

# Resources on **the Environment** for Adults and Children

## Internet resources

The Internet has a seemingly endless supply of information, but much of it has to be adapted for use with preschoolers. Typing a key word or two into a search engine will provide information that teachers can use to expand basic knowledge, check facts, or find activities to adapt. The few sites listed below are particularly helpful, but are by no means all encompassing.

**EEK! Our Earth, State of Wisconsin.** This site's lessons on the environment contain good information for teachers in simple language they can use to explain complex ideas to children. There are also ideas for activities.

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/index.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/index.htm)

**Energy, The Environmental Literacy Council.** This well-organized site has comprehensive information on the environment to help teachers understand unfamiliar concepts. The site includes descriptions of ecosystems, pollution, air, water, and so on. It also has links to many other resources.

[www.enviroliteracy.org/category.php/4.html](http://www.enviroliteracy.org/category.php/4.html)

**Environmental To Do's for Young Children, National Network for Child Care.**

This site has a wealth of outdoor activities geared to older children; many are readily adaptable for preschoolers. [www.nncc.org/Curriculum/envir.todo.html](http://www.nncc.org/Curriculum/envir.todo.html)

**The One-Inch Square Project, San José Children's Museum.** This project has a

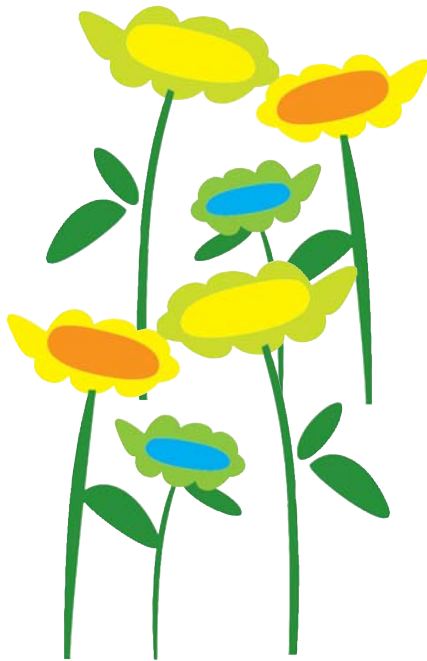
good description of how to examine a small patch of earth or part of a natural object. [www.hhmi.org/coolscience/inchsquare/index.html](http://www.hhmi.org/coolscience/inchsquare/index.html)

**Roots and Shoots, Jane Goodall Institute.** There is a \$35 fee to join the Institute, but the site has enough information that can be viewed at no cost to make it worth visiting. [www.janegoodall.org](http://www.janegoodall.org)

**Teaching Ideas and Resources, The Times Educational Supplement**

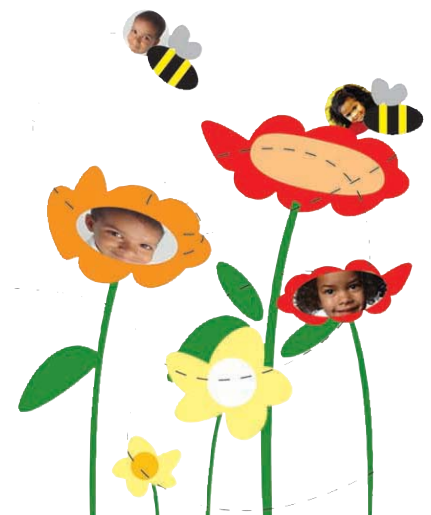
**(TES/HSBC).** This useful Web site covers every curriculum subject and age. The British have a long tradition of excellent early childhood practices. The Web site also links to other useful sites.

[www.tes.co.uk/education\\_links](http://www.tes.co.uk/education_links)



**Ann Lewin-Benham, AB,** was founder/director of the Model Early Learning Center (MELC) and Capital Children's Museum in Washington, D.C. Her recent book, *Possible Schools: The Reggio Approach to Urban Education*, tells MELC's story. Ann writes and lectures on early education.

Illustrations © Marti Betz.



**Books for adults**

This section references new and classic books about the environment; all are still relevant.

