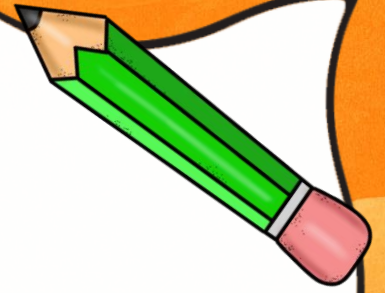


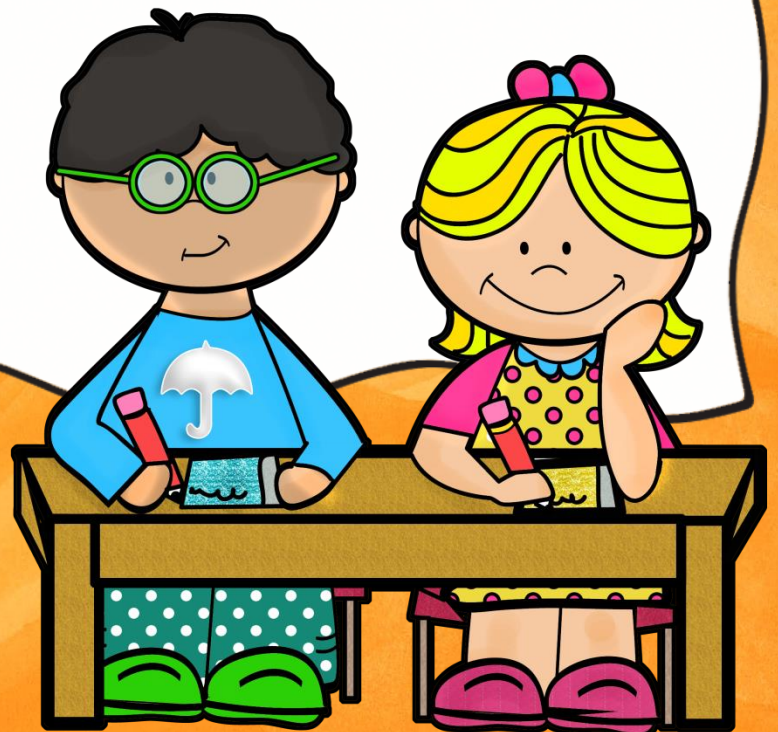
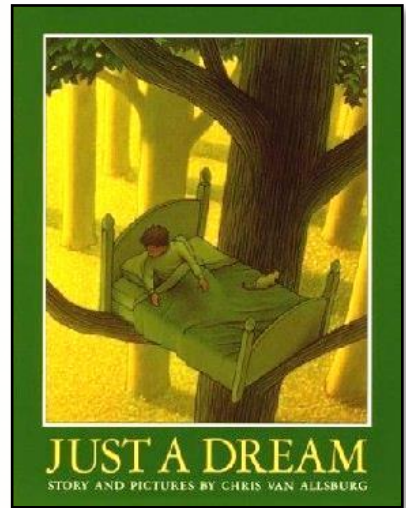
Free!



