

Sustainability in Our Classroom

Estimated time for activity ~45min (~5 min prep time)

Objective

Students will learn how to identify sustainable practices in their classrooms and schools.

Essential Questions

- What sustainability practices can you identify in your classroom?

Materials

(5-10 minutes prep time)

- pencils or writing utensils and paper
- markers, colored pencils, or highlighters

Background

After introducing students to the concept of sustainability in the previous activity, students will identify sustainable practices in their classrooms. They will create maps of their classrooms and label sustainability practices and brainstorm how they can add more sustainable practices. Sustainable practices in the classroom involve energy efficiency, waste reduction, and the use of eco-friendly supplies. Creating outdoor learning spaces, integrating sustainability into the curriculum, and engaging the community are other ways to shift a school's culture to include more sustainable practices. It's important to have students involved in the decision-making process to foster both individual and collective commitment and responsibility. This can start with first accessing one's place--the classroom--to identify sustainable practices that exist already and opportunities for growth.

GRADE LEVEL



3-12

CONNECTIONS TO THE BIG IDEAS OF SUSTAINABILITY



Place



Systems



Community

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS



SCIENCE:
PATTERNS



SOCIAL STUDIES:
PLACES &
ENVIRONMENTS



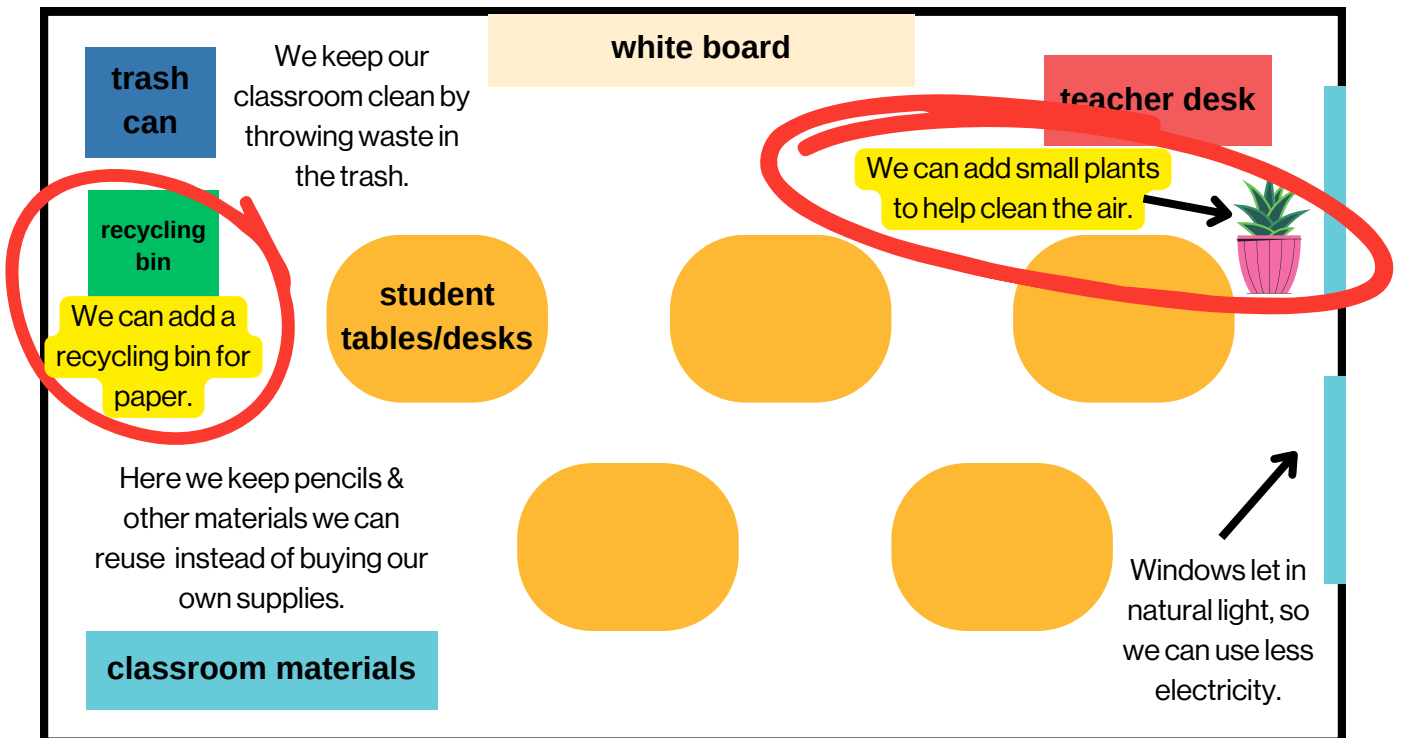
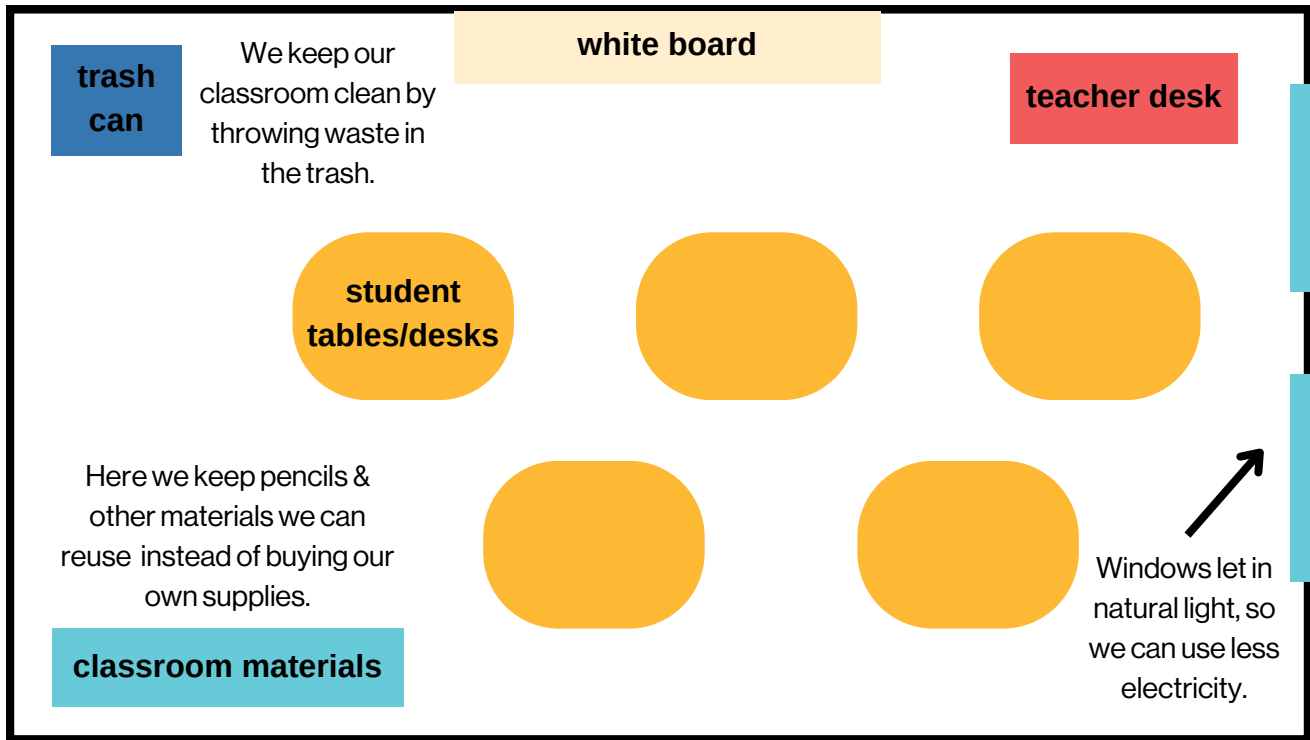
ELA:
WRITING

