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Introduction

Our Environment contains a captivating, whole language, thematic unit about the environment. At its core are two high-quality children's literature selections, *The Wartville Wizard* and *The Great Kapok Tree*. For these books, activities are included which set the stage for reading, encourage the enjoyment of the book, and extend the concepts gained. In addition, the theme is connected to the curriculum with activities in language arts (including daily writing suggestions), maths, science, social studies, art, music, and life skills (cooking, physical education, etc.). Many of these activities encourage cooperative learning. Suggestions and patterns for bulletin boards and unit management tools are additional time savers for the busy teacher. Furthermore, directions for student-created Big Books and a culminating activity, which allow students to synthesize their knowledge in order to produce products that can be shared beyond the classroom, highlight this very complete teacher resource.

This thematic unit includes:

- literature selections** — summaries of two children's books with related lessons (complete with reproducible pages) that cross the curriculum
- poetry** — suggested selections and lessons enabling students to write and publish their own works
- planning guides** — suggestions for sequencing lessons each day of the unit
- writing ideas** — daily suggestions as well as writing activities across the curriculum, including Big Books
- bulletin board ideas** — suggestions and plans for student-created and/or interactive bulletin boards
- homework suggestions** — extending the unit to the child's home
- curriculum connections** — in language arts, maths, science, social studies, art, music, and life skills such as cooking and physical education
- group projects** — to foster cooperative learning
- a culminating activity** — which requires students to synthesize their learning to produce a product or engage in an activity that can be shared with others
- a bibliography** — suggesting additional literature and nonfiction books on the theme

The Wartville Wizard

by Don Madden

Summary

A neat and tidy old man lived on a hill overlooking Wartville. Every day he collected the rubbish that had been dumped on the beautiful countryside. The old man grew angrier and angrier about picking up after other people, and he delighted in calling them slobs.

One day he noticed that he had power over rubbish. With a point of his finger he could send rubbish back to the person who had thrown it. Of course, this caused quite a problem among the townspeople, and even their only doctor, Dr. Splint, could not help them.

Then Barbette happened to see the old man in action. She ran back to town to tell everyone about her discovery. Soon people were calling the old man a wizard. The townspeople gathered on his lawn and demanded that he remove their garbage. He refused to give in to their demands until they promised not to litter again. They promised, and the old man was happy once more in his neat and tidy town.

The outline below is a suggested plan for using the various activities that are presented in this unit. You can adapt these ideas to fit your own classroom situation.

Sample Plan

Day I

- Set up a garbage pool display (see page 6)
- Save that garbage! (page 6)
- Your Environment-background information (page 12)
- Garbage Scavenger Hunt (page 6)
- Read *The Wartville Wizard*
- Homework Activity: Bring in garbage (page 6)

Day II

- Comprehension Activities-Sentence Strips (page 16)
- Make Garbage Charts after sorting and measuring (page 10)
- Ecology-learn about environments (pages 20 and 21)
- Reuse It!: worksheet (page 14)

Day III

- Opposites (page 17)
- Sentence Transformations (page 18)
- Ways You Can Help (page 22)
- Make Garbage Hats (page 10)

Day IV

- Brainstorming techniques (page 13)
- Language: What If... (page 19)
- Maths: Wartville Wizard's Word Problems (page 23)

Day V

- Make an Accordion Book (page 24)
- Read *Where Does the Garbage Go?*

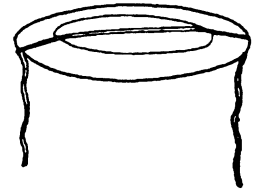
Garbage Projects

Use the garbage collected for the Homework Activity or from the day's collection of garbage to use in the following projects.

Garbage Hats

Materials: Paper plates; plastic, paper, and metal containers; scissors; white glue; string; one-hole punch; hole reinforcers

Directions: Punch a hole on either side of the plate; reinforce the holes with reinforcers.



Thread a length of string through the holes leaving enough to tie under the chin.

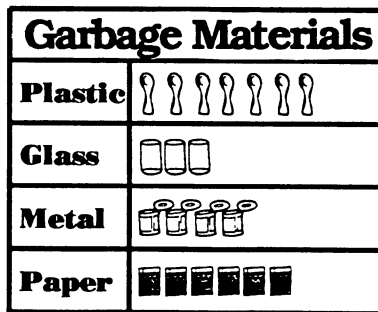
Students can choose the containers they want to attach to their hats.

Extension: Sew items to an old hat or cap.

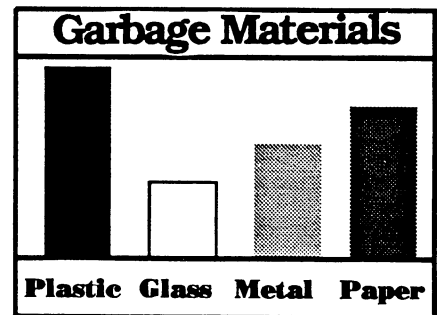
Garbage Chart

Gather all the garbage in one spot. As a group, discuss the characteristics of the rubbish: size, color, weight, shape, material, etc. Sort the items according to size; then sort according to color, material, shape, or weight. Divide students into groups and assign them a characteristic. Have each group make a chart of their items (see examples below and form on page 53). They can draw and cut out a sample for each item to glue to the chart, or they can attach self-stick notes to the chart. A simple bar graph could be made as a follow-up to the picture graph.

Picture Graph



Bar Graph



Afterwards, read the graphs. Guide students with the following questions.

- Which has the most? The least? Only one?
- How many _____ are there?
- How many more/fewer _____ than _____ are there?
- How many items are there altogether?
- How many _____ and _____ are there?