**Attenborough, D. 1979. *Life on Earth*. Boston: Little, Brown.**

The author, a fine zoologist and photographer, presents scores of color photographs accompanied by text to portray a variety of life forms and the incredible accomplishments of the diverse creatures. The book is based on the acclaimed thirteen-program BBC TV series.

**Ausubel, K. 1994. *Seeds of Change: The Living Treasure*. San Francisco: Harper.**

The author explains the implications of how we farm and presents alternatives that would assure a viable seed stock.

**Barry, J. 1997. *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America*. New York: Simon & Schuster.**

A prize-winning account of the 1927 flood of the Mississippi River shows how the politics and engineering around control of the river changed American life. This is a powerful examination of the relationship between a society and a river.

**Carson, R. [1962] 2002. *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.**

This classic book was the first environmental wake-up call, and its publication ultimately led to the banning of the pesticide DDT.

**Colborn, T., D. Dumanoski, & J. Myers. 1997. *Our Stolen Future*. New York: Penguin.**

Written like a detective story, this book presents a chilling scientific look at how certain kinds of pollution are affecting humans and the environment.

**Diamond, J. 2005. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York: Viking.**

In lucid prose Diamond describes what has happened to societies that have ignored the natural imperative to preserve trees, soil, and biodiversity.

**Diamond, J. 1997. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: Norton.**

A Pulitzer Prize winning history that shows the 13,000-year interplay between geography, climate, natural resources, and human activity that has allowed some societies to thrive while others merely survived, stagnated, or died.

**Harr, J. 1996. *A Civil Action*. New York: Vintage.**

This meticulously researched true story tells of a lawyer's fight against two giant corporations that polluted the water supply of Woburn, Massachusetts.

**Lovelock, J. 1988. *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth*. New York: Norton.**

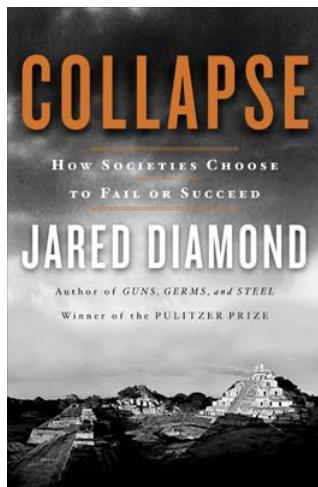
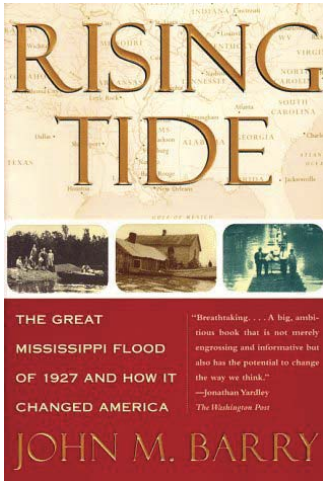
The author explains the interconnectedness of all things—nature, man, and society.

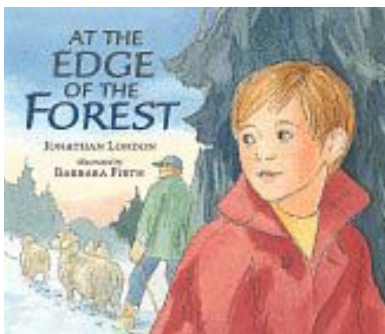
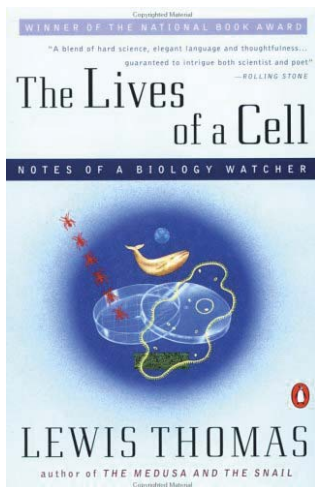
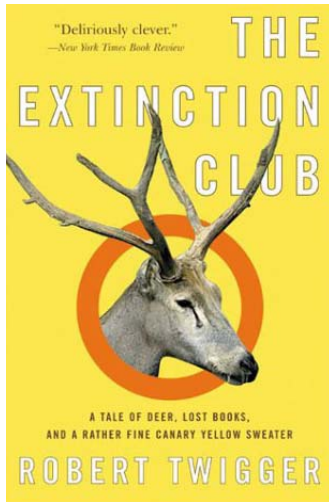
**Marx, W. 1967. *The Frail Ocean*. New York: Ballantine.**

This is a documentation of the fantastic life in the ocean and how it is being devastated by humans.

