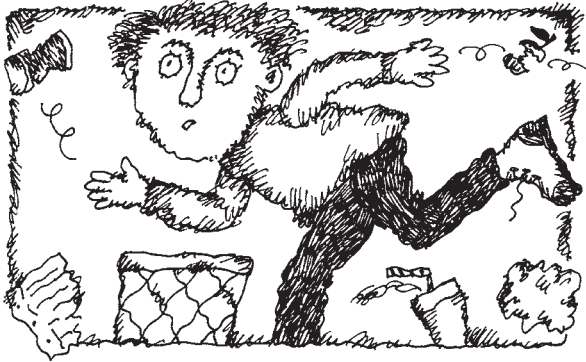


An Earth Day Carol

Teaching Notes



Background

The first Earth Day was celebrated on April 22, 1970. Over the years, it has been commemorated in ways large and small. At the heart of any Earth Day observance is the knowledge that we must all work together to save our planet. Despite all of the gains since that first Earth Day, about one-third of the planet's biodiversity has been lost; forest cover is disappearing at a rate of about 6.5% per decade; and the world's population, currently about 6.75 billion, has nearly doubled, further taxing the planet's natural resources and adding to the problem of global warming. Earth Day is recognized as being needed now more than ever.

Extension Activities

Green Newsletter

Do an environmental audit of your school. Compile a list of things that students, teachers, and other school staff are already doing to help save the earth. Then make a list of actions that still need to be taken: Is litter being collected? Is there a lunchroom recycling

program in place? Is water being conserved? Suggest that students work together to write up their findings and suggestions for future action. Compile their work into an environmental school newsletter and circulate it to all the classes (or deliver it by e-mail). The letter should applaud all efforts to date, and challenge everyone in the school to do even more.

Changes, Changes

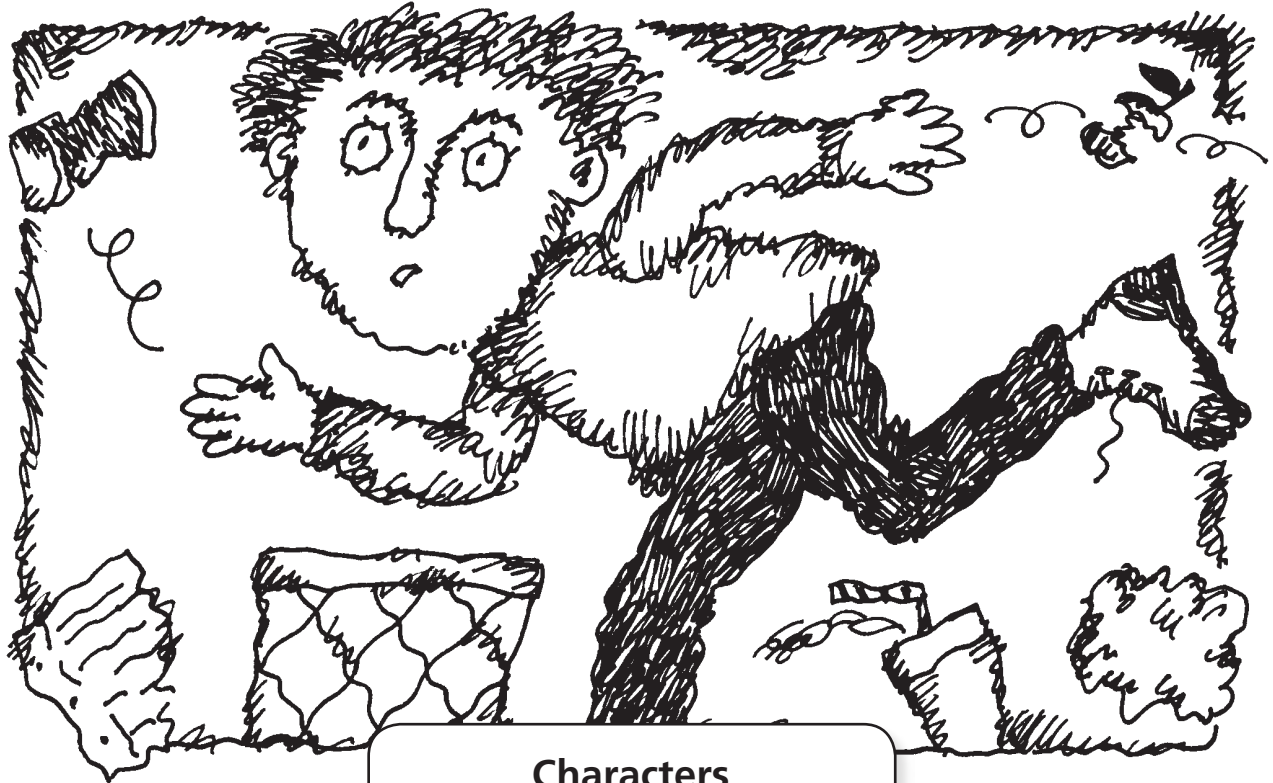
Have students interview older adult family members to discover how their immediate environment was different when they were children. Develop a list of interview questions for the interviewees to answer, such as:

- Did you throw away as much garbage as we do now?
- How did you store food to keep it fresh?
- What happened when children outgrew clothing?
- How do you think the environment has changed over the years?
- What would you suggest to solve problems with the environment today?

Send a copy of the question list home with each child (or by e-mail), along with directions asking the interviewees to answer the questions and fill in their name and area they lived as a child, as well as the time period during which they lived there. Have students share the results of the interviews in class. What kinds of environmental changes for the better or worse have occurred? What work still needs to be done?

