



Maggie's Activity Pack

Name _____

Date _____

Earth Day



It was a warm spring day in Michigan. As nice as it was to see the sun after the long, snowy winter, Melissa wished it wasn't quite so warm. Her dad had demanded that she spend her Saturday working in the yard. And all her labor combined with the sun's rays was making her hot. She had really wanted to climb Sugarloaf with her friends today, but her parents wouldn't hear of it. "We want to plant new trees next weekend. It's your job to rake and get the yard ready. You live in this house, too."

Melissa wiped the sweaty hair from her face, sighed, and brought the rake into the garage. "Why do they need to plant more trees? We have enough in the yard already. If they don't think so, all they have to do is look at the pile of leaves out there. More trees?" Melissa groaned. "That's the last thing this yard needs!"

She trudged into the kitchen. It was time for a break. Melissa grabbed a glass, filled it with ice, and turned on the faucet. "Ahh...a nice tall glass of cold water is just what I need," she murmured.

What Melissa doesn't know is that the two things she just did – getting the yard ready to plant trees and enjoying a big glass of water are two things the Earth Day Network wants people to think about. Earth Day is more than what happens on April 22. Did you know there is a global network of people who think about the health of our planet and want others to participate in taking good care of Mother Earth? Many people throughout the world take part in programs such as making sure we use the Earth's resources, like water and trees, wisely. But, just as Melissa is doing in her yard, keeping the Earth healthy, takes hard work, too. And this work can begin right in your own backyard!

Like Melissa you can clean up the area around your house. Look at your doors and windows. Are they properly sealed? Checking this out can ensure your family is not letting

heat or air-conditioned air escape from your house. This wastes money and natural resources.

You can help in your community, too. Maybe you and your friends want to pick up litter in a near-by playground. Perhaps you can encourage your neighbors to think carefully about the wise use of water. There may be a company that is polluting the air or a stream in your town. You could write a letter to that company.

One of the things all people can do on Earth Day is to think about the impact they have on our planet. You can think about your ecological footprint. That is the amount of land and water you need to support what you use and throw away. If you take an ecological footprint quiz, you may be shocked to learn that if everyone lived as you do, it would take 7 Planet Earths to support our lifestyles!

Helping people to understand that we may be using too much of the Earth's resources, is just one goal of the Earth Day Network. Another of these goals is quite amazing. A program called "Trees Across America" encourages people to plant 285 million trees across the United States! This is one tree for every American. Planting trees is important because in the past 30 years the United States has lost over 30% of its urban trees. This is a loss of over 600 million trees. Losing trees is a problem because they do so much for us. We breathe in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. Trees take in that carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. This means they are essential to the balance of life on Earth. Trees improve the health of communities because they act as filters. They take harmful pollution out of our air and water. Large trees in the yard can protect your house from becoming too cold in the winter or too hot in the summer. That means they save your parents money on their heating and cooling bills. But, as you've read, the United States has lost too many city trees. And the city is where 80% of Americans live. So it is important to plant more trees in these urban areas. The Earth Day Network also wants people to plant trees in important watershed areas. The Chesapeake Bay, the Mississippi River Valley, Puget Sound, and the Great Lakes region where Melissa lives, are some of these areas.

Another goal of the Earth Day Network is to highlight the importance of clean water throughout the world. Many people have to travel long distances to get clean water. They can't just turn on the faucet as Melissa did. Countries throughout the world face serious problems with clean water. Environmental decline in Mongolia has meant that many children must walk miles each day to get water for their families. This means these children can not go to school. Small Russian villages often depend on out-dated wells for water that isn't