**Michener, J. 1978. *Chesapeake*. New York: Ballantine.**

This long novel by the master storyteller paints a compelling picture of the ecosystem of the Chesapeake Bay, focusing on the relationship between the life of the bay and its inhabitants. One particularly compelling chapter describes Canadian geese; another episode describes the impact of a severe flood on oyster beds.





**Reisner, M. 1987. *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water*. New York: Penguin.**

An investigative reporter chronicles the politics and greed that have ruthlessly diverted the great rivers of the American west.

**Rienow, R., & L.T. Rienow. 1967. *Moment in the Sun: A Report on the Deteriorating Quality of the American Environment*. Ballantine.**

This is a candid report on the effects of a growing U.S. population and its wanton consumption on the natural environment.

**Steingraber, S. 1998. *Living Downstream: A Scientist's Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment*. New York: Vintage.**

The author, fighting cancer, compares the past and present of the rural area where she grew up and the politics surrounding its agricultural practices.

**Thomas, L. 1974. *The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher*. New York: Bantam.**

A noted scientist extols the wonders of life, from cells to communities.

**Twigger, R. 2001. *The Extinction Club*. New York: HarperCollins.**

This engaging author relates how the Pere David's deer species was saved. In short anecdotes the book portrays humans' attitudes toward other species.

**Ward, B., & R. Dubos. 1972. *Only One Earth: The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet*. New York: Norton.**

This is the unofficial report commissioned by the secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. It was prepared with consultants in 58 countries and rendered in highly readable prose by Ward, Columbia University Professor of International Development, and Dubos, an eminent microbiologist.

**Warner, W. 1976. *Beautiful Swimmers: Watermen, Crabs and the Chesapeake Bay*. New York: Penguin.**

This Pulitzer Prize winning book tells the story of the Atlantic blue crab, the ecology that supports it, and the men who trap it.

### Books for children

This list includes picture and story books as well as reference books. Those with an asterisk (\*) are particularly rich and would be excellent to have permanently in a home or classroom library. Teachers reviewing the books can best determine their suitability for a particular group of children but most can be used for ages three to six.

Note: Information on using these resources in conjunction with early childhood environmental education activities is available at

<http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200603/lewinactivitiesBTJ.pdf>.

\* ***Around the Pond: Who's Been Here?* by Lindsay Barrett George. 1996. New York: Greenwillow.**

Realistic illustrations show various traces of which animals have been at the pond.

\* ***At the Edge of the Forest*, by Jonathan London. 1998. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.**

The coyotes are a threat to the sheep farmer, but through his son's intervention, the human family reaches a compromise with the family of wild dogs. A beautiful story.

***Baby Whale's Journey*, by Jonathan London. 1999. San Francisco: Chronicle.**

This storybook shows how a baby whale learns to take its place among other ocean life, including managing a threat to its mother from a giant squid.

\* ***Box Turtle at Long Pond*, by William T. George. 1989. New York: Greenwillow.**

A box turtle spends all day trying to find food, sometimes being at odds with other animals who take his food or try to make him their food.

\* ***Cactus Hotel*, by Brenda Guiberson. 1991. New York: Henry Holt.**

The life cycle of a giant saguaro cactus makes a compelling story that traces its 200-year life sheltering numerous desert animals and taking its place in the desert ecosystem. With beautiful drawings, this heartwarming story takes the reader from the sprouting of the cactus through its life and death and shows how even after death it continues to be a resource for the desert animals.

