

Taking the Lead

Energy Revealed
Activity
Grade Level: 4-7



Main Objective

Learners are empowered to serve as Presidents of their own Board of Directors. Their task is to identify and communicate energy conservation strategies in a presentation that is targeted to a specific audience: the members of their Board — which is to say, their guardians or household members. This lesson works well as a culminating activity after other activities because it gives learners an opportunity to demonstrate and apply their knowledge about energy and the environment.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, learners will:

- Clarify and articulate personal opinions about energy use and waste
- Understand ways to influence opinions through awareness and promotion
- Reflect on their potential to change others' behaviour and attitudes about energy use
- Communicate their knowledge through effective communications

Length of Activity: 5 hours

Step 1: Introduction to energy use and leadership.

Step 2+3: Create presentation, present, and discuss as a class.

Materials Required

- Internet-enabled device
- Energy-Related Rules and Responsibilities of the President of the Board of Directors Handout
- Board of Directors Change Chart Worksheet
- Energy Needs: The Ways We Use Energy Backgrounder
- Taking Action: Personal Choices About Energy Use Backgrounder

Activity

Step 1: Become the President

1. Discuss learners' views on energy use and conservation. Ask them to describe the ways that their household uses energy, and then ask them how they think their household could reduce their energy use. Record a list of ways to conserve energy on the board.
2. Explain that now is the time for learners to take leadership! You are designating them the President of their households Board of Directors. Ask them for their definitions of a Board of Directors. Then explain to them that it is a group of people, led by a President, who are chosen to govern the affairs of an organization. In this activity, their entire household is the organization, and the learners will lead it. They will be responsible for governing the affairs of the household as they relate to energy use and conservation.
3. Give learners a couple of minutes to list their ideas about what they see as their roles and responsibilities now that they are President of their own Board of Directors:
 - To develop rules for turning lights off.
 - To teach household members about energy conservation.
 - To limit the number of hours that each household member can watch TV, use the computer, or use a particular appliance?
4. Ask volunteers to share their lists. Put their answers on the board, and when you have a good cross-section of energy conservation ideas, ask learners to identify the five ideas that they consider to be the most important and the most relevant to their household. Give learners a copy of the Energy-Related Rules and Responsibilities handout. Ask them to record those five ideas and sign the document.
5. Encourage learners to think about their responsibilities and how they intend to influence their Board to use energy more wisely. Hand out the Board of Directors Change Chart Worksheet. Learners put their own names in the first blank space and then write down what they do to waste energy. Write these categories on the board to help them:
 - **Entertainment:** How much TV do you watch? Do you leave the TV on when you are not in the room? Do you leave the radio playing when you are not there?
 - **Water Use:** Do you leave the tap running while you brush your teeth? Do you take long showers?
 - **Trash:** Do you put everything in the trash, or do you always recycle those things that can be recycled?
 - **Lighting & Appliances:** Do you encourage your household to use energy efficient lights and appliances? Are there lights and appliances that can be turned off when not in use?

- Heating: Do you put on a sweater when you are cold, or do you turn the heat up?
- Transportation: Do you travel by car when you could walk or ride a bike instead?

6. After they have entered the information about themselves, ask learners to write down the names of other members of their household and then use the same categories to identify ways for each of them to improve their energy savings. Give learners ten minutes to complete the chart and then talk as a group about the exercise.

Step 2: Presentation

1. Ask learners to think about their favourite commercials on TV and what it is that makes them effective. Generate a list of the strategies that directors rely on to persuade audiences to use their products:
 - The use of humour, catchy music, and effective lighting
 - Testimony from a known leader such as Wayne Gretzky, David Beckham, or Rick Hansen
 - Before-and-after and other comparative data
 - Evidence from polls or research studies
 - A sense of belonging to a special club
 - Claims of superiority and effectiveness
 - Targeted audiences – different commercials target different groups of people depending on the product/service
2. After reviewing several strategies, challenge each learner to plan a presentation to promote energy conservation to their own Board of Directors. The presentation can consist of a brief video, a poster, PowerPoint or some other medium. Presidents can rely on the information recorded on their Change Chart to help them target their presentations to the needs of their specific audience.
3. Give learners at least one class period to decide on the form of their presentation and to begin planning. Provide them with adequate homework time to shape their presentation. You could hold a discussion about some of the challenges that learners might face:
 - Is there someone in your household who might not want to change their behaviour to conserve energy? Why?
 - How will your presentation reach a household member who is resistant to change?
 - Can you describe this activity to your household members soon so that they are aware of their involvement?

4. Select a day for the learners to preview their presentations with a classmate or in small groups of 4 or 5. Learners can present for one another, providing support and feedback. Working in pairs or small groups, they can also troubleshoot any problems they have had in developing their presentations.
5. Give learners a range of dates within which to deliver their presentation to their Board of Directors.

Step 3: Conclusion

1. After all learners have delivered their presentations to their Board of Directors, have a class discussion to talk about the results:
 - Did you prepare your household for the presentation?
 - How did your household members respond to your presentation?
 - Did they ask you any questions about energy use and conservation? Were you able to answer their questions?
 - Do you think your household members will change some of their behaviour and begin using energy more wisely? If yes, what do you think they will do? If no, why do you think they are resistant to change?
 - What do you believe would be the easiest energy conservation change to make in your home? Why?
2. Record the predicted behaviour changes on the board. Ask learners to identify five commitments their household can make toward becoming more energy efficient.
3. Tell learners to create a document that lists the five commitments and provides space for each household member to write his or her signature. By signing, household members are committing to do their part in helping conserve energy. Learners can ask each household member to sign the document to demonstrate his or her personal commitment to energy conservation. When all families have signed the documents, they can be displayed throughout the classroom to remind learners of the impact their presentations.
4. Revisit this activity in one month to discuss learners' challenges and successes in keeping these commitments and to reflect on what they have learned.

Sample Schedule of Activities

This culminating lesson is best taught over several weeks.

Week 1	Day 1	Step 1, Sub Step 1-6: 45 minutes
	Day 2	Step 2, Sub Step 1-2: 30 minutes
	Day 3	Step 2, Sub Step 3: 60 minutes
	Days 4, 5	Homework time for student presentations, some class time for check-in with teams
Week 2	Day 6, 7	Step 2, Sub Step 4-5: 60 minutes
	Days 8 - 10	Board presentations at home
Week 3	Days 11, 12	Board presentations at home
	Day 13	Step 3, Sub Step 1-2: 30 minutes
	Day 14	Step 3, Sub Step 3: 30 minutes
Week 4	Days 15 - 19	Display family commitments in the classroom
Week 8	Day 40	Step 3, Sub Step 4: 30 minutes

Extension Ideas

- 1. Preview all learner presentations to select one.** If learners make their presentations to the class, the class could choose which one(s) to present to the entire school during an assembly or at a “Night of the Notables” event that includes guardians and administrators. Learners can work together to adapt the chosen presentation as a class project and present it as the culmination of their unit on energy. Ideally, learners could make the presentation on Earth Day (April 22nd).
- 2. Appeal to school administrators as well.** Make learners the President of another Board of Directors, this one consisting of the Principal, Vice Principal, educators and/or maintenance staff. Learners can work in groups to prepare presentations to the Board asking it to make the school more energy efficient.