



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2024 Volume IV: Energy: Past, Present, and Future

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## Using Dr. Seuss to Teach about Environmental Conservation

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The curriculum unit I created in the Energy: Past, Present, and Future seminar is for my first-grade students. In this unit, students will be learning about environmental conservation through the lens of Dr. Seuss's, *The Lorax*. In the story, the main character opens a factory and begins to cut down trees and release pollutants in the surrounding community. This has impacts on the local wildlife causing them to relocate. When the last tree is cut down the Onceler is left to reckon with the harm he has caused the environment. This is an entry point for students to learn more about the natural world. The main topics students will learn in the unit are the human impact on the environment, deforestation, photosynthesis, water pollution, air quality, the greenhouse effect, and climate change, which all connect back to the story. This unit is project based. There are three main experiments tied to the story: sprouting seeds in a garden glove, cleaning an oil spill, and modeling the greenhouse effect. Students will work in groups to participate in each experiment. To conclude the unit, students will create a visual of their choice to showcase how they plan to help the environment.

(Developed for Science, grade 1; recommended for Science and ELA, grades K-2)

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