



Reader's Theater Exercise 17: Help Your Students Create Their Own Earth Day Themed Reader's Theater

Teaching kids about how they can live in order to protect and preserve our Earth is a valuable and crucial lesson to instill. Hands-on activities and projects are useful and inspiring, but with current academic curriculum pressure

there may not be class time to devote to planting trees or cleaning up the school grounds. **Luckily, Reader's Theater can provide a way for students to work on essential reading skills and develop their citizen mindsets as members of their communities and our planet.**

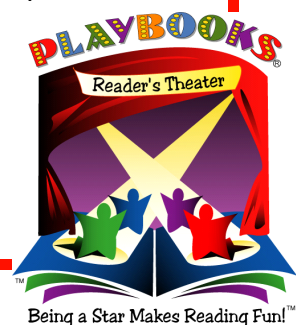
The following Reader's Theater Exercise teaches students about environmentally friendly ways of living and asks them to draw a poster advertising a school Earth Day event (imaginary, or real!). **Students will then be instructed to write a Reader's Theater script in which they (themselves and classmates) organize an Earth Day event, design a presentation on things you can do to help the Earth, or discover something interesting about nature or helping the environment.** This allows students to practice and get used to the idea of taking action to help the environment when the school cannot help them actually take part in an ambitious project this year.

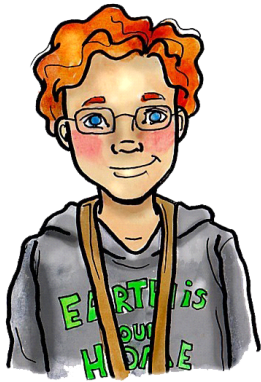
Teacher Directions: Get started by sharing with your students the significance of Earth Day, taking place on April 22, a day for raising awareness about environmental issues and making steps towards treating our planet with care.

Next, pass out the activity sheets on the following pages and **allow your students time to read the information page, "How Can You Save Planet Earth."** If you prefer, hold a class discussion as you go over the information sheet with your class. Now, instruct your students to **make "Save Water Week" posters** as directed on the activity sheet .

Divide the class into groups of 4-6 people and instruct them to write a one-page Reader's Theater script with an Earth Day theme, in which each student is a character. Groups may choose to write about "Save Water Week" for an Ecology Club like the idea from the poster activity, or they may write about another Earth Day theme instead, using another idea from the list of earth-friendly suggestions on the information page. With either option, they should draw on the information they learned from the provided sheet when creating their Earth Day story. Depending on the grade level of your class, students may need more or less guidance.

Finally, have each group (or selected or volunteer groups) perform their scripts for the class. Alternatively, you may have groups trade scripts and perform a different group's story instead of their own. **Remember to encourage your students to read with appropriate expression and emotion for more fun, better understanding of the story, and best reading fluency progress!**





How Can You Save Planet Earth?

Earth Day is April 22, so this month is a great time to think about what you can do to help keep the earth healthy! Read the following suggestions for Earth-friendly living, and then you will get to write and perform your own Reader's Theater script for Earth Day!

Recycling/ Precycling: *Recycling* means to re-use products which would otherwise be thrown away or to make new products from old materials. This means recycling can be as simple as passing on old clothes, but it usually refers to using materials from old products to make new products.

The phrase, "reduce, reuse, recycle" refers to three goals of recycling. We need to *reduce* the amount of the earth's natural resources we use, *reuse* items by giving them to someone else instead of throwing them away, and *recycle* products that can be made into something new.

Precycling means to *buy* recycled products and prevent the need for recycling. Like recycling, this reduces the use of fresh natural resources, saves energy needed for product manufacturing, and cuts down on trash. Some ways of precycling include buying products or products with packaging made from recycled materials. For example, some school materials like writing paper are made from paper factory scraps. Also avoid using disposable products when possible. For example, use your own cups when away from home instead of using Styrofoam ones.

Water Conservation: Even though the earth is covered in water, ocean water is salty and not suitable for drinking. It takes time and resources to clean "used" water or rainwater for human use. A typical 8 minute shower uses 17 gallons of water, while a 4 minute shower uses only 7.5 gallons of water. See how much water you can save by cutting just a few minutes of running water?

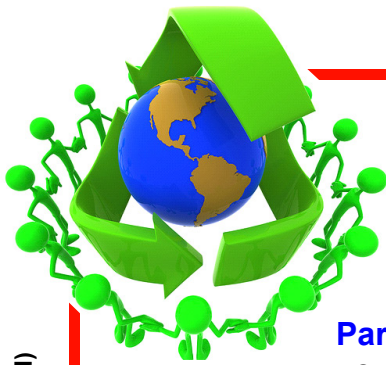
Turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth. When doing dishes, instead of running the faucet the whole time, fill one side of the sink with cleaning water and the other side with rinsing water. The website, <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com> shares over 100 ways of saving water!

Preserving the Climate and Energy Saving: A measure of the effect human activity has on the environment is called the **carbon footprint**. This means the amount of carbon dioxide, a harmful gas which contributes to global warming, that we release into the air by burning fossil fuels like oil or coal. We leave carbon footprints by driving cars, using heaters in our homes, and cooking with ovens or barbeque grills! In addition, there is a limited supply in the world of fuels like oil which we use most commonly, so it is important to use energy wisely. Walk or ride your bike to school instead of riding in the car. If that is not possible, then carpool with friends. This is not only good for the environment, but will also save money for your parents because they will not need to buy as much gas! Also remember to turn off lights and electronics when you are not using them.

Nature Protection: The plants and animals with whom we share the earth both provide beauty for us to enjoy, and help keep the environment balanced and healthy. Trees supply the air with oxygen we need to breathe, so plant some! Pick up and throw away trash when you see it around your neighborhood, at the beach, at the park, or in other natural or community areas.

Individual people, school classrooms, or other groups can also "adopt" an animal of an endangered species that is being kept in a wildlife rehabilitation organization. The person or group who wishes to "adopt" the animal donates an amount of money that will go towards caring for the animal, and the organizations usually send back a photo of the animal. This is a fun form of "pitching in" to see how you are helping nature in a small, yet important and specific way!





How Can You Save Planet Earth? *(continued)*

Part A: Pretend you are a member of an Ecology Club at your school, and you are helping to plan a “Save Water Week” for Earth Day. For this event, classrooms will compete to see who can conserve the most water by using the most water-saving methods at home and recording what they do each day.

On a separate, white sheet of paper, **make a poster to be displayed at your “pretend school”** for advertising the event and getting students excited about taking part. Use both words and drawings, making sure to include the dates the event will take place. Mention some important reasons for saving water and also methods of conserving water. You can even include your own slogan for “Save Water Week” and offer prizes to the classroom or group of students that wins the competition!

Part B: Now, it’s time to make up your own Reader’s Theater script about helping to save the planet! Your teacher will assign you to a group with several other students. With the other students in your group, **write a one-page script about organizing “Save Water Week” for an Ecology Club like the idea above. You may also write about another Earth Day theme instead,** using another idea from the list of earth-friendly suggestions on the previous page.

Include each person in your group as a character in the script. In your story, have your characters organize an Earth Day event, give a presentation on things you can do to help the Earth, or discover something interesting about nature or about saving the environment. **Be creative!**

When you are done writing your scripts, practice reading them aloud in your groups, playing the role of your character in the story. **Your teacher may then ask you to perform your scripts for the class. Remember to read with expression and enthusiasm as if you are an actor or actress in a play!**

