

Change our lives, know the world

Glance at a newspaper or turn on the TV on any day and it is clear that the world faces many problems--from global warming and air pollution to water shortages, waste issues and poverty. These are related to our use of massive amounts of energy, water and resources as we strive to make things and consume them. The roots of this problem lie far in the past. First came the Industrial Revolution, starting in the 1700s and accelerating through the 1800s. This spurred the massive exploitation of resources. A second cause was that of wars, especially World War II, which triggered the consumption of massive amounts of all types of resources. After World War II, people around the world worked hard to build a peaceful and wealthy world. They developed industry and devised many things that made the lives of people more convenient. The Industrial Revolution started in the 18th century and peaked in the 19th century, leading to dramatic changes in the world.

In addition, transportation also became immensely more convenient as cars, airplanes, highways and railways developed. However, at the same time this convenience and development was accompanied by an array of environmental problems, including air pollution and global warming as well as a depletion of resources and negative impacts on wildlife.

Before World War II, some parts of the world were colonized by the more industrialized countries and exploited, and had little chance to develop. Today people in these and other places still live in poverty.

This book is designed to get primary school students in grades four, five and six thinking about environmental issues. Specifically, this book is meant for use in classes in social studies and science for grades four, five and six, and home economics for grades five and six, as well as integrated study time. The hope is that these lessons will spur children to think about the kind of world we want to create in the future. Our sincere hope is that this book will inspire students around the world to think about what they can do to protect the environment and then take action to do so.



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Using kidsXchange

When the elementary school students of today are adults in the year 2020, experts believe the world will be hotter, the weather and climate less stable and that there will be food and water shortages. To make the earth a place where people will be able to live indefinitely into the future, elementary students need to be made aware of what is happening in the world. Our fervent hope is that this text will play a part in helping these students blossom into individuals who are able to be aware of what is occurring in the world and consistently think of what should be done for mankind and the world. With this in mind, UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and UNEP (the United Nations Environment Programme) came up with youthXchange, an environmental education program targeting people primarily between the ages of 15 and 25. This is an effort that uses "things" or objects in our everyday lives to get people to think about the planet as well as society and its structure. This project is taking place in 15 countries.

For more information in English, take a look at the youthXchange homepage.

Let's get interested in international efforts to fight global warming!

International efforts to fight global warming are taking place under the United Nations. For that express reason, 191 countries from around the world agreed to set up the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992. Subsequently, in 1997, parties to the treaty agreed to the Kyoto Protocol, and in 2008 at the Toyako Summit discussions were again held at the international level on measures to stem the advance of global warming. In this text, we touch upon global warming in the context and how it is linked with our way of life and our lifestyles. Please take what you learn through this book and discuss it with members of your family and friends.

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