

#9015

1959: ENDANGERED PLANET

PBS VIDEO
Grade Levels: 9-13+
56 minutes



DESCRIPTION

World-wide economic growth brings both promise of quality of life to emerging and industrialized nations, and also disease and destruction to land, air, and water. Presents a historical perspective of the rise of environmental concerns and movements. Includes vintage footage and personal reflections.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Health

- Standard: Knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health
 - Benchmark: Knows how individuals can improve or maintain community health (e.g., becoming active in environmental and economic issues that affect health, assisting in the development of public health policies and laws, exercising voting privileges)

Subject Area: Science: Life Sciences

- Standard: Understands relationships among organisms and their physical environment
 - Benchmark: Knows ways in which humans can alter the equilibrium of ecosystems, causing potentially irreversible effects (e.g., human population growth, technology, and consumption; human destruction of habitats through direct harvesting, pollution, and atmospheric changes)

Subject Area: Civics

- Standard: Understands issues regarding the proper scope and limits of rights and the relationships among personal, political, and economic rights
 - Benchmark: Knows examples of situations in which personal, political, or economic rights are in conflict
 - Benchmark: Understands the argument that poverty, unemployment, and urban decay serve to limit both political and economic rights

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To weigh environmental costs of economic development.
2. To list how global environmental issues were addressed by governments, businesses, and individuals.

3. To examine how environmental problems challenged scientific and political ideas about science and progress.
4. To investigate a current local or national environmental controversy.

BEFORE SHOWING

1. This program contains graphic scenes of diseases caused by environmental pollution. Preview the program before using it in the classroom.
2. Have students write down examples of local, regional, and global environmental issues and how the issues were addressed by governments, businesses, and individuals.
3. What activities do you perform every day? How do you think these activities help or harm the environment?
4. Have students write down examples of how human activity in one area affects another area.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Why were the Chisso Corporation and the Japanese government slow to respond to the poisoning of Minamata Bay? Give other examples from the program of how businesses and governments responded to environmental problems and what strategies people used to force them to take action.
2. Do you agree with journalist Anil Agarwal that the environmental movement has led to a "new form of democracy"? Why or why not? In general, how do you think citizens' views of industry and environmentalists have changed since the 1950s? How have these views influenced or not influenced business practices and citizens' economic and environmental priorities?
3. How do industries such as steel production benefit society? How can these benefits be preserved while still protecting the environment?
4. What problems surfaced in the 1950s and 1960s that made people aware of environmental issues? What were some of the causes of these problems? What were some of the consequences? What does the mercury poisoning of Minamata Bay and the effects of DDT on pelicans reveal about changes in people's understanding of ecology and their attitudes toward economic growth?
5. Developing nations today are eager to raise the standard of living of their citizens through increased industrialization and consumer goods, just as industrialized nations did in the 1950s and 1960s. As a class, discuss the rights of developing nations to improve their standard of living despite the ecological cost versus the desire of industrialized nations to control environmental harm.
6. How did these environmental problems challenge scientific and political ideas about science and progress? How did they encourage people to question conventional authority?
7. Why do you think the environment has become an important political issue at this point in human history? What are some ways that environmental issues might affect people's lives in the next century?

Applications and Activities

1. To explore the tradeoffs between environmental protection and economic growth, ask students to research the perspectives reflected in the quotations above by Tomiji Matsuda and Mukesh Gupta. First, divide students into pairs to research specific environmental issues, such as population growth, global warming, soil erosion, acid rain, deforestation, the destruction of coral reefs, or endangered species. Ask students to use their research to assess the costs of environmental protection versus damage caused by economic growth in this area.
2. Imagine you are running for president in the 21st century. What part would environmental issues play in your campaign? Ask students to develop a political platform about the environment. What are the major issues facing the nation and the international community? Have students write a campaign speech explaining their environmental concerns and the programs they propose to address those concerns.
3. Have the class investigate a current local or national environmental controversy. Divide the class into two teams. Have one team present the pros and the other team the cons of the issue. Have the class discuss what action, if any, they would like to take. Develop a plan to implement one or more of the proposed ideas and follow through.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Making a Difference: Restoring the Earth Around Us #3054
- Rachel Carson's Silent Spring #3287



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **ENVIROLINK NETWORK**

<http://envirolink.netforchange.com/>

This organization collaborates with other eco-organizations to develop a comprehensive resource for individuals, organizations, and businesses working for social and environmental change. Contains latest articles.

- **CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE REPORTS**

<http://cnie.org/nle/crs/>

Searchable collection of over 1,200 Congressional Research Service (CRS) documents about the environment and related topics (economics, transportation, energy, etc.). The reports are presented as a public service by the National Council for Science and the Environment.



- **GLOBAL LEARNING AND OBSERVATIONS TO BENEFIT THE ENVIRONMENT (GLOBE)**

<http://globe.fsl.noaa.gov/>

An international network of students, teachers, and scientists who study the global environment. Made up of over 6,000 schools in more than 70 countries. Students create a core set of environmental observations about their school and scientists use the information to enrich their science education. Searchable by school and partner countries. Contains a searchable page of related sites. Also available in Spanish and French.

- **ECOKIDS ONLINE!**

<http://www.ecokidsonline.com/pub/splash.cfm>

Point the cursor over certain items in the opening room scene to learn about various eco-issues. Clicking on the globe leads to environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, habitat and habitat loss, and other topics.