***Compost! Growing Gardens from Your Garbage*, by Linda Glaser. 1996. Brookfield, CT: Millbrook.**

In pleasant drawings the book shows how to turn your kitchen garbage into compost that enriches your soil. The book conveys the process of decomposition and garbage turning into rich soil, and shows the spreading compost, planting, and harvesting of new vegetables.

***Crocodile: Disappearing Dragon*, by Jonathan London. 2001. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.**

In fine illustrations, the book documents what is threatened by the crocodile and what threatens it.

***Crunch Munch*, by Jonathan London. 2001. New York: Harcourt.**

This picture book shows a variety of animals and what they eat.

***The Dandelion Seed*, by Joseph Anthony. 1997. Nevada City, CA: Dawn.**

A dandelion seed is frightened to find itself all alone as fall arrives. A puff of wind carries it over the city to the sea, then to a farm where it is buried in winter snow. In spring a new dandelion grows. Its leaves feed deer and rabbits and its nectar is used by bees and butterflies. A child picks it and blows its seeds, and the cycle starts again. The paintings are realistic and very beautiful.

***Deforestation*, by Caleb Owens. 1999. New York: Grolier.**

With excellent illustrations this book makes clear the perils of cutting too many trees. It should be a "must read" to inspire children's love of trees and understanding of their importance.

***Drip! Drop! How Water Gets to Your Tap*, by Barbara Seuling. 2000. New York: Holiday House.**

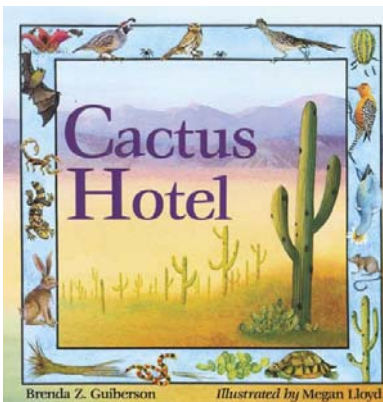
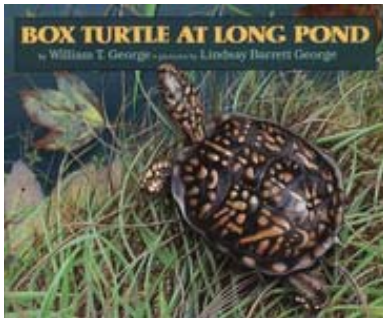
In clear cartoon images this comprehensive but simple book traces water from its sources, including the rain cycle, into our homes, and through the purification process. The book includes three easy-to-do experiments with water.

***Each Living Thing*, by Joanne Ryder. 2000. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace.**

The book celebrates the creatures of the earth, from spiders dangling in their webs to owls hooting and hunting out of sight, and asks us to respect and take care of them.

***The Earth and I*, by Frank Asch. 1994. San Diego: Gulliver.**

A child explains how he and the Earth dance and sing together and take turns listening to each other.



***Earth Day*, by Nancy I. Sanders. 2003. New York: Scholastic.**

This book thoroughly, but simply, explains the history and meaning of Earth Day. To its credit, and unlike some other books on Earth Day, this book makes it clear that we should follow environmentally friendly practices every day.



***Energy from the Sun*, by Allan Fowler. 1997. New York: Grolier.**

The book provides a comprehensive explanation in simple language and through clear, quality illustrations of how the sun provides energy for *everything*, from to plant growth to human activity to machines.

**\* *The Essential Goldfish*, by Ian Dunbar. 1996. New York: Howell.**

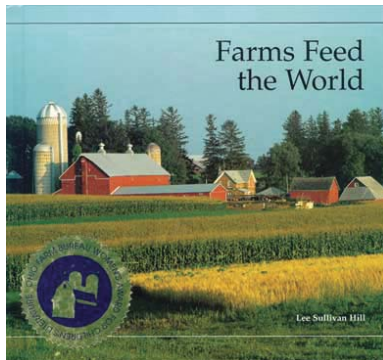
This work is a good resource on goldfish, with excellent photographs.

**\* *Fancy Goldfish: A Complete Guide to Care and Collecting*, by Erik Johnson. 2001. New York: Weatherhill.**

The photographs of unusual goldfish in this book are not to be believed and will pique every child's curiosity.

