

# Connecting Kids to Nature

Nature is a great teacher and getting kids outside to learn and play is good for their brains and their bodies. Try this outdoor activity from Project Learning Tree® - it's safe, fun, and educational!

## Pollution Search

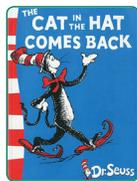
Here is a way for children to take a closer look at pollution: what it is, what its sources are, and what people can do to reduce it.

Human-generated chemicals, trash, noise, and heat are all pollutants, but so is ash spewing from an erupting volcano or smoke spreading from a forest fire. Pollution is any contamination of air, water, or land that affects the balance of the environment.

Take children on a guided walk of your neighborhood to identify the sights, sounds, and smells of pollution that may exist around you. Before stepping outside, prepare children by reviewing the "Neighborhood Pollution Patrol" chart below, and take it outdoors to assist with recordkeeping. Ask prompting questions to help students complete the chart. The question numbers correspond to the numbered cells on the chart below:

1. Do you see, hear, or smell any signs of pollution? What is it?
2. Can you find examples of pollution on land, in the air, and in the water? Where?
3. Can you explain the source or cause of the pollution you have identified?
4. Who or what is affected by this pollution?
5. What might you do to help eliminate or reduce this pollution?

Neighborhood Pollution Patrol			
	Pollutant 1	Pollutant 2	Pollutant 3
1. Sense used to identify pollution <i>(sight, smell, hearing)</i>			
2. Location of pollution <i>(air, water, land)</i>			
3. Source (or cause) of pollution			
4. Who/ what is affected by this pollution			
5. Your solution			



For younger children, consider reading Dr. Seuss's *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back* (ISBN 0394800028 and also available on video for free at <http://tinyurl.com/kxpheu2>). This story can be used to teach about people's attitude toward pollution. What represents pollution in this story? Where does it come from? How did the cat try to solve the problem? Is there a happy ending? Does this story remind you of any pollution you have seen or know about?

### Make Learning Fun!

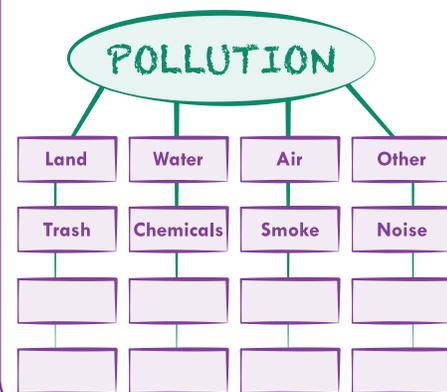
Encourage your child's school to incorporate learning outdoors.

For more activity ideas and materials:

- Attend a PLT workshop, [www.plt.org/state-network/](http://www.plt.org/state-network/)
- Visit [shop.plt.org](http://shop.plt.org)

### Concept Map

Challenge children to organize their identified pollutants in new ways. Try to complete the example below and then create your own!



Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

[www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org)