are more likely to reduce pressure on limited resources and eliminate some of the waste inherent in overconsumption.

What's more, some social scientists believe that young people who think more objectively about advertising might lead happier, healthier lives because it's less likely they will be fooled into thinking that products can deliver the better life that advertisements sometimes promise.

Did you know?

Advertisers spend more than \$15 billion a year on advertising and marketing aimed at youth! Youth buying power in America is now estimated at more than \$30 billion a year in direct purchases and influences an additional \$670 billion in parental spending, making teens a prime advertising target.

Discussion questions

Brainstorm the reasons people buy products and discuss how advertising influences what we decide to buy.

- What are some of the promises ads make?
- How does advertising affect what we buy?
- Where do we see and hear ads?

Activity

Have students bring in a print advertisement they believe is aimed at their age group. In pairs or small groups, have students answer the questions below. Consider having groups present their ad and findings to the class or use as a Think-Pair-Share activity.

Why was this ad made?

Who is the target audience for this ad? How do I know?

Who paid for this ad? Why?

What is this ad about? What makes me think that?

What ideas, values or points of view are overt? Implied?

What techniques are used in the ad (emotional appeal, appealing to identity)? Why?

How might different people understand this advertising message differently?

Does the ad make any claims about the product? What are they?

Are the claims facts, opinions or something else?

What are the sources of the information, ideas or assertions?

How credible is this ad? What makes me think that?

Additional resources

The Story of Bottled Water

<http://storyofstuff.org/bottledwater>

This seven-minute video shows an example of manufactured demand through the success of bottled water. The film sheds light on the bottled water industry's use of environmentally themed advertising to sell bottled water.

New American Dream

www.newdream.org

This website helps Americans consume responsibly to protect the environment, enhance quality of life and promote social justice.

SMELL
LIKE A
ROCK
STAR!

BODYSPRAYZ
POWER SCENT FOR MEN



Ecological Footprint

Everyone uses natural resources in almost every action or activity.

Scientists have developed a measurement called the “ecological footprint” to represent the amount of biologically productive land and sea needed to provide the resources we use and manage the amount of garbage we produce.

The sustainable ecological footprint per person is approximately 5 acres or five football fields. A person’s ecological footprint is not static. The footprint changes with the choices he or she makes. Taking a footprint quiz each year is a good way to quantitatively show how environmental impacts are reduced by making choices that use fewer natural resources.

Did you know?

Americans make up about 5 percent of the world’s population and use about 25 percent of the world’s natural resources. At approximately 24 acres or football fields per person, Americans have one of the largest ecological footprints on the planet!

Discussion questions

- What is an ecological footprint?
- What are some of the choices we make that affect how we use natural resources?

Activity

Consider having students determine their ecological footprint using an online footprint calculator. This can be done in the computer lab or as homework. Use one of the student-friendly footprint calculators below.

www.footprintnetwork.org

www.myfootprint.org

www.zerofootprintkids.org

Before or after students calculate their ecological footprints, discuss why it is important to measure an individual’s ecological footprint.

Footprints are individual and based on personal choices. Everyone use resources differently, so it is important to know one’s starting point in order to record eventual change.

Using the results of their ecological footprint, challenge students to make three changes that use fewer natural resources. Several months later, have students use the same footprint calculator to determine the change in size of their ecological footprint.

Additional resources

Real World Math

www.facingthefuture.org

This curriculum engages students with real-world data on global issues such as climate change, population and financial literacy.



Natural Resources

All living things on Earth, including people, use natural resources to meet their needs.

Natural resources are materials from our planet, along with sunlight and wind, that provide us with the raw materials to manufacture, or make, the products we consume.

Renewable resources can be replenished as they are consumed. Wind, sunlight, trees and fish are examples of renewable resources. Nonrenewable resources such as coal, oil, metal ores and minerals cannot be replenished as they are consumed.

Both renewable and nonrenewable resources can be depleted. If the demand for a renewable resource outstrips the rate at which it can replenish, the resource may become depleted. Once a nonrenewable resource is extracted and used, it's considered depleted, or gone, because it will take millions of years to regenerate.

