

Introduction to Sustainability

Discussion Questions

1. When you hear the word sustainability, what comes to mind?
2. What resources are available in your environment? Which are renewable? Which are non-renewable?
3. What environmental issues are present in your community?
4. What environmental issues are important to you?
5. Why would someone make art about the environment?

Key Terms

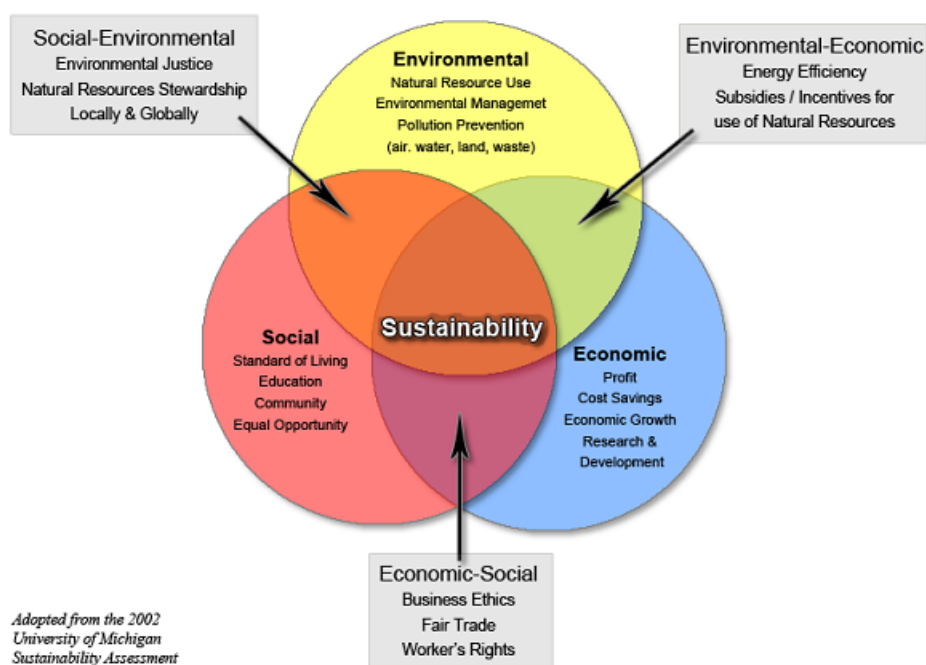
Environment: the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates.

Non-renewable resources: a natural resource that cannot be quickly replaced by natural means at a pace to keep up with use. Coal, gas, and oil are all examples of non-renewable resources.

Renewable resources: a natural resource, which can be replaced quickly and naturally. Sunlight, wind, and water are all examples of renewable resources.

Sustainability: meeting our own needs without limiting the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The Three Spheres of Sustainability



Pillars of Sustainability: Factors that need to be considered and balanced in order to make sustainable decisions.

Social Sustainability: The ability of a society to achieve a good social wellbeing. This includes good quality of life, equal opportunities, and access to education.

Environmental Sustainability: The ability to use our natural resources, such as materials, energy fuels, land, water, etc. at a sustainable rate.

Economic Sustainability: The ability to use resources efficiently and responsibly so that the economy is benefitted. This includes high rates of employment and the ability for consumers to have access to resources.

Additional Information

- This tool created by Sustain Dane allows you to visualize the state of economic, environmental and social sustainability in Dane county.
<http://sustainabilitysnapshot.com/>
- This page on the Sustain Dane website looks at past and current sustainability initiatives within Dane county.
<https://sustaindane.org/resources-accelerate-sustainability/>
- This page from Pennsylvania State University provides a list of teaching resources and lesson plans for teaching about sustainability.
<https://cgs.la.psu.edu/teaching-resources/k-12-resources-1/teaching-sustainability-resources-for-educators>
- This page from Arizona State University provides a variety of lesson plans around the theme of sustainability. The lesson plans target grades 6-9 but include modifications to make them applicable to a younger audience.
<https://sustainability.asu.edu/sustainabilitysolutions/programs/teachersacademy/teacher-resources/>
- This page from Vanderbilt University provides teacher tips on teaching sustainability and teaching with ecological footprints.
<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-sustainability/>

Now that you have explored the topic of sustainability in your classroom, use the lesson plans to take a closer look at artwork from the Chazen Museum of Art and make connections to sustainability.

Close-Looking Prompts

1. **See, Think, Wonder**—To encourage students to make careful and thoughtful observations, ask students the following questions: What do you see? What do you think about that? What does it make you wonder? The prompt works well in a group discussion but you may want to ask students to try the routine individually on paper or in their heads before sharing out as a class. Student responses to the questions can be written down and recorded so that a class chart of observations, interpretations, and wonderings are listed for all to see and return to during the course of study.
2. **Looking 10x2**—To help students look more slowly and find details, ask students to look at a work of art for 30 seconds and make a list of 10 things they have observed. Then ask them to look at the artwork again and come up with a list of 10 new things. Ask pairs of students to share their lists after both looking sessions to notice what their partners saw. If a list of 10 observations seems too long, start with just three to five things to notice each time.
3. **What makes you say that?**—To encourage students to interpret a work of art, ask students: What is going on? and What makes you say that? The questions encourage students to describe what they are seeing, make an interpretation and support their claims using evidence from the artwork. This prompt works best as a group discussion.

These close-looking prompts come from Project Zero's Artful Thinking Routines. More information about these prompts and others can be found at <https://pz.harvard.edu/projects/artful-thinking>.