

TAKING THE SUSTAINABLE WAY EVERY DAY

Self-Paced Module: Educator Guide



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Background

The current pace of nature's decline is unprecedented in human history, plastics pollution has increased ten-fold in the past forty years, and pathways for achieving sustainability are imperative.¹ Sustainability is defined as responsible interaction with the environment to avoid depletion or degradation of natural resources and allow for long-term environmental quality.² Human impact on the environment—depletion of natural resources, introducing or increasing pollution, and ever-increasing energy consumption—is jeopardizing the ability for future generations to meet their needs. While large-scale sustainability efforts at the corporate level must remain the primary focus in tackling climate change, it is important that students understand their abilities to make a positive change on a smaller scale by making daily choices that will lead to a more sustainable lifestyle. For more information about the efforts organizations, scientists, and individuals are taking to address environmental problems, visit solveforearth.com or [Ecochallenge at The Tech](#). Keep in mind that student's personal experience and living circumstances will differ. Adjust the conversation based on the circumstances and needs of your students.

Module Summary

To provide relatable context on the environmentally sustainable behaviors and choices students can make, they will travel through the morning of typical students as they get ready to leave for school. In this interactive module, students investigate everyday occurrences to discover where and how they can help the environment with their behaviors, with an emphasis on the various choices they can make each morning.

¹ <https://ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>

² "Environmental Sustainability: Definition and Application." Study.com, 18 September 2013, study.com/academy/lesson/environmental-sustainability-definition-and-application.html



Using the Self-Paced Module

This section provides strategies for incorporating the self-paced module into instruction and screen-by-screen suggestions for facilitating discussion before, during, and after each module.



Note to Educators on Economic Sensitivity: A conscious effort has been made to avoid speaking overly negatively about any one decision; instead, try to focus on the benefits of being environmentally aware whenever possible. Every student's living situation will be unique—adjust the conversation based on your students' circumstances and needs.

Taking the Sustainable Way Every Day

Overview

Sometimes the problem of “saving the environment” appears so big that finding a solution seems impossible. In this module, students will discover ways that they can help the environment with their everyday behaviors, starting with getting ready for school.

Key Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify how their behaviors and choices affect Earth's environment.
- Make environmentally sustainable decisions to lessen their impact on Earth's environments.

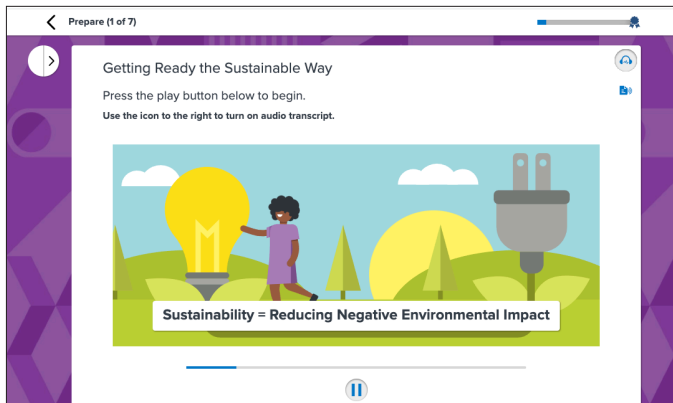
Setting the Stage

Engage students before the module with one or more of these questions:

- Do you like showers or baths? If you take showers, how long do you usually take?
- Do you bring a water bottle to school every day? Is it reusable or disposable?
- Do you consider the environment while you're getting ready for school in the morning?
- Do you think it's important to take care of the environment? Explain.
- Is it possible for students like you to take care of the environment? How?

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Screen-by-Screen Educator Tips

• Prepare

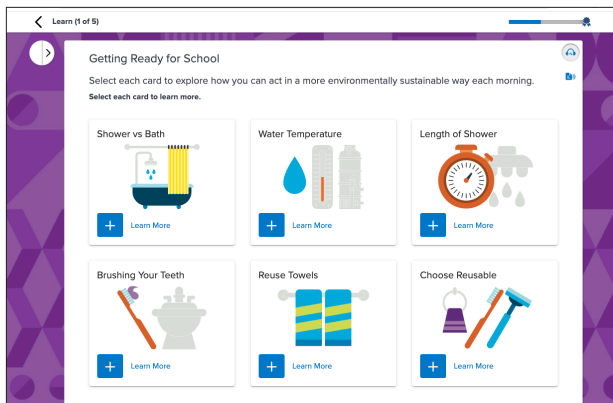
- **Getting Ready the Sustainable Way:** The module begins by explaining to students that to live in a sustainable way means to try to actively reduce their negative impacts on the environment. Can they think of anything they currently do that would achieve this goal?
- **How Environmentally Sustainable Are You?:** Students are asked to think about how sustainable their current choices are. Take an informal poll of students' feelings—who feels very, somewhat, or not at all sustainable?
- **Show What You Know:** The pre-test consists of three questions. Students have one opportunity to answer each question correctly. Feedback is provided for both correct and incorrect answers. If using the module in a classroom setting, consider having students vote on answers or call on different students for each question. The correct answer is visible once an answer is submitted.
- **What Do You Think?:** Students are asked to rank how strongly they agree or disagree with the following statement: I know several ways that my family and I can make choices in our daily routines to promote environmental sustainability.