***Farms Feed the World*, by Lee Sullivan Hill. 1997. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda.**

This book shows farms that grow plants, sheep, cattle, fish, and even seaweed. The foods that come from the farms are shown in the grocery store.



***Fishing at Long Pond*, by William T George. 1991. New York: Greenwillow.**

Katie and her grandfather go fishing and find all manner of animals living in the water.

***Gas*, by Brian Cook. 1981. New York: Watts.**

The text is too advanced for preschoolers, but the images are clear and thought provoking. The book will help preschoolers trace the path of gas from discovery and production to end user.

***The Goldfish: An Owner's Guide to a Happy Healthy Pet*, by Carlo DeVito. 1996. New York: Wiley.**

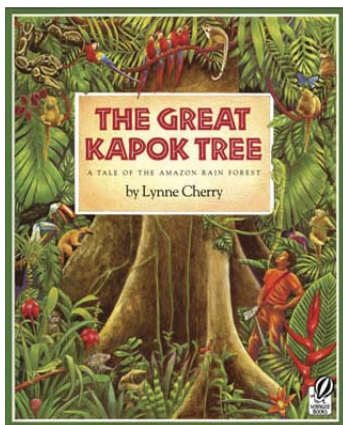
This is a basic guide to caring for a goldfish, including sections on its health and setting up its environment.

***Good Enough to Eat*, by Lizzy Rockwell. 1999. HarperCollins.**

This book would be a good reference to have in the classroom and to use when eating different foods. It shows the benefits of carbohydrates, protein, fat, water, vitamins, and minerals in simple text and explains the relation between food and humans' energy.

**\* *The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest*, by Lynne Cherry. 2000. New York: Harcourt.**

The story describes how the animals that live in a kapok tree plead to have it spared from being cut.



***The Grizzly Bear with the Golden Ears*, by Jean Craighead George. 1982. New York: Harper & Row.**

Mamma bear rules the forest because she has a cub and is able to demand some of the fish caught by every other bear. She meets her match in a man and almost loses her cub.

***How Things Work*, by Ian Graham. 1953. New York: Time-Life Books.**

Preschoolers can look at the pictures; teachers will have to help with the text. Images relevant to environmental education are in sections on wind power, water, transmitting power, and harnessing the sun.

***I Can Be a Farmer*, by Kathy Henderson. 1989. Chicago: Children's Press.**

Most of the excellent photos in this book show people at work on farms of all kinds. Photos include farm machines and computers used on farms.

***If You Were a Farmer*, by Virginia Schomp. 2001. Tarrytown, NY: Cavendish.**

The simple, clear text of this book covers many aspects of farming not shown in other books, such as dangers to crops and the positive and negative aspects of using chemicals.

***In the Woods: Who's Been Here?* by Lindsay Barrett George. 1995. New York: Greenwillow.**

Realistic illustrations show various traces of the animals that have been in the woods.

***Inch by Inch: The Garden Song*, by David Mallet. 1995. New York: Harper Collins.**

Inch by inch, row by row a child grows a garden with the help of the rain and the earth. The story is based on a popular folksong (score included).

***Just a Dream*, by Chris Van Allsburg. 1990. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.**

Walter, who throws his trash on the sidewalk and spurns his friend's birthday gift of a tree to plant, wants to live in the future until he goes to bed one night and sees what life would be like with more smog, bigger highways, no fish or trees, a hotel on Mount Everest, and other changes. After this he begins to sort trash, plant trees, care for the environment, and then dreams of a future in which trees grow and humans use muscle power as an energy source to mow lawns.

***The Little Engine That Could*, by Watty Piper. 1930. New York: Platt & Munk.**

This story of an engine that uses every ounce of energy to bring children their toys has been a classic for decades, and probably always will be. Reading it is a great way to start a conversation about energy with children.

***The Little House*, by Virginia Lee Burton. 1942. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.**

A house in a lovely countryside is swamped as the city encroaches, little by little. This classic has been a favorite for over 60 years.

