

Introduction to the units

The following teaching units take a number of different approaches to helping pupils understand some of the issues of sustainable development. Links to the Sustainable Schools National Framework doorways are indicated on each unit:



Food and drink



Buildings and grounds



Energy and water



Inclusion and participation



Travel and traffic



Local well-being



Purchasing and waste



Global dimension

Each unit is a guideline for a lesson and contains practical advice, guidance on what learning objectives, resources to support the aims, advice on additional sources of information and structured activities for the classroom.

All of the units need to be read through carefully before being used as they are not 'off the peg' lessons. Some preparation will be required, either in obtaining the recommended resources or adapting material for individual group needs and abilities.

Each of the units has a particular curriculum focus, however the scope of sustainable development and the issues around mean that other National Curriculum subject skills or content are covered, or touched upon in many of the units. That information for each key stage is listed below rather than on every single unit.

For all the units the main subjects covered are: geography, science, and citizenship. All of the units draw out key skills and processes for those subjects. In addition the general activities and some of the content support the delivery of other subject areas, such as English, ICT, history, design and technology and RE. On some occasions that is included in the actual unit if it is relevant only on the one occasion.

Differentiation

In each of the teaching units there are opportunities for differentiation. This can be done by extending some of the issues and questions raised to provide pupils with further research. Many of the units are suitable for being reduced down to simple one issue approaches with more in-depth work on understanding terms and establishing a clear interpretation of what they mean in the pupils own lives.

Many of the units suggest working in groups, greater emphasis on presenting conclusions from group work would also allow for differentiation.

New changes in the Key Stage 3 Curriculum

The revised Key Stage 3 curriculum affects some of these teaching units mainly through the geography and science curriculum. Each subject has renewed emphasis on encouraging greater investigation skills and taking on board the moral and ethical dimensions of information. The approaches within the units support the changes and provide opportunities to develop the new aims. Emphasis on discussion and group work also helps in engaging pupils with the increased demands for pupils to discuss their learning and formulate arguments to support understanding and demonstrate knowledge. Pupils are encouraged to spend time reflecting upon information and how to interpret it.

For further information about the secondary curriculum, visit <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/>

Key Stage 3

English

All the units provide opportunities for pupils to develop a range of speaking and listening and reading skills. They will encourage pupils to produce a range of writing for different audiences and purposes.

Some of the units contain opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of drama activities and techniques to explore ideas and issues.

The resources advised for these units will mean that pupils will explore different types of text and examine the media. There is investigation of how meaning is conveyed in texts, how to make choices of form, why some layout and presentation is used. Pupils may also be asked to examine the nature and purpose of media products influence content and meaning.

Mathematics

There are opportunities for some of the units to support aspects of the mathematics curriculum by encouraging pupils to handle and interpret data. In those cases there are also opportunities in this unit to do numerical calculations and to handle data.

Science

For those units where science is not a clear focus there are still opportunities for pupils to learn about the interplay between empirical questions, evidence and scientific explanations using contemporary examples. Pupils can learn about the importance of sustainable development from a scientific perspective and possibly about the conservation of energy.

A couple of the teaching units contain issues about Health that provide opportunities for pupils to investigate and examine and record evidence. Questions concerning technological advancement and access can be raised.

The units also encourage the requirement of sharing developments and common understanding across disciplines and boundaries.

Art and design

There are opportunities across the units for pupils to investigate and make art, craft and design in order to communicate their ideas.

Citizenship

In addition to the specific areas of the citizenship curriculum all the teaching units encourage pupils to understand the world as a global community. They are provided with opportunities to think about topical issues and to contribute to group and exploratory class discussions.

Pupils understanding about becoming informed citizens will be raised and they will develop skills of enquiry and communication, participation and responsible action.

They also encourage pupils to:

- reflect on different opinions, ideas, beliefs and values by exploring topical and controversial issues and problems
- research, plan and undertake enquiries into topical and controversial issues and problems using a range of information and sources
- analyse and evaluate sources used, identifying different values, ideas and viewpoints and recognising bias.

Design and technology

There are opportunities in the units for pupils to be taught to develop, plan and communicate ideas. In some of the units pupils can be asked to evaluate processes and products and develop understanding of materials and components. They can also be asked learn to identify and use criteria to judge the quality of other people's products, including the impact beyond the purpose for which they were designed.

Geography

In addition to specific elements of the geography curriculum most of the teaching units address the key concepts of: scale; interdependence; environmental interactions; physical and human process; and cultural understanding and diversity.

The units also encourage enquiry and communication.

History

There are opportunities to use some of the units to support aspects of the history curriculum by improving pupil's knowledge and understanding of events.

ICT

All of the teaching units contain research opportunities using ICT, which can be extended to sharing information.

Specifically there are opportunities for pupils to learn: how to collect, enter, analyse and evaluate quantitative and qualitative information, checking its accuracy; to develop and explore information, solve problems and derive new information for particular purposes; how to interpret information and to reorganise and present it in a variety of forms that are fit for purpose

Post-16 teaching units

The two teaching units for post-16 are designed primarily to draw out issues associated with geography, however they also strongly support citizenship, and general studies. They both provide a good framework for a discussion and investigation-led study.

All the units will improve communication skills and ICT skills.

Further information about Sustainable Schools is available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools