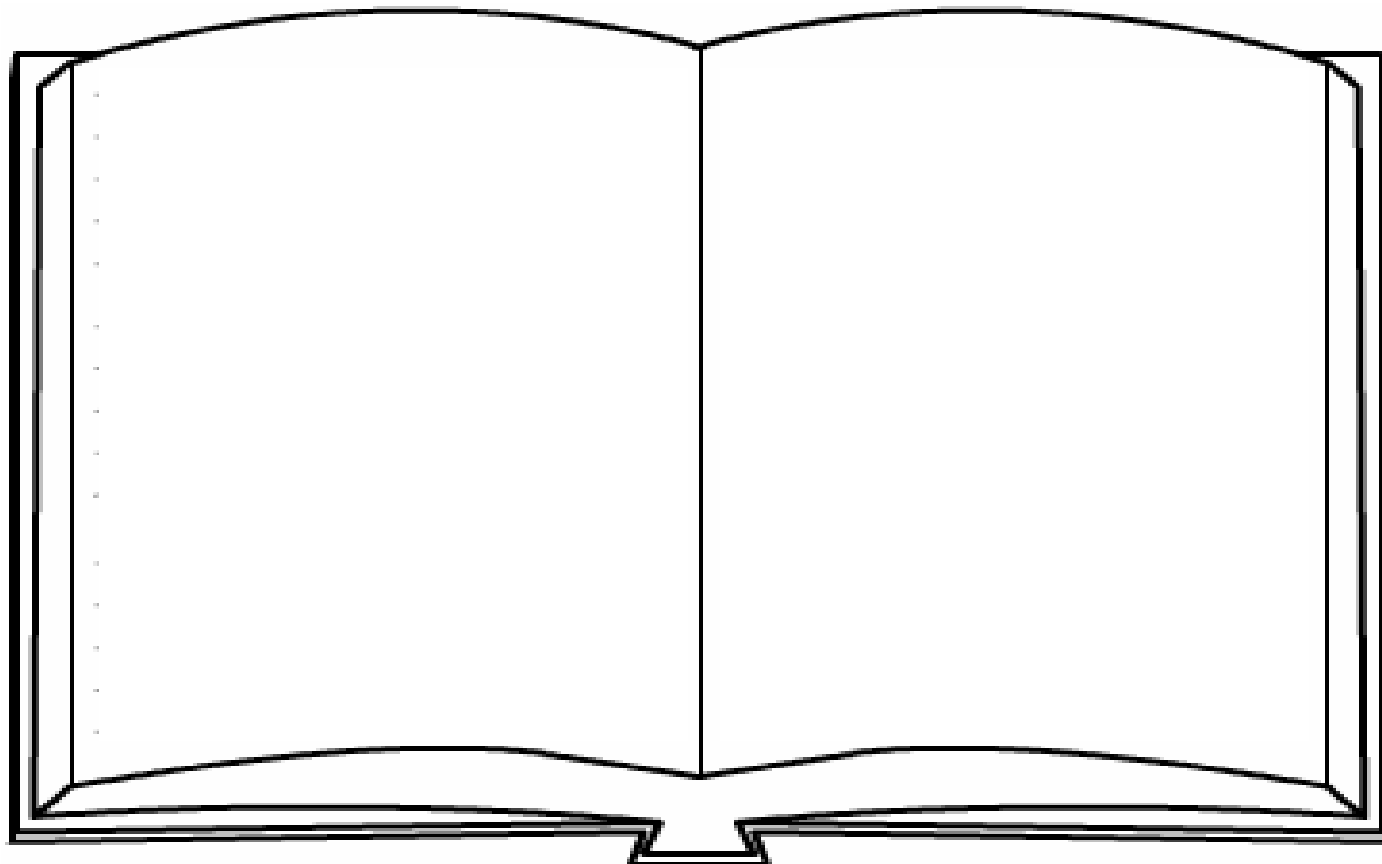
always safe to drink. Children often are sent to pump water. They must carry these heavy buckets back to their homes. The Earth Day Network is working to help areas like the village of Mbabala in Tanzania to sink wells that will provide clean water for children. They are working to help areas where access to clean water is a problem. Their information will help all of us understand the need for clean water in our world.

There are many ways you can take part in Earth Day. Look around your house, neighborhood, and community to spot ways Planet Earth would benefit from your attention. How can you help? What will you do on Earth Day? What hopes do you have for people all over the globe this Earth Day?

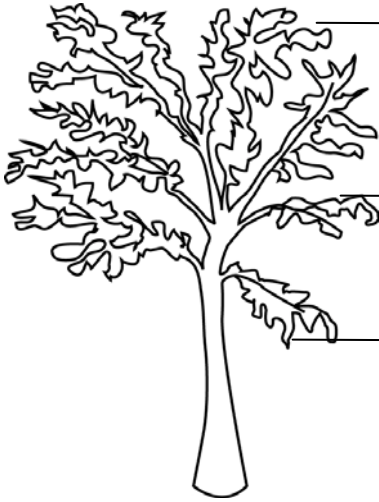
Reading and Writing in the Content Areas: Science

These questions will give you practice in responding to an article on many levels. For some of the questions, looking back in the article will help you answer them. For other questions, you will need to use the information in the article AND your own thoughts to help you write an answer. Some questions ask you to give your opinion.