***Marvin Wanted More*, by Joseph Theobald. 2003. London: Bloomsbury Children's.**

Marvin the sheep eats and eats until he realizes that his consumption leaves the world a much less happy place.

***The Meat and Protein Group*, by Helen Frost. 2000. Mankato, MN: Capstone.**

This short book has wonderful photos of many foods that supply protein, including meat. (Note: The series by the same author and illustrator covers each of the other food groups in separate books: vegetables, fruit, grain, and dairy.)

***Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*, by Virginia Lee Burton. 1939. New York: Houghton Mifflin.**

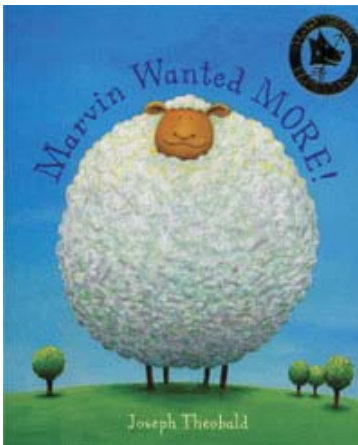
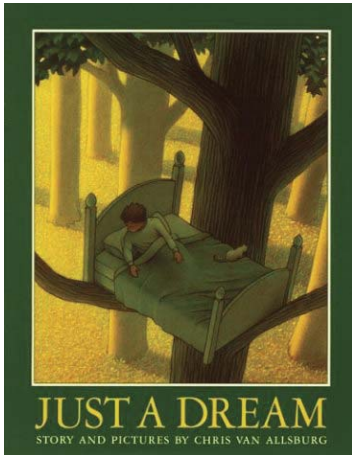
Another classic story shows energy at work. The illustrations on the inside covers provide clear pictures of steam shovels and references to the coal-fired engine to give today's children a close-up of this now largely replaced source of energy.

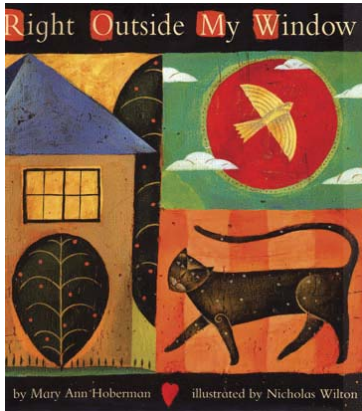
**\* *Nature's Green Umbrella*, by Gail Gibbons. 1994. New York: HarperCollins.**

This beautifully illustrated book describes life in a rain forest.

***On the Day You Were Born*, by Debra Frasier. 1991. New York: Harcourt.**

In colorful collage prints, the author portrays the beauty of all the natural forces on the planet and in our solar system—the wind, the oceans, the stars and much more—on the day a baby is born. The text personalizes the book by using the pronoun *you*.





***On the Riverbank*, by Charles Temple. 1992. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.**

The book shows many things different animals can find to eat along a riverbank.

\* ***Owl Lake*, by Keizaburo Tejima. 1983. New York: Philomel.**

In magnificent wood cuts, the author shows how an owl catches a fish.

***Right Outside My Window*, by Mary Ann Hoberman. 2002. New York: Mondo.**

While looking outside the window, a child sees something new each day throughout the seasons.

\* ***A River Ran Wild: An Environmental History*, by Lynne Cherry. 1992. New York: Harcourt Brace.**

This true story gives the history of the Nashua River in New England from its pristine precolonial days, through the industrial revolution, into the twentieth century as it became incredibly polluted, to its eventual restoration. The book is beautifully illustrated and the story is gripping and sensitively told.

***Simple Machines*, by Allan Fowler. 2001. New York: Grolier.**

This book, which is short enough for quick classroom reading, uses photographs to clearly illustrate basic machines. The photos are of common things found in homes and many include children.

***Swimmy*, by Leo Lionni. 1968. New York: Knopf.**

One odd black fish in a school of red fish finds himself alone when a huge fish swallows his entire school. He joins another school and organizes them to swim in a group while he forms the eye; this protects the school from being devoured. The endnotes describe some fish habitats and habits and explain that some species actually do swim in formation to ward off predators.

