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Celebrating Earth Day



Civic education and your newspaper

By Jodi Pushkin, *President Florida Press Educational Services (FPES)*

According to the Louis Frey Institute, research shows when students engage in simulated civic actions, they are prone to develop a positive political efficacy that contributes to lifelong engagement.

The local newspaper is a great teaching tool to engage your students in civics education. Did you know that more than 60 percent of people with high exposure to newspapers in childhood are regular readers of newspapers as adults, according to a study conducted for the News Media Alliance, former Newspaper Association of America Foundation? That percentage is significant because statistically people who read the newspaper daily are more engaged citizens. Engaged citizens participate in their communities by voting and practicing good citizenship.

The goal of NIE programs is to create a generation of critical readers, engaged citizens and consumers. John F. Kennedy said, “Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.” The goal of NIE is to engage and develop that resource.

The newspaper is both a primary and secondary source for informational text. According to Scholastic magazine, “Informational text is a type of nonfiction — a very important type. Nonfiction includes any text that is factual. (Or, by some definitions, any type of literature that is factual, which would exclude texts such as menus and street signs.) Informational text differs from other types of nonfiction in purpose, features, and format.”

The newspaper meets these specific characteristics of informational text. It is a logical resource for information about the natural, social and political world. The newspaper conveys information about the natural or social world. The articles are written from someone who knows information to someone who doesn't. The newspaper has specialized features such as headings and technical vocabulary.

To learn more about Florida's NIE programs, visit the Florida Press Educational Services (FPES) Web site at www.fpesnie.org.

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Florida Standards

The Florida Department of Education defines that the Florida Standards provide a robust set of goals for every grade. Emphasizing analytical thinking rather than rote memorization, the Florida Standards will prepare our students for success in college, career and life. The Florida Standards will reflect the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

Building on the foundation of success that has made Florida a national model, The Florida Standards provide a clear set of goals for every student, parent, and teacher.

For more information on Florida Standards, go to the CPALMS website. CPALMS is the State of Florida's official source for standards information and course descriptions: cpalms.org.

The activities in this packet applies to the following Florida Standards for grades six through twelve.

Science: SS.612.A.6.3; SS.612.W.7.8; SS.612.W.9.3; SC.912.CS-CC.1.1; SC.912.CS-CC.1.2; SC.912.CS-CC.1.4; SC.912.CS-CC.1.5; SC.912.CS-CC.1.7; SC.912.CS-CP.3.2; SC.912.CS-CS.3.1; SC.912.CS-PC.2.3; SC.912.CS-PC.2.4; SC.912.E.6.4; SC.912.L.17.10; SC.912.L.17.11; SC.912.L.17.12; SC.912.L.17.13; SC.912.L.17.14; SC.912.L.17.15; SC.912.L.17.16; SC.912.L.17.17; SC.912.L.17.20; SC.912.L.17.8; SC.912.N.1.3 **Language Arts:** LAFS.912.L.1.1; LAFS.912.L.1.2; LAFS.912.L.2.3; LAFS.912.L.3.4; LAFS.912.L.3.5; LAFS.912.L.3.6; LAFS.912.RH.1.1; LAFS.912.RH.1.2; LAFS.912.RH.1.3; LAFS.912.RH.2.4; LAFS.912.RH.2.5; LAFS.912.RH.2.6; LAFS.912.RH.3.7; LAFS.912.RH.3.8; LAFS.912.RH.3.9; LAFS.912.RI.1.1; LAFS.912.RI.1.2; LAFS.912.RI.2.4; LAFS.912.RI.2.5; LAFS.912.RI.2.6; LAFS.912.RI.3.7; LAFS.912.RST.1.1; LAFS.912.RST.1.2; LAFS.912.RST.3.7; LAFS.912.SL.1.1; LAFS.912.SL.1.2; LAFS.912.SL.1.3; LAFS.912.SL.2.4; LAFS.912.SL.2.5; LAFS.912.SL.2.6; LAFS.912.W.1.1; LAFS.912.W.1.2; LAFS.912.W.1.3; LAFS.912.W.2.4; LAFS.912.W.2.5; LAFS.912.W.2.6; LAFS.912.W.3.7; LAFS.912.W.3.8; LAFS.912.W.3.9; LAFS.912.W.4.10

Newspaper in Education

The Newspaper in Education (NIE) program is a cooperative effort between schools and local newspapers to promote the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources. Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text.

Informational text is a type of nonfiction text. The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world. Florida NIE programs provide schools with class sets of informational text in the form of the daily newspaper and original curriculum. NIE teaching materials cover a variety of subjects and are consistent with Florida's education standards.

Florida Press Educational Services, Inc. (FPES) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of newspaper professionals that promotes literacy, particularly for young people. FPES members consist of daily and weekly newspapers throughout the state of Florida. Through its member newspapers, FPES serves educators, students and families in all 67 Florida counties. For more information about FPES, visit fpesnie.org, or email ktower@fpress.com or jpushkin@tampabay.com. Follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/nie_fpes](https://twitter.com/nie_fpes)

Going Beyond the Text

Working together

An ecosystem is a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment. In other words, an ecosystem is a community of living and nonliving things that work together. Think about all of the different parts of the ecosystem that make up your county. Make a list of all the interacting organisms in what would be in a county. Next, look for articles, photos and advertisements in the newspaper that illustrate these ideas. Make a list of all of the parts of a county ecosystem that you find in the newspaper. Choose some of the most important parts and create a cartoon depicting this ecosystem.