Activity

(30-50 Minutes)

1. Hand each student a blank sheet of paper and ask them to map their classroom. Guide them through the basics, showing them how to draw the shape of the classroom and label where windows, entrances, and desks are. Then have students, either on their own or working in groups, label other specific items: class supplies, whiteboard, waste bins, sinks, shelves, plants, class pets, etc. **Example maps on the next page.**
2. Once they are done mapping, ask students to identify sustainable practices they do in their classroom. Remind them of their definitions of sustainability from the previous activity and give them an example to guide them: using natural light from the windows to reduce electricity usage. Have students write a short sentence explaining each sustainable practice they identified.
3. Once they are finished labeling sustainable practices in their classroom, ask them to take another look around the room and think about what they can add to the classroom to implement more sustainable practices. For example, adding plants or a recycling bin. Have them add these additions to their maps, highlighting and circling them, along with a short sentence explaining why these new practices are sustainable.
4. After students are finished with their maps, have them display them around the classroom and do a short gallery walk. They can choose to comment on each others' maps and see how many different sustainable practices they thought of. *Optional:* Have students count how many different sustainability practices they identified and create a way to display the data (in a chart, table, graph etc.)
5. Have students answer the reflection and analysis questions. Either print them out or have students answer them on the back of their maps.

Classroom map example



Sustainability in our Classroom Reflection & Analysis Questions

- 1. How did you identify sustainable practices in your classroom?**
- 2. From looking at others' maps, which sustainability practices were most popular?**
- 3. Now that you've identified sustainable practices in your classroom, what are some examples of sustainable practices in your school?**
- 4. What is the impact of not implementing these practices? What happens if we don't try to be sustainable?**
- 5. What are some ways that your campus can become more sustainable, and how can you help implement more sustainable practices?**