Conservation includes the wise use of natural resources, which can inspire innovative product engineering and design. Some companies are rethinking the way they design and build their products to conserve natural resources.

Did you know?

Cradle-to-grave describes the life cycle most products follow. Each stage of the life cycle has unique environmental impacts. Starting from the natural resources "cradle," products go through manufacturing, packaging, transportation and consumption before going to the disposal "grave." Cradle-to-cradle design ensures all elements of a product can be reused, recycled or returned to the soil as nontoxic nutrients.

Discussion questions

Should product designers be required to consider the negative impacts, including pollution and disposal, of the products they create?

Activity

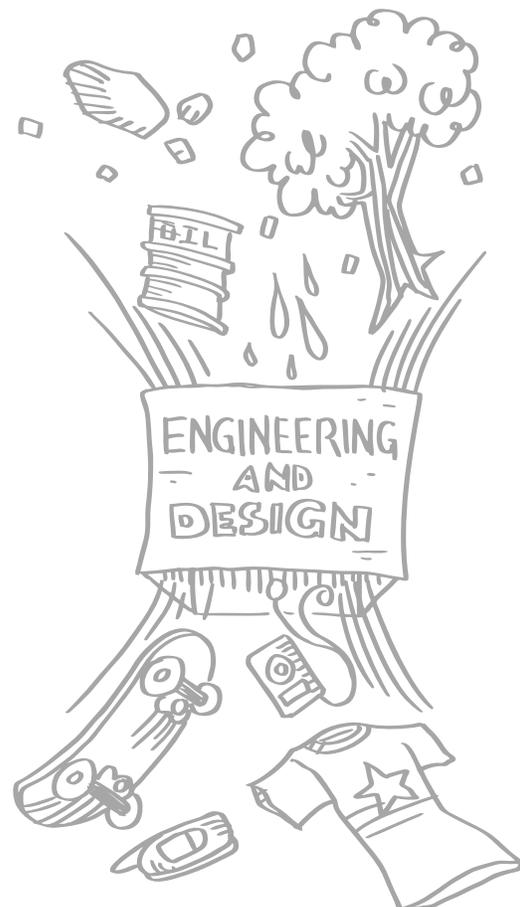
Have students pick a common teen consumer product and map its cradle-to-grave life cycle on a poster. Identify the product's most significant environmental impacts and at what stage of the life cycle they occur. Consider extending the activity by having students investigate how the product can be redesigned using the cradle-to-cradle philosophy to reduce environmental impacts.

Additional resources

Design Squad PBS

<http://pbskids.org/designsquad/>

This TV series and website aims to give youth a stronger understanding of the design process and the connection between engineering and the things we all use everyday.



SMART CONSUMER CHOICES

Each day, each of us has the opportunity to make smart consumer choices.

Smart choices allow us to connect what we choose to buy, or not buy, and natural resource limits. Smart consumer choices reduce excess waste of resources, prevent environmental damage and help us enjoy life.

Consumption, or buying and using stuff, is not inherently bad. By making a smart consumer choice, we can avoid consuming more than we intend and reduce the needless waste of natural resources.

Smart consumer choices are conscious and intentional. They take into account the resources used to make a product and what will happen to the product (reuse, recycle or trash) when its useful life ends. Products that are smart consumer choices tend to be reusable, long-lasting and avoid the use of toxic materials and excessive packaging.

Did you know?

Parents listen to their kids. Three out of every four kids influence what food is bought and which DVDs are rented on a regular basis, say retail researchers. Many kids even influence which car their parents buy.

Discussion questions

- Is it important to think about your consumer choices? Why or why not?
- What are the characteristics of a smart consumer choice?
- How might people from different backgrounds view the same consumer choice?

Activity

Fishing for the Future

www.pbs.org/emptyoceans/educators/activities/fishing-for-the-Future.html

Through simulation, students model several consecutive fishing seasons and will experience a “tragedy of the commons.” During post-simulation discussion, students consider social, environmental and economic impacts of overfishing and identify sustainable fishing practices.

