



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2012 Volume VII: Energy, Environment, and Health

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## **Humans: Champions of Justice or Villains of the Ecosystem?**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.07.07, published September 2012

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I developed a unit based on self-discovery and scientific knowledge, in order to create young problem-solvers and future citizens who will work diligently to undo the damage humans have exacted on our planet. As a fifth grade teacher, I am responsible for teaching ecology during the school year. Over the years, I have developed a personal interest in this particular subject, finding it fascinating to learn about the various environments which exist around the world and the way in which nature has been able to live harmoniously since the beginning of time. In this unit, I discuss the major ecosystems which exist around the world and the way in which living and non-living factors interact. They learn about the various components in each ecosystem such as climate, location, as well as native plants and animals in these areas. I also present my students with various cases that involve environmental issues which threaten these environments and they must decide whether humans are positively or negatively affecting the world around them. In addition, they must also create a viable solution to solve a problem which exists in their immediate area in order to produce a small change which yields a great impact.

(Developed for Life Science/Ecology, grade 5; recommended for Life Science/Ecology [Elementary], grade 5)

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