

Litter Prevention

Grade Level: Grades K-5

Concepts Taught:

Prevention of litter, social responsibility, choice and consequence

Activity Time(s):

20-30 minutes

Unit Essential Questions:

- What is litter?
- What causes litter?
- What are the consequences of littering?
- How can I teach others not to litter?

**NC CORE/Essential Standards:
Kindergarten—Grade 5 Standards:**

Reading Standards— Key Ideas & Details #1

Craft & Structure #6

Speaking and Listening Standards #1, 2, 3

Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas #6



Unit Objectives:

Students will listen and respond to a book read-aloud on litter. They will recognize that littering is a choice and has environmental and legal consequences.

Materials:

Book: *The Wartville Wizard* by Don Madden; Aladdin Books, Macmillan Publishing Company; 1993.

ISBN#978-0-689-71667-6

2 child-sized felt vests
miscellaneous “trash” items from the story (with Velcro attached)

Background Information:

By definition, litter is any piece of misplaced solid waste that can range from tiny bits of paper to larger objects such as automobiles. Litter is caused by individuals tossing an object outside on the ground, debris that falls from the back of an unsecured truck load or through any other means. Littering can be accidental or intentional, however, most always results from an individual’s behavior. Studies have shown that the more litter is found along roadways will create an environment that fosters more litter. Tobacco products such as cigarette butts, paper, and plastic are the most common items found along roadways. Litter can be controlled through volunteer clean-up activities, easy access to trash receptacles and recycling, as well as education.

Preparation:

Story background: This story takes place in the town of Wartville. Wartville citizens are illegally dumping their trash and litter: soda bottles under flowers, juice cans by mailboxes, and candy wrappers and papers on the roadside. One man continues to clean the town litter, until he realizes he has the power to get rid of all the litter forever. He magically sends each piece of litter back to the person who dropped it where the item sticks permanently to that person. The town then has a meeting to decide how to handle the problem.

***Note: a beer can, cigar, and cigarette butts are items that are mentioned in the story and may require adult discretion.

Activity:

1. Choose 2 children to stand in front of the class and wear the felt vests. As the story is read aloud to the students, have the other children in the class stick pieces of trash on the vests. Remind students to imagine what it would feel like to have their own trash/litter stuck to them.

2. Pause to ask these questions:

How did the old man feel when he saw the trash along the road?

What did the old man decide to do with each piece of trash?

What were some of the items that became stuck to the town people?

Were grown-ups the only ones who were tossing out litter?

Who first discovered that the old man had magical powers over trash?

Which character had the most litter attached to his body?

In the end, what did the citizens of Wartville decide to do with their litter problem?

Application Questions:

Where do you often see litter around your neighborhood or while in the car?

When you go to the movie theatre is it considered litter if you leave your drink in the chair holder or leave popcorn tubs on the floor?

Extensions/Modifications:

- Once the story is read and the vests are covered in litter have students remove the items and place them into categories such as "Recycled Item", "Reusable Item", "Trash only".
- Students can create their own unique trash item to "stick" to a large classroom-sized vest for a bulletin board.
- Create a piece of art from used food wrappers/packaging.
- Students can hold a school clean-up event to collect trash from around the school/neighborhood. Visit <http://www.wakegov.com/recycling/schools> to request a free litter clean-up kit.