Additional resources

Lesson 1, Garbology: Buy, Use or Toss?

www.facingthefuture.org

In this lesson, students explore a typical North American trash can and read a short article in order to draw conclusions about how garbage “artifacts” reflect the lifestyle of those who used and disposed of the items.

The Story of Stuff

www.storyofstuff.org

A 20-minute animated documentary about the life cycle of stuff.

Chris Jordan

www.chrisjordan.com

Chris Jordan is an artist whose work focuses on mass consumption and waste. His website features photographs from his popular artwork, Running the Numbers, which depicts consumption statistics.



GLOSSARY

Commons Resources, such as fish in the ocean, which all members of the community may use without payment

Conserve To use natural resources in a way that ensures their availability for future generations

Consumption The process of using natural resources, materials or finished products to satisfy human wants or needs

Cradle-to-cradle design A strategy for designing products in a way that generates economic, social and environmental benefits at every phase of use and eliminates the disposal stage from their life cycle

Cradle-to-grave design The life cycle most products follow, from a natural resources “cradle” to the end-of-life disposal “grave”

Deplete To use up natural resources partially or entirely

Ecological footprint A measurement that represents the amount of biologically productive land and sea needed to provide the resources we use and manage the amount of garbage we produce

Fossil fuel A nonrenewable natural resource used as a fuel, including coal, oil and natural gas, produced by the decomposition of prehistoric plants and animals

Life-cycle design Strategies for developing products that take into consideration the environmental effects of the entire cycle of their manufacture, use and disposal

Mass media Means of communication, especially newspapers, popular magazines, Internet, radio and television, that reach and influence large numbers of people

Multiple perspectives Different ways of looking at the same event, based on diverse knowledge and experiences

Nonrenewable resource A resource, such as oil or metal, that cannot be replaced as it is used

Post-consumer content Materials (resources) recovered through recycling and made into new products

Renewable resource A resource, such as wind, trees, or fish, that can be replaced as it is consumed

Sustainability The capacity to meet current needs without limiting the ability of future generations to meet their needs

Tragedy of the commons The concept that shared resources will be overused because individual users will not ensure sustainable levels of use

Look it up

Resources used to develop this guide

Smart Consumers: An Educator’s Guide to Exploring the Environment. World Wildlife Fund, 2004.

Consume This! Buying that Matters. Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention, 2006.

<http://www.c2p2online.com>.

It’s All Connected, A Comprehensive Guide to Global Issues and Sustainable Solutions. Wheeler, Benjamin; Wheeler, Gilda; and Church, Wendy. Facing the Future: People and the Planet, 2005.

The Quest for Less: Activities and Resources for Teaching K-8. Environmental Protection Agency, 2005.

Teaching Green – The Middle Years: Hands-on Learning in Grades 6-8. Grant, Tim and Littlejohn, Gail (editors). New Society Publishers, 2004.

Living Planet Report 2008. World Wildlife Fund, 2008. Accessed Aug. 19, 2010, http://assets.panda.org/downloads/living_planet_report_2008.pdf

All websites referenced in this discussion guide accessed in July 2012

ACTIONS THAT COUNT

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Calculate your ecological footprint

Use your ecological footprint as a starting point for change. Pick one area in which you scored high, and make a change to reduce it. When you've got that change down, choose another.



Share with others



Most people have never thought about how their consumer choices relate to natural resources and garbage. Talking about your questions and ideas raises awareness and can inspire others to action.

Make a smart consumer choice

Make it last. Treating your stuff with respect extends its useful life and reduces the demand for new products. It's an easy way to reduce.

Buy durable stuff. Buying and using durable, high-quality, long-lasting products rather than disposable, single-use or low-quality items reduces your consumption of natural resources.

Buy stuff made with post-consumer recycled content. Products made from post-consumer recycled content close the loop by reducing the need to extract additional natural resources.

Buy used products. Buying used products such as video games, school supplies, books or clothes from thrift or resale stores helps to conserve natural resources by reducing the demand to create new products.



Don't stop believin'

Real, long-lasting change comes from committed people learning about and continuing to adopt behaviors and practices that use fewer natural resources.