# Just a Dream to Save Our Planet



Digital & Printable  
Earth Day Lessons

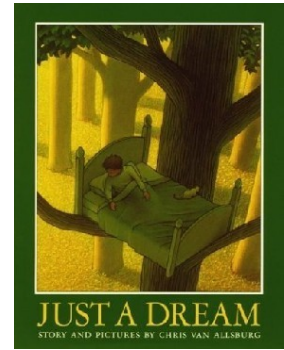


Laura Candler

# Just a Dream to Save our Planet

## Earth Day Literacy & Science Lessons

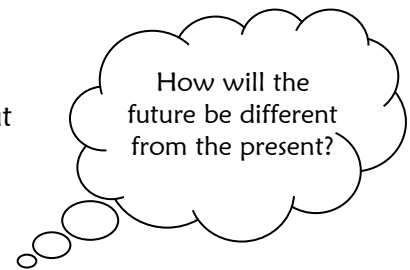
by Laura Candler



**Just a Dream to Save Our Planet** includes printable and digital resources to help guide discussions about environmental issues. The lessons are based on a classic children's book by Chris Van Allsburg called [Just a Dream](#). The book was written in 1990, but its message about the need to take care of our Earth still holds true today. In this story, Walter is careless with his trash and scoffs at the idea of planting trees to help the environment. Then he has a dream that takes him to the future where he discovers an Earth that's uninhabitable due to air and water pollution. Walter's dream helps him understand why it's important to conserve the earth's resources. The printable resources are located in this PDF guide, and links Google Slides versions of the activities are included in the lesson descriptions below.

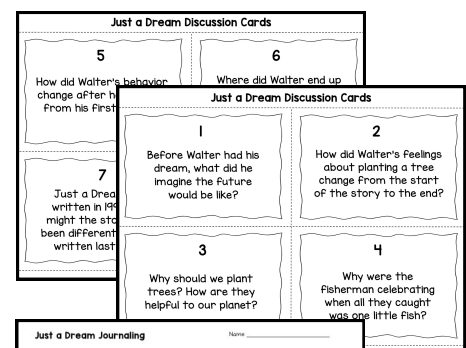
### Suggested Lesson Sequence

1. **Think-Pair-Share** - Before reading the story, ask students to think about how their future might be different from the present. How will we travel? Where will we live? What will our planet look like? Then ask them to turn and discuss their predictions with a partner. Finally, call on several students to share their predictions with the class.



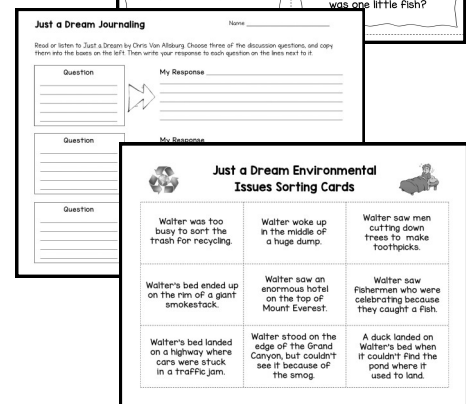
2. **Read and Make Predictions** - Then tell them that a boy named Walter imagined what the future might be like, but then he had a dream that showed him a future he could never have imagined! This story is perfect for making predictions because Walter's dreams take him to many different places. Each time he goes to a new place, the author gives us a hint about the next location in the form of a small picture. Show the picture to your students and ask them to predict where Walter's dream will take him and what he will discover.

3. **Discuss Environmental Issues** - After you finish reading the story aloud, use the eight Discussion Cards on pages 4 - 5 to discuss issues related to the story. If you want to create your own discussion questions, use the template on page 6. If you're teaching online or prefer to use paperless resources, you can use the [Google Slides Virtual Group Chat](#) discussion cards.



4. **Just a Dream Journaling** - As a follow-up to the class discussion, ask your students to choose three of the discussion questions and write a personal response to each question. You can use the Just a Dream Journaling printable on page 7 or have them complete the activity in a personal journal. Or you can assign the [Google Slides Just a Dream Virtual Journal](#) activity.

5. **Prepare for the Sorting Activity** - Give each team one set of the Just a Dream Sorting Cards on page 8 and one copy of the Environmental Issues Graphic Organizer on page 9. Ask your students to cut apart the cards and place them face down in the middle of the organizer. The [Google Slides version](#) the graphic organizer already has all nine sorting cards stacked in the middle.

