

THE STANDARD

Protect Earth's Resources

Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment.

 ANCHORING PHENOMENON

The Stream Behind the School Used to Be Brown

Show 5th graders two photos of the same neighborhood stream, years apart. In the old photo the water is brown and choked with trash. In the new photo the water runs clear, grasses and young trees line the banks, and an Adopt-A-Stream sign stands by it. Nothing changed on its own. People did something.

DRIVING QUESTION

“What did the people in this community actually do to turn a brown, trashy stream into a clean one?”

 INVESTIGATIVE 1

Where Does Our School's Trash Go?

Have 5th graders weigh one day's lunchroom trash, then sort it into landfill, recycling, and compost piles. Most of the pile turns out to be food scraps and recyclable bottles that never needed a landfill. It zooms in on one resource problem the 5th graders make themselves, plus a sorting fix a community could copy.

DRIVING QUESTION

“How much of our trash is actually trash, and what could a school do to send less of it to the landfill?”

 INVESTIGATIVE 2

The Water We Pour Down the Drain

Have 5th graders catch and compare the water from two handwashing methods: tap running the whole time, and tap off while scrubbing. The off-while-scrubbing test wastes far less. This connects the anchor to a resource, fresh water, that 5th graders can measure and protect with one small change a whole community could copy.

DRIVING QUESTION

“How much water does one small habit save, and what could a community do to save water on a bigger scale?”