

## Teacher notes for activity: Making choices

### Resources for this activity

- Powerpoint slides to support activity, including printable activity frames (poster template and energy diary), available on [www.ashdenawards.org/schools/activities](http://www.ashdenawards.org/schools/activities).
- 5-minute Ashden Awards films, available on [www.ashdenawards.org/schools/films](http://www.ashdenawards.org/schools/films):
  - **Seaton Primary School, UK:** generating renewable electricity from a photovoltaic array and wind turbine, and solar water-heating for the swimming pool.
  - **Eastchurch Primary School, UK:** developing a culture of 'Good Energy Housekeeping', led by classroom Energy Monitors, and an 'E-team' of Year 4 pupils.
  - **Cassop Primary School, UK:** using wind and solar electricity, and wood-fuelled heating, and integrating the understanding gained into the curriculum and ethos of the school.
  - **CRT/N, Nepal:** improving traditional water mills so that they can grind grain more quickly, and run other equipment as well.

### Curriculum areas and topics

- Main activity: Science, Geography, Education for sustainable development (ESD), English, Citizenship.
- Further activities: Science, Citizenship, Geography, English, ESD, Religious education (RE), Mathematics, Information and computer technology (ICT), Art and design.
- Links to topics: Myself, Homes, Light, Electricity.

### Suitability

- Key Stage One and lower Key Stage Two – age approximately 5 to 9 years.
- Main activity needs approximately one lesson.
- The detailed objectives and approach can be adapted for use with different age groups.

### Grouping

- Whole class for discussion and introduction.
- Individual, paired or group work for writing choices.
- Mixed ability pairs – pupils support each other with writing and discussion.
- Ability groupings – less able have support from teaching assistant and/or picture prompts and additional vocabulary. More able work independently and complete the extension activity.

## Background

We all have the freedom to make some choices in our everyday lives and this applies to children too. When we recognise this, we can begin to take responsibility for our actions. In addition, we all have varying degrees of power to affect what others do – for good or bad, whether by modelling, coercing or informing. Thinking about our potential in this way is the beginning of citizenship and helps to raise confidence and self esteem.

This activity is to enable young pupils to realise that they do have the power to make certain choices and that they are participants in daily life rather than travellers through it. The focus for this activity is the careful use of energy, although it starts by identifying a range of things that involve decisions in our everyday lives.

## Prior knowledge

It is best if pupils have some understanding of:

- What energy is.
- Why we need energy and what we need it for.
- Where energy comes from.

See the ‘What is energy?’ activity for suggestions on introducing these ideas if needed. The Powerpoint and Teacher notes are available on [www.ashdenawards.org/schools/activities](http://www.ashdenawards.org/schools/activities).

## Purpose of the activity

- To know that we have to make choices in our everyday lives
- To learn how to think carefully about the choices we make so that we can use energy wisely.

## How to use the resources

### Powerpoint slides

Introduce the activity and objectives and discuss what a ‘choice’ is. Use the picture of a pupil to support a brainstorm about choices we can make in our everyday lives. The text alongside the image of the pupil is there to prompt thinking. For example, when they get home from school pupils may be able to choose whether to go outside and play, watch television, play on the computer, etc. Some pupils will say that their mum or dad chooses everything for them, but there will be always be some choices that they can make. It is important to help pupils to recognise that they have this power and to discuss the skills needed to make important decisions about our everyday lives.

Direct the discussion to careful energy use. All pupils will have a light switch in their bedroom – do they always switch it off when they leave the room? If they are using a computer or television, do they turn it off, put it on standby, or just leave it on when they have their tea? It is important to discuss and remind pupils of the importance of using energy as carefully as possible and why leaving appliances on standby is very wasteful.

Having helped pupils to recognise that they can choose to do certain things that can help the environment, use the images on the next slide to prompt thinking about good and bad actions that we can choose to do. These include switching lights off; turning televisions off rather than leaving them on standby and closing doors when we leave the room or go out to play at school.

Using the car for short journeys is a choice where pupils may think that they have no input, but this is worth exploring. How do pupils get to school and why do they choose that method? Do they live close by, but have to drive because they don't get up early enough? Do they moan to parents that it is too far to walk? This kind of discussion is useful to help children make connections between attitudes, situations and actions and helps to develop reasoning skills.

### **Poster template**

Finally, show the poster template and explain that pupils can make their own poster to broadcast some key choices that they want to make, in order to use energy wisely in their school. The poster can be left for some pupils to copy as a format using blank paper, or the next slide is suitable for printing out and photocopying as a support frame.

Alternatively, download the poster template for older pupils and let them use the following techniques to produce their own 'Choice' poster:

- Insert images (to put their own picture in).
- Format background.
- Use text boxes (use these to write their own 'choice' comments).
- Save and print document.

### **Film**

Watch and discuss one or more of the 5-minute Ashden Awards films (details on page 1).

### **Further activities**

- 1) Discuss and compile a list of reasons that it is important to use energy wisely. Key ideas to explore could include:
  - the costs, in terms of how much money our families and schools pay for energy.
  - the costs to the environment in terms of pollution and global warming from using coal, gas and oil.

Discuss how these sources of energy will soon run out and how science and technology provide ways to use energy in cleaner ways. You could support this by watching the Eastchurch School and Cassop School films if you have not already seen them.

#### **Science, Citizenship, Geography**

- 2) Use the framework provided on the Powerpoint to keep a diary of energy use throughout the day. Pupils could complete this during a school day, or use the alternative framework to take home and complete as homework. What did you find out? What choices did you make? Which choices do you think were good ones?

#### **Citizenship, Science, English**

3) The most important follow up is to ensure that the energy choices that pupils feel they can make in school are supported and carried out. This means a whole class ethos to support majority decisions: is your white board switched off rather than left on standby at lunch-time? Do you have a pupil chosen to check that lights and computers are off when the class leaves the classroom? You could elect classroom energy monitors or set up a whole-school Energy team. There are more suggestions for this in the 'I want to be in the Energy team' activity: the Powerpoint and Teacher notes are available on [www.ashdenawards.org/schools/activities](http://www.ashdenawards.org/schools/activities).

**Citizenship, ESD**

4) Use this work as the basis of a class presentation or assembly about choices.

**Citizenship, RE**

5) Make pictograms and graphs of the most popular choices in the class. What do the class think is the most important or effective choice and why?

**Mathematics**

6) Use the top four choices and ask pupils to rank them in order of effectiveness for saving energy in the classroom or the whole school. Use this to design an experiment to test and find the answer. How could you find out? What would you need to measure?

**Science, Mathematics**

7) Take digital images of classroom appliances and use them to design and make 'switch it off' posters. Print and laminate and use in class and around the school.

**ICT, Art and design**

8) Design a letter to parents and/or article of 'best tips' for the school web site. Monitor energy use before and after making choices in the classroom and inform the wider community about positive action. There are more suggestions for this in the 'Energising the Community' activity: the Powerpoint and Teacher notes are available on

[www.ashdenawards.org/schools/activities](http://www.ashdenawards.org/schools/activities)

**Citizenship, English**

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