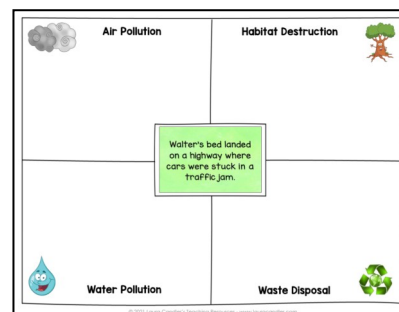




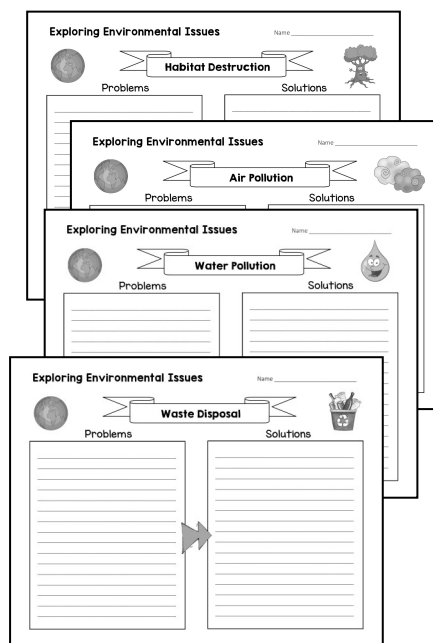
6. **Introduce Terminology** - Before begin the sorting activity, discuss the meanings of the environmental terms on the right with your students. Ask them to think of examples of each environmental problem.



7. **Sort Events By Environmental Issues** - Tell your students that the sorting cards in the middle of the graphic organizer describe some of the events that took place during Walter’s first dream. Each event is related to one of the four environmental issues on the graphic organizer. Ask the first person on each team to flip over the top card and read the sentence aloud, for example, “Walter was too busy to sort the trash for recycling.” Ask him or her to think about which category the card goes into and place it face up on the graphic organizer mat in that spot. The rest of the team gives a thumbs up if they agree or they discuss the event until the majority of them agree. Some cards can go into more than one location, so tell them to simply pick the issue where it MOST fits. A few cards don’t fit into any of the categories very well; ask your students to make up a new category for those. The same directions are used for each card, with students taking turns around the team.



8. **Research Environmental Problems and Solutions** - Finally, ask students to research these four issues to find out more about them. When researching, they should focus on the causes of the problem and some possible solutions, including new technologies being explored by scientists as well as actions by citizens. If you are familiar with the Jigsaw cooperative learning activity, you can divide your students into teams of four and each team member a different Environmental Issues note-taking page (pages 10-13). Have them research their topic, list their findings, and share the results with their team. Or you can give each student all four note-taking pages and discuss the issues as a class. You’ll find a blank note-taking template on page 14 you can use for additional topics such as Energy Conservation or Climate Change. If you prefer the Google Slides versions of these pages, [you’ll find them here](#).



9. **Writing Activity** - As a culminating activity or for assessment purposes, ask students to write a paragraph on each of the four issues. In each paragraph, they should outline the problems and possible solutions related to that environmental issue.



### Google Slides Versions of the Activity Pages

Click the links below to access the Google Slides activity pages. Copy them to your school Google Drive, and then use Google Classroom to assign editable copies to your students. **(Important: Do not give the links below directly to your students or they will encounter Google permission errors when they try to access the files.)**



- **Just a Dream Virtual Group Chat** - <http://bit.ly/justadream-virtualchat>
- **Just a Dream Virtual Journal** - <http://bit.ly/justadream-virtualjournal>
- **Just a Dream Sorting Activity** - <http://bit.ly/justadream-sortingactivity>
- **Exploring Environmental Issues** - <http://bit.ly/exploring-environmental-issues>

# Just a Dream Discussion Cards

1

Before Walter had his dream, what did he imagine the future would be like?

2

How did Walter's feelings about planting a tree change from the start of the story to the end?

3

Why should we plant trees? How are they helpful to our planet?

4

Why were the fisherman celebrating when all they caught was one little fish?

## Just a Dream Discussion Cards

5

How did Walter's behavior change after he woke up from his first dream?

6

Where did Walter end up in his second dream? How was this dream different from the first?

