



Sources of Pollution

Grades 3 – 5

BACKGROUND:

Point source problems are easier to correct. Their causes – wastewater emptied into bodies of water through pipes – can be dealt with directly.

Nonpoint source problems are more difficult to fix. They can result when rain from your lawn, driveway, city streets, construction sites, and parking lots runs off into creeks and streams. This runoff may contain: oil, fertilizers, pesticides, soil, and other substances harmful to water quality.

Fixing nonpoint source problems usually requires a great deal of cooperation. Communities, farmers, homeowners, developers, and companies – all of us – must take better care of the land to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

OBJECTIVE:

Students will do the following:

- Distinguish between point source and nonpoint source pollution.
- List and show ways to prevent nonpoint source pollution in a photo collage.

MATERIALS:

- Poster board (1 per group)
- Old magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers

TIME: 90 minutes

SETTING THE STAGE:

- 1) Ask students what water pollution is. Help them clarify their definition.
- 2) Ask them where water pollution comes from. Discuss the issue of responsibility.
- 3) Tell the students that protecting water quality and controlling pollution is everybody's business! The Clean Water Act gives states the authority to control pollution sources, but each of us must share in the responsibility.

PROCEDURE:

Write: "point source pollution" and "nonpoint source pollution" on the board. Can the students guess what these mean?

- 1) Give the students the definition of each term.
- 2) Ask them to give examples of each one.
- 3) Ask them which kind of water pollution they would be most likely to cause by their own actions (nonpoint source). Have them identify some ways they might prevent pollution (for example: not littering, using organic fertilizer, and reducing toxic chemical use).

FOLLOW-UP:

Have the students work in teams of three or four. Supply them with poster board, scissors, glue, old magazines, and markers. Each team should prepare a poster display on ways to reduce nonpoint source pollution. Suggest collages of applicable photos and words. Have the teams share their posters.

Adapted from *Water Pollution* by Gay, K., Franklin Watts, NY, 1990

