

The Day The Air Pollution Gremlins Came To Town



Target Grade Levels

Second - Fourth

Time

Two or three class periods, depending on how elaborately students perform the play

Materials

- play scripts for each student

Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

- Language Arts:
 - Communicate data and information in appropriate oral form;
 - Monitor their understanding of a spoken message and appropriately seek clarification;
 - Use a thesaurus, synonym finder, dictionary, and software to clarify meanings and usage; and
 - Interpret speaker's messages (both verbal and nonverbal). Purposes and perspectives.

Overview

Students will learn what causes air pollution through their performance of the Air Pollution Gremlins play. Students will also learn the health hazards that air pollution creates.

Background Information

There are hundreds of pollutants that float around in the air that we breathe. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has established air quality standards for six of these pollutants: ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, particle pollution, sulfur dioxide, and lead. These air quality standards are designed to protect the health and welfare of people, plants, and animals, and to protect buildings, monuments, water resources, etc.

Procedure

1) Vocabulary

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| a) sulfur dioxide | d) particulate matter |
| b) nitrogen oxide | e) carbon monoxide |
| c) ozone | f) lead |

2) Activities

- a) Assign the following characters to students:
 - i) Christina
 - ii) Steven
 - iii) The Air Pollution Gremlins:
 - (1) Smelly Sulfur Dioxide
 - (2) Nasty Nitrogen Oxide
 - (3) Odious Ozone

(4) Pesky Particulate

(5) Cranky Carbon Monoxide

(6) Lumpy Lead

iv) The Gremlins may be cast singularly or as a group of actors. Note: Other responsibilities can be assigned, such as direction, prop production, costume design, and/or scene changes.

b) Setting

Christina and Steven are sitting in a living room with the television, radio, fan, and three or four lights on. They are watching a television show.

c) Perform the play.

Adapted from: "The Day the Air Pollution Gremlins Came to Town" *Texas Commission on Environmental Quality*. www.tnrcc.state.tx.us/air/monops/lessons/lesson_plans.html.

Reference: The Air Pollution Gremlins were created by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Acknowledgment: Play written by Laura Venegas, University of Texas at El Paso TES Course, 1995.

The Day The Air Pollution Gremlins Came To Town

- Christina:** This is my favorite show!
- Steven:** Yeah, I just love the Power Rangers. The song that's playing on the radio right now is pretty cool too. It goes along with the action on the TV.
- Christina:** *(She gets up and looks outside the window)* Hey, Steven look at that! *(Points to the sky)*
- Steven:** Wow! I wonder what it is? Let's go outside and get a better look.
- Steven and Christina go outside. A large cloud comes closer to them. Underneath or behind the cloud are the Air Pollution Gremlins. The cloud stops right in front of Steven and Christina. Immediately, the Gremlins start jumping around and making faces at the audience and Christina and Steven.*
- Steven:** Who are you?
- Smelly Sulfur Dioxide:** We are the Air Pollution Gremlins. We've come to take over your town.
- Christina:** Why would you want to do that? Only nice people live around here.
- Pesky Particulate:** You may be nice people, but nobody seems to care about the air in this town. So, it looks like a good place to live. *(sneer)*
- Steven:** I notice each of you has a different name. Why is that? Aren't you guys all the same?
- Cranky Carbon Monoxide:** We have different names because we come from different sources and cause different problems.
- David & Christina:** Oh No!
- Cranky Carbon Monoxide:** I'm Cranky Carbon Monoxide. I mostly come from car exhaust. I like to make people dizzy and give them headaches. *(twists hands menacingly)*

Smelly Sulfur Dioxide: I'm Smelly Sulfur Dioxide. I come from smokestacks of power plants and industries. I can hurt your eyes, noses, and lungs. I can even eat away iron and steel. I like to make the air look hazy. *(lunges at audience)*

Nasty Nitrogen Dioxide: I'm Nasty Nitrogen Dioxide. I have a yellow-brown color and I come from cars, electric power plants, and other large industries. I can make the air brown and hazy. I like to hurt lungs, plants, and metals. *(makes an evil laugh)*

Lumpy Lead: I'm Lumpy Lead. I can contaminate the air, food, and water. Also, I am found in some old paints. I'm very harmful to children and fish. *(does a little dance)*

Odious Ozone: I'm Odious Ozone. I'm invisible by myself, but when I get together with my friends, I can help form smog. I can make it hard to breathe. *(lunges at audience)*

Pesky Particulate: I'm Pesky Particulate. I live in the air and like to travel on the wind. I make things dirty and I can carry harmful chemicals into your lungs as well. *(makes a very loud and evil laugh)*

Christina: All of you sound so terrible! We don't want you to live around here.

Odious Ozone: You make it easy for us by wasting electricity and asking your parents to drive you everywhere you want to go!

Steven: You mean that just because we waste electricity and ride around a lot in the car, you guys are here to stay?

Nasty Nitrogen Dioxide: Bingo! Thank you for the invitation to live in your town!

Christina: Well from now on, you're not invited to our town. I'm not wasting electricity anymore and I'm going to walk or ride my bike if I want to go somewhere nearby.

Steven: Yeah! *(firmly)* We're starting right now!

Steven and Christina rush inside and turn off all the lights and appliances they had left on.

Gremlins: OH NO! We can't live in this town if no one is wasting energy! This doesn't seem like a very good place to live after all.

Lumpy Lead: I'm sure we can find another town where people are wasting energy. C'mon, let's go! The Gremlins leave in their cloud.

Christina: What do you want to do now?

Steven: Let's go outside and ride our bikes in the fresh, clean air.

Christina: I hope those Gremlins don't come back.

Steven: They won't come back as long as we continue to use energy wisely.

The End