



Economics and the Environment: EcoDetectives



IN A NUTSHELL

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SUBJECTS

Economics
Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies

This curriculum addresses environmental issues from the perspective of economic decision making. Four principles are used throughout the eighteen explorations: people's choices influence the environment; people's choices have unintended results; people's choices are influenced by rewards; and people are more likely to take better care of things they own and value. These four principles are used to help students explore "ecomysteries," which are dilemmas or puzzles involving issues such as protection of endangered species, population growth, and pesticide use. Each activity includes background information, a brief description of the applicable economic forces behind the issue, specific questions, transparency masters, answers to questions and quizzes, and recommendations for journaling, assessment and essays. Time requirements, materials needed, objectives, and concepts are also listed. Activities consist of surveys, radio plays, statistics analysis, readings, and mathematical problems.

Grade Level
middle school
Length
128 pages
Date Published
1997

**THE BOTTOM
LINE**

"The role of economics in finding solutions to environmental problems is central but not exclusive, and should be taught in the context of other theories and opinions."

What the REVIEWERS Said !	Key Characteristics	Strengths Noted	Other Considerations
	Fairness and Accuracy	Covers many topics underrepresented in other materials.	Not open to inquiry, except within constructs of the four stated principles. Opposing theories are not presented. Many sources of information are not cited.
	Depth	Economic concepts are clearly articulated. Places some issues in larger context.	Focus on privatization and free-market-based incentives.
	Emphasis on Skills Building	Students practice risk analysis, cost/benefit analysis, critical thinking, comparing, interviewing, and writing skills.	At times leads students to a specific answer.
	Action Orientation	Encourages learners to reflect on their actions. Stresses that choices influence outcomes.	
	Instructional Soundness	Strong connection to learners' everyday lives. States goals and objectives.	Not learner-centered or multidisciplinary. Most activities are classroom-based.
	Usability	Instructions are clear and easy to follow. Does not require complicated equipment or supplies.	Age ranges could be more clearly defined.

"Details public gain at private expense, but fails to detail private gain at public expense."

"A creative teacher who could expand on some of the narrow presentations could use this to supplement an environmental text."