An Earth Day Carol

by Paula Thomas



Characters

- Narrator
- Ebenezer Litterbug
- Children 1-8
- Ghost of Earth Day Past
- Native American Boy
- Native American Girl
- Ghost of Earth Day Present
- Speaker
- Ghost of Earth Day Future

Act 1

Narrator: It was the day before Earth Day
And all through the town
No litter was anywhere,
Not uptown or down.

**Ebenezer
Litterbug:** *[walking along, kicking a can, garbage is hanging out of his pocket.]* Bah, Earth Day!

Child 1: Hey! Ebenezer Litterbug! Tomorrow is Earth Day.
The whole town has been cleaning for weeks.
Pick up your garbage!

**Ebenezer
Litterbug:** Mind your own beeswax! What do we pay street
cleaners for?

Child 2: Looking after the environment is everybody's
business, Ebenezer. That is what Earth Day is
all about.

Ebenezer: Earth Day! Bah, Earth Day!

[Both children throw their hands up in frustration and walk off in opposite directions.]

Act 2

Ebenezer's bedroom.

Narrator: Ebenezer Litterbug lay asleep in his bed
Sorry fellow, there was much to dread.

Ghost of Earth Day Past: *[carries a leafy tree branch to Ebenezer's bed, leans over and taps his shoulder] Rise and shine, Ebenezer baby!*

Ebenezer: *[sitting up with a start, rubbing his eyes] Who are you?*

Ghost of Earth Day Past: I am the Ghost of Earth Day Past. You are making a mess of the Earth. You need a lesson. Come!

[Ebenezer gets out of bed and follows the Ghost to a woodland area.]

Ebenezer: Where are we? This is awesome, clean and green!

Ghost of Earth Day Past: We are in America in 1492. This is how our country looked before wasting and polluting became the ways of the land.

[Native American boy and girl walk past and stop.]

Native American

Boy: Father says we must respect the earth.

Native American

Girl: If we treat her well she will reward us with food and all that is good.

[Boy and girl exit.]

Ghost of Earth Day Past: All things here were pure and clean because the people took care of the earth. We must leave now.

[Ghost leads Ebenezer back to his bedroom.]

Ghost of Earth Day Past: Wait for the next ghost. See you around Ebenezer buddy!

Ebenezer: *[waving]* Bye!

[Ebenezer lays down and the ghost exits.]

Act 3

Ebenezer's bedroom.

Narrator: Ebenezer was tossing
And turning in bed
Wondering: *Where's the next ghost?*
What lies ahead?

Ghost of Earth Day Present: *[walks to Ebenezer's bed, leans over, and takes the covers off]* Wake up sleepyhead. We've got to make tracks out of here. *[He beckons with his finger to follow quickly to a recycling center.]*

Ebenezer: Who are you?

Ghost of Earth Day Present: I'm the Ghost of Earth Day Present. Follow me.

[The two walk together to a recycling center.]

Ebenezer: Why are we here?

Ghost of Earth Day Present: Look, listen, and learn.

[A group of children are standing as a speaker is talking.]

Speaker: The first Earth Day was on April 22, 1970. Earth Day is a day to enjoy our planet, learn about our planet, and help our planet. What can you do to help the earth?

Child 3: Don't throw out your cans, glass, plastics, or papers. Recycle!

Child 4: Throw your garbage in a trash bin. Don't litter!

Child 5: Don't waste water. Fix leaky faucets. Turn the water off while you're brushing your teeth.

Child 6: Walk, use the bus, or carpool. Energy is precious. Turn off lights and turn the heat down. Use it, and we'll all lose it!

Child 7: Reuse your shopping bags, plastics, and aluminum foil. Always try to use things more than once.

Child 8: Recycle your toys, books, and clothes. Give them to children who need them.

Ebenezer: These kids really think that they can make a difference.

Ghost of Earth Day Present: *[walking back to Ebenezer's bedroom]* You had better hope so, Ebenezer. We are all depending on it. The next ghost will come to show you why.

Act 4

Ebenezer's bedroom.

Narrator: Ebenezer waited.
Could he not guess?
He was about to see
One huge mess!

[Ghost of Earth Day Future goes to Ebenezer's bed, taps his shoulder and walks away.]

Ebenezer: Hey, wait! Who are you? *[He jumps up and runs after the Ghost to a vast wasteland. They stop to look around.]*

Ghost of Earth Day Future: I am the Ghost of Earth Day Future. I live here where there are no living things, only garbage and pollution.

Ebenezer: ARGHH! This can't be! I'm out of here! *[runs to hide under his blanket]*

[Ghost exits.]

Act 5

Ebenezer's bedroom.

Narrator: Ebenezer rose,
With just one thought in his head:
*It's Earth Day, by golly,
I'm not staying in bed!*

Ebenezer: *[jumping up and running to a group of children at the park]* Happy Earth Day, everyone!

Child 1: Is that you Ebenezer Litterbug?

Ebenezer: Yes, it's me, but I've changed!

Child 2: Are you going to stop littering and polluting?

Ebenezer: Yes!

Child 3: Are you going to follow the three R's and always reduce, reuse, and recycle?

Ebenezer: Yes! Yes!

Child 4: Are you going to live in the spirit of Earth Day and take care of the world?

Ebenezer: Yes! Yes! Yes!

All: *[to the tune of "We Wish you a Merry Christmas"]*

We wish you a Happy Earth Day,
We wish you a Happy Earth Day,
We wish you a Happy Earth Day,
And Recycling Day, too!

We will not waste or litter
Wherever we go.
We will help Mother Nature
And we'll all live and grow!

[Repeat refrain.]

The End