

HOW DO WE USE OUR LAND?

Objective: To appreciate our roles in producing and sharing our natural resources.

A Few Facts

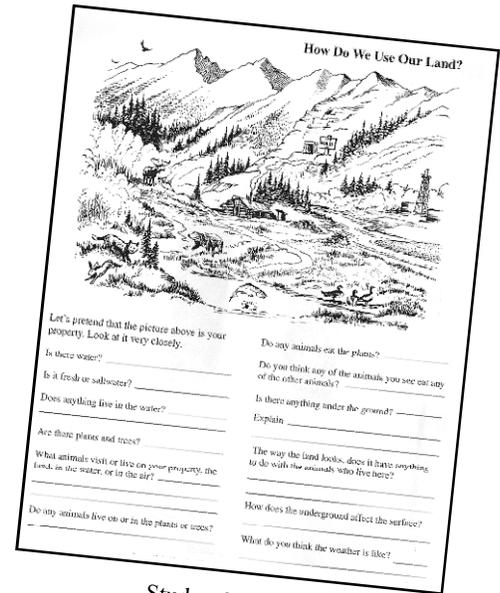
Almost all property in the United States and Canada is controlled by land use regulations. Invite your local land use official to visit your class to discuss local permit rules. Some interesting areas to explore are:

- Land use: zoning laws, building permits, sewage disposal permits, well permits and business licenses.
- Living off the land: hunting and fishing licenses, mining and lumbering permits, housing code approval.

How big is an acre? Unless you live in an agricultural community, acres and hectares are hard for most people to visualize, yet almost all land uses are related to these two measurements.

- 1 acre = 43,560 sq. feet 1 hectare = 107,600 sq. feet

A high school football field equals about an acre. A hectare equals about 2½ football fields.



Student Page

Classroom Experience

Visit a football field with your class. Encourage them to measure it in many different ways. (They could measure it in time; it would take a 10-year-old nearly 3 minutes to run around one acre.) Estimate how many houses would fit in that space. How large should each house and yard be?

Cooperatively have the class decide what support space would be needed and shared, for roads, some open space, utility poles, etc. The class can then draw up a list of the people to be employed to develop the football field into housing.

Research and discuss: Not all land is suitable for all uses.

You need land (somewhere) for agriculture so you can eat.

You need land (somewhere) for houses so you have a place to live.

You need land (somewhere) for mining to make the things you need.

Our interdependence as a society relies on a limited amount of land and the need to have a continual supply of resources and different uses from that land. Is there a land use we can really do without?

Read More About It!

Check out these children's books for your class:

- *Sugaring Time* by Kathryn Lasky; Macmillan Children's Book Group
- *Cranberries* by William Jasperson; Houghton Mifflin
- *Farming* by Gail Gibbons; Holiday House
- *Reflections of a Black Cowboy* by Robert Miller; Silver Burdett Press
- *Luck of the Roaring Camp* by Bret Harte; Dover Publications

Integrating the Curriculum

1. Develop a plan for a new city, with all support services as well as transportation to other cities. Give the class a limited amount of space and have them discuss (and compromise on) use of land for athletic fields or a homeless shelter.
2. Borrow soil testing materials (and an expert if you can) from your local Soil Conservation Service. Test the soil around the school and discuss soil assays' role in land development. What soil makes the best ballpark? What soil supports a building best?
3. Read a report on the quarrels between ranchers and farmers in the settlement of the west. Suggest that your class construct and role-play a court case involving these two warring factions.
4. If a television tower needed to be put in your neighborhood, how would you feel? Why? What are the alternatives?

Dig A Little Deeper



• When the class has developed its plan for the football field (this can easily be done on a computer), ask a representative from the Planning and Zoning agency to come and discuss why—or why not—building permission would be given.

- Research the building of early frontier towns and the building of towns in the thirteen original colonies. Were housing problems different?
- After World War II, when England was rebuilding its cities, it provided for "green space" at specific distances throughout the city. What was the reason?