Invasive species

The National Ocean Service defines an invasive species, also known as an exotic or nuisance species, as “an organism or plant that is introduced into a new environment, where it is not native.” Invasive species can be in the form of plants or animals. The nonnative dwellers can be hazardous to an ecosystem. Look for articles in the newspaper that focus on local ecosystems, and invasive and threatened species. Pay special attention to the information about the effects of human activities and invasive species on ecosystems. Keep track in your journal of the articles you find. Choose one of the topics you have read about to do further research. Write a feature-style newspaper article about what you have discovered. Share this article with your class.

Protecting our environment

Think about the importance of the environment as it relates to the future of mankind and the quality of life. Deforestation is a hot topic when it comes to the environment. Whether we are talking about urban or traditional forests, trees and plants play an important role in the environment. With your class, make a list of ways these concepts are interconnected. Next, in a small group, look for articles in the newspaper about the environment, such as preservation, conservation, recycling, pollution or any other topics you discussed with your class. Based on the information you read in these articles, write an editorial on the importance of protecting your environment. Use the editorials in the newspaper as models.

Innovation

Technology plays a big role in protecting, restoring and taking care of the environment, whether it is documenting species, knowing the pH balance of a waterway or tracking a species' habitat. Write down all the ways technology is used or can be used to document and protect ecosystems and habitats. Look in the newspaper for examples of how technology is used by other organizations and services in your community. Research this subject on the Internet, as well. Now that you have learned what you can do to help conserve Florida wildlife, ecosystems and habitats, create a new technology that can be used in these efforts: a computer program, application, database or other type of interactive system. Write a blog post about your innovative idea. Share your idea with your class.

Going Beyond the Text

Conservation initiative

According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the best way to help imperiled species survive is to participate in beach and park or roadside cleanups in your area, volunteer your time to educate others and contribute to organizations who administer management, educational and research programs. Look in the newspaper for articles about conservation and how you can help make your community environmentally sound. Using ads in the newspaper as models, create an ad or public service announcement to promote a conservation initiative. Think about the dynamics of the ads you see in the newspaper (images, words, placement of items, colors). Think about ways to draw people's attention to your ad and message. Next, design an ad for the print edition of the newspaper and for the website. How is the ad in the print edition going to be different than the web version of the ad? Write a fully developed paragraph showing the differences in the ads and what your main point of the ads is. Share your ad and the information in your paragraph with your class.

Earth Day

Although April 22 is officially Earth Day, every day is Earth Day for people who care about the environment. Find an article in the newspaper that discusses an environmental issue. Clip or print the article. Read the article closely. Underline or highlight the main points and facts. Circle any statements you think are opinions. In full sentences, respond to the following questions:

- What is the environmental issue being discussed?
- Is the issue of local, national or international concern?
- Who is most directly impacted by this issue?
- Do you feel this issue is important to the future of our environment? Why or why not?
- What piece of information do you feel is missing in this article?

Share what you have learned with your class.

Reduce, reuse, recycle, upcycle

Define the words "reduce," "reuse," "recycle" and "upcycle" on a piece of paper. With another student, look through the newspaper for words, photos and advertisements depicting household items. Cut out or print the words and images and put them into one of these four categories: reduce, reuse, recycle or upcycle. Design a poster promoting these ideas in your school. Use some of the images and words you found in the newspaper for ideas for your poster. Share what you have learned with your class.

Going Beyond the Text

Reducing waste

Did you know that a person creates an average of 4.5 pounds of trash per day, according to the Environmental Protection Agency? If you multiply that amount by the number of students in your classroom and then in your school...that is a lot of trash! By reducing the number of items in your lunch that must be thrown out, or by only using those that can be eaten, reused, recycled or composted, you can make a difference in your environment and the environment of the future. Create your own waste-free and healthy lunch menus for one week. Make sure to pack only what you can eat, reuse, recycle or compost. Using the advertisements in the newspaper as a model, create an advertisement for your waste-free lunch week. Share your menus and ad with your class.

Humans vs. the environment

There are ongoing conflicts between human usage of Earth's resources and what plants and animals need to survive. Things human beings do on land affect the entire planet. Look through the newspaper for articles or pictures that indicate conflict between how humans use the environment and the needs of plants or animals. Read the articles and think about the main ideas and conflicts presented. Explain in a fully developed paragraph the information presented. Is there a solution to this conflict? What issues are presented? Create a visual display that represents either or both sides of the conflict. Share your display and article with your class.

Activities written by Jodi Pushkin, Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education, for more information, contact ordernie@tampabay.com.

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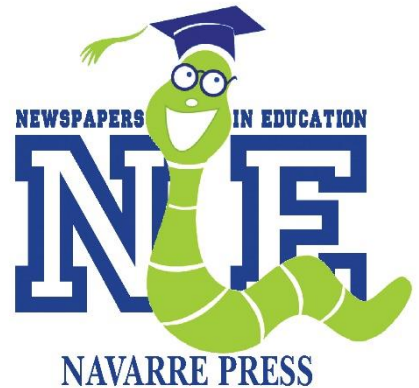
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