***Talk about Water*, by Angela Webb. 1986. New York: Watts.**

This book begins with excellent photographs of rain trickling down a window pane, then down a hillside. It covers the water cycle and water turning into steam or ice and also includes a few simple experiments.

\* ***Understanding Freshwater Fish*, by Dick Mills. 2001. Surrey, UK: Interpet.**

With exceptional illustrations, including art depicting settings that may have been used for early pet fish, the author connects the natural habitats of freshwater fish to their life in aquaria.

***What If Everybody Did?* by Trina Johns. 2003. Atlanta: Atlanta Publications.**

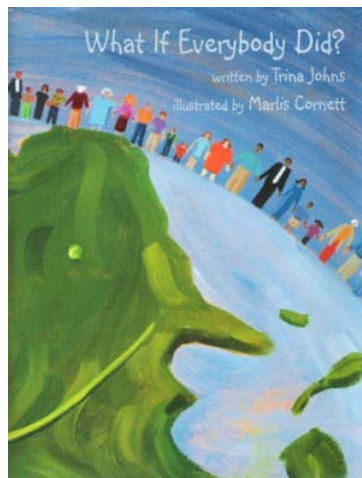
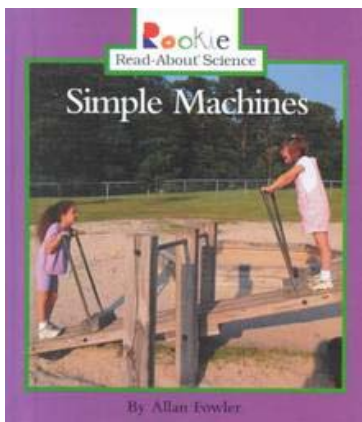
The author portrays environmentally unfriendly acts like dropping a candy wrapper, crushing tiny wildflowers underfoot, and cutting down trees, and shows what the sidewalks and woodlands would look like if everybody did these things. The text is clear, but the illustrations are not; the teacher may need to explain them.

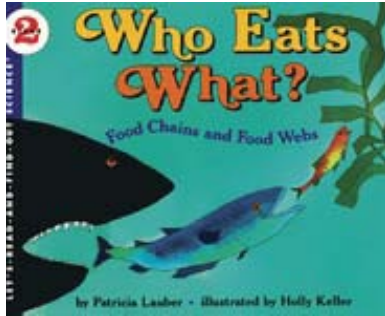
***Where Does the Garbage Go?* by Paul Showers. 1974. New York: HarperCollins.**

Through illustrations and clear, direct language, this book provides excellent ideas for recycling, and also touches on the city dump, trash turning up on beaches, and methods of landfill. It can be a good reference book for a classroom.

\* ***Where the River Begins*, by Thomas Locker. 1984. New York: Dial.**

On a trip with grandpa, two brothers find the source of the river that runs by their home. The book contains fine color paintings of a river environment over its long course.





***Who Eats What*, by Patricia Lauber. 1995. New York: HarperCollins.**

This book describes food chains and food webs. A teacher may have to “tell” more than read because the text is sometimes complex. Still, the excellent pictures are almost self-explanatory and will capture young children’s imagination about a fascinating natural phenomenon. Because of the gruesome aspect of bigger fish eating littler ones, it should become a favorite! (The gruesome aspects are handled honestly but very gently.)

***Who Is the World For?* by Tom Pow. 2000. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.**

When asked by their young, various animal parents describe the world from their perspective, including a father talking to his young son.

***Who Keeps the Water Clean? Ms. Schindler!* by Jill D. Duvall. 1997. New York: Grolier.**

Photographs portray the work of an employee responsible for monitoring water quality at a waste-water treatment plant. The easy-to-follow text gives a clear depiction of this vital work that is too often taken for granted.

**“Wind on the hill,” by A.A. Milne. 1927. In *Now We Are Six*. New York: Dutton.**

Milne’s poetry is rarely equaled. This short poem ends with the lines “But where the wind comes from *Nobody* knows.” It is bound to excite children’s sense of wonder about the wind, and is a classic poem that every child should hear.

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