• Learn

- **Getting Ready for School:** Students will swipe through a series of cards to explore how they can act in a more environmentally sustainable way each morning. Ask volunteers to share which choices they are already making or which they think would be most easily incorporated into their routines.
- **Staying Green While Getting Dressed:** Students will click several tabs to learn ideas for being environmentally sustainable when considering what to wear. Have students research or provide them with a list of local second-hand, thrift, and consignment shops.
- **In the Kitchen:** Students will click on each hotspot in the kitchen to point out how their behaviors can become more sustainable. Ask students to think about what might prevent them from trying some of the strategies presented “In the Kitchen.” As a whole group or in pairs, have students discuss strategies that have worked for them in the past and how they decide which actions and behaviors are important to them.

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- **Before You Leave:** Students will flip a series of cards to explore actions they can take before they leave the house that will have a sustained impact throughout the day. For each action, ask students to rank how high of a priority they believe each to be, 1 (not high) to 5 (very high). They can record their rankings on scratch paper, share with a peer, or hold up the corresponding number of fingers.
- **Making a Difference:** Students will watch a short animation that discusses the positive environmental impact they can make on their own and by engaging their families. Encourage students to explore solveforearth.com or go through the website together. Ask volunteers to share one action they will take as a result of what they have learned.
- **Wrap Up**
 - **You're Ready to Be More Sustainable:** The module ends by summarizing the key takeaways about making sustainable choices and increasing positive environmental impact. Take this time to answer any remaining questions students might have.
 - **What Do You Think?:** Students are asked to rank how strongly they agree or disagree with the following statement: I know several ways that my family and I can make choices in our daily routines to promote environmental sustainability. Did more students agree with the statement after completing the module than before? If students still disagree at the end, ask them what they still need to know in order to agree with the statement.
- **Challenge**
 - There are five post-test questions for this module. Students are encouraged to review the information in each section, if needed, before beginning the post-test.
 - Students will encounter a variety of question types including multiple choice, classification, matching, and true/false.
 - For each question, students have two opportunities to answer correctly. Full credit is given for correct answers on the first try. The total number of available points in this module's post-test is 8. If students answer incorrectly, they are given an opportunity to try again or skip and continue to the next question. No additional points are given to students who either do not retry the question or retry the question and still answer incorrectly. Partial credit is given for students who correctly answer a portion of a multi-part question or who give the correct answer on a second try.



Extending the Module

Once students complete the module, consider one or more of the following follow-up activities:

- Challenge students to draw a map of their living space. For each room, students should include a label and 1–2 actions they can take in it to be more sustainable.
- Introduce students to the SMART (specific; measurable; attainable; realistic; time-bound) goal-setting method. Encourage them to set a SMART goal for increasing their own environmental sustainability.
- Challenge students to conduct a “sustainability survey” on their living space, noting aspects that increase sustainability, listing things that could be more sustainable, and providing suggestions.
- Guide students in researching a current sustainability effort in their community or an issue that could benefit from sustainable action. Coordinate a letter-writing or social media campaign in which students advocate for more support in these areas, citing their research.
- Invite students to research a sustainability “superhero,” and write a paragraph explaining why his/her actions should earn the “superhero” status.
- Challenge students to apply what they have learned about sustainable decision-making to their school or classroom. What choices can they make during their school day to increase their positive environmental impact?

Standards Correlation

The following standards from the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) are addressed in this self-paced module:

- **MS-ESS3-3:** Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing human impact on the environment.
- **ESS3.C:** Build understanding that human activities have significantly altered Earth's environments.
- **ESS3.D:** Reduce global climate change and human’s vulnerability to it by understanding human behavior and applying knowledge wisely in decisions and activities.



Key Terms

Conservation

avoiding the wasteful use of energy

Energy Efficiency

using less energy to perform the same task

Environment

the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates

Environmental Impact

the effects one's actions have on the environment, positive or negative

Fast Fashion

inexpensive clothing produced rapidly in response to the latest trends

Pollution

the presence of harmful or poisonous substances in the environment

Standby Power

electricity that is consumed by appliances even when they are not in use

Sustainability

living in balance; using what you need and no more