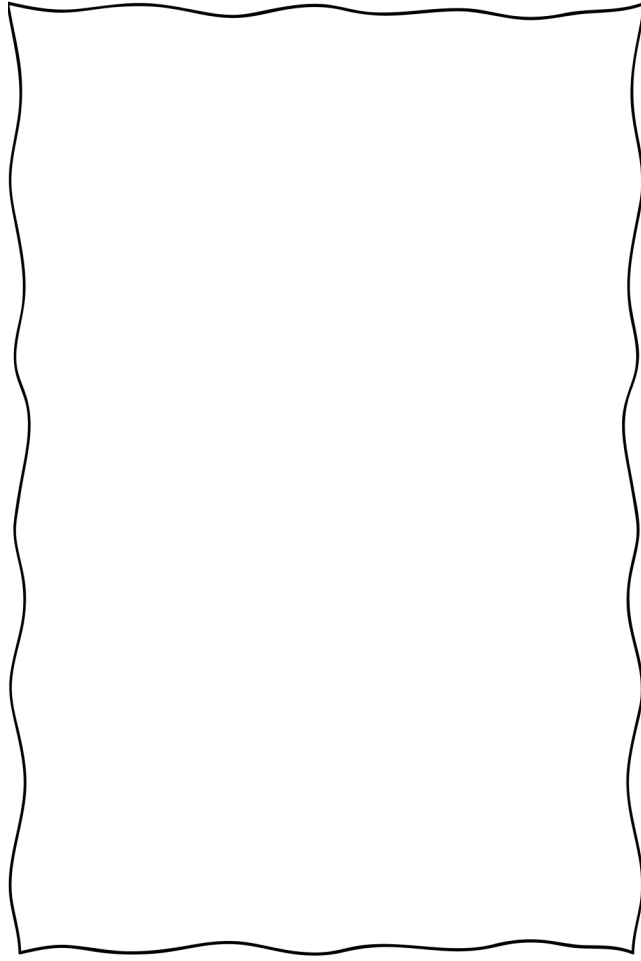
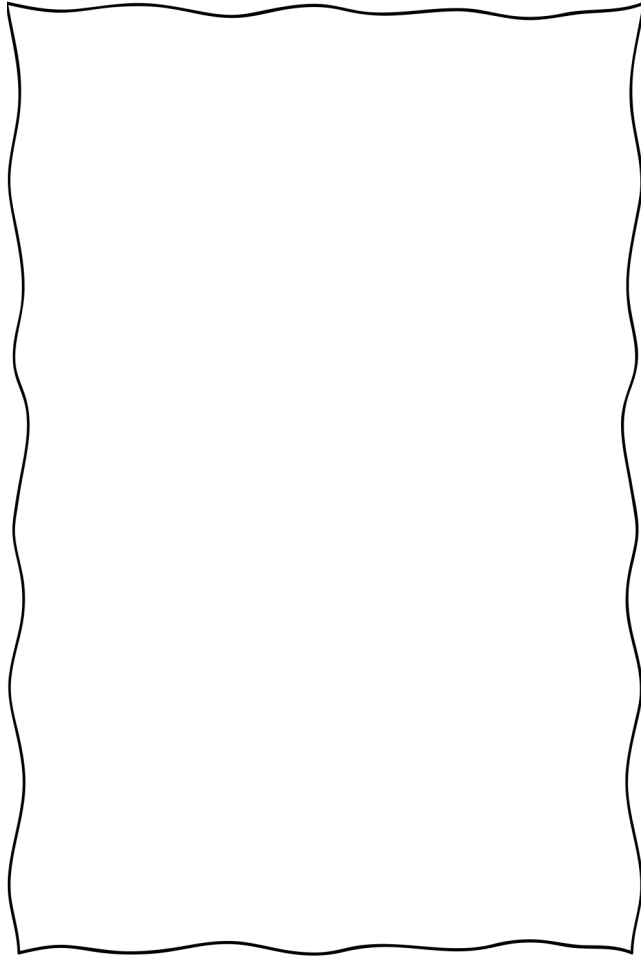