1. Imagine you are Melissa. Write a diary entry explaining how you felt about cleaning your yard.



2. List 3 things trees do.



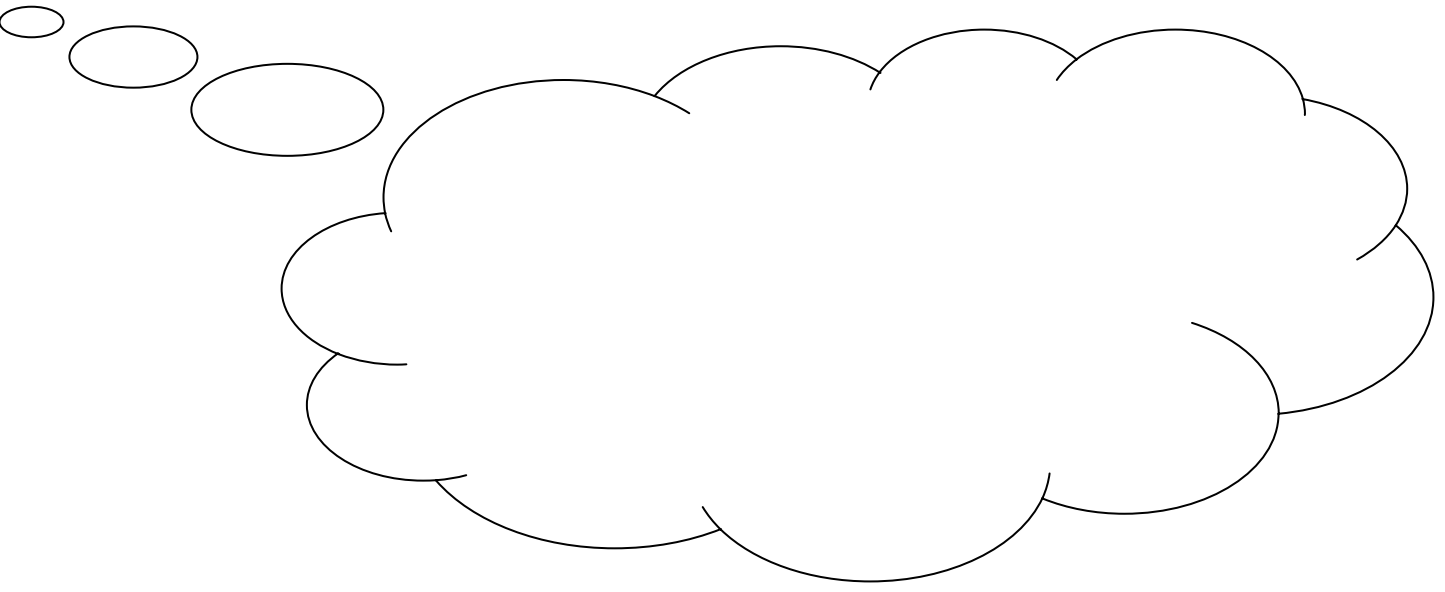
3. Why is it important to plant trees in watershed areas?

4. Give the Earth Day Network advice on how to meet their goal of planting so many trees.

5. List 3 things we use clean water for.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

6. Imagine you are a child in Mongolia or a Russian village sent to get water. What are you thinking about as you set off to get a bucket of this important resource?



7. What might happen if people do not have clean water?

8. What are 3 things you can do on Earth Day?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

9. Do you think it is important that people choose to do a project they enjoy on Earth Day?
Explain your thinking.

10. Do you think “celebrating” Earth Day on April 22 is a good idea? Why or why not?



Dear Colleague,

We all want our students to develop higher level reading and writing skills. So many times, we have excellent material to help them do this when it comes to fiction, but nonfiction can be more problematic. We need to help our children see that the answer is not always there in the text. Getting away from that “dragnet” syndrome of “just the facts” is essential. The follow-up activity in this activity packet will help your students bring their higher level thinking skills to a nonfiction article. After they complete the activity, discuss with them which questions were easy to answer and what questions were more difficult. Talk about why this was. This type of discussion will give you insight into what types of questions your children need further practice with.

I encourage you to visit the Earth Day Network website at <http://www.earthday.net/>. You will find some good background material for your April activities here. I was shocked when I took the Environmental Footprint “quiz.”

Kathy

Answers to questions will vary. I am providing you with a list of the thinking/reading levels needed to answer each of the questions so you can better assess your students.

Goals:

Children will read a nonfiction article about Earth Day. They will answer follow-up questions highlighting literal, inferential, and critical reading skills to achieve comprehension practice in the content area of science. This activity is available on both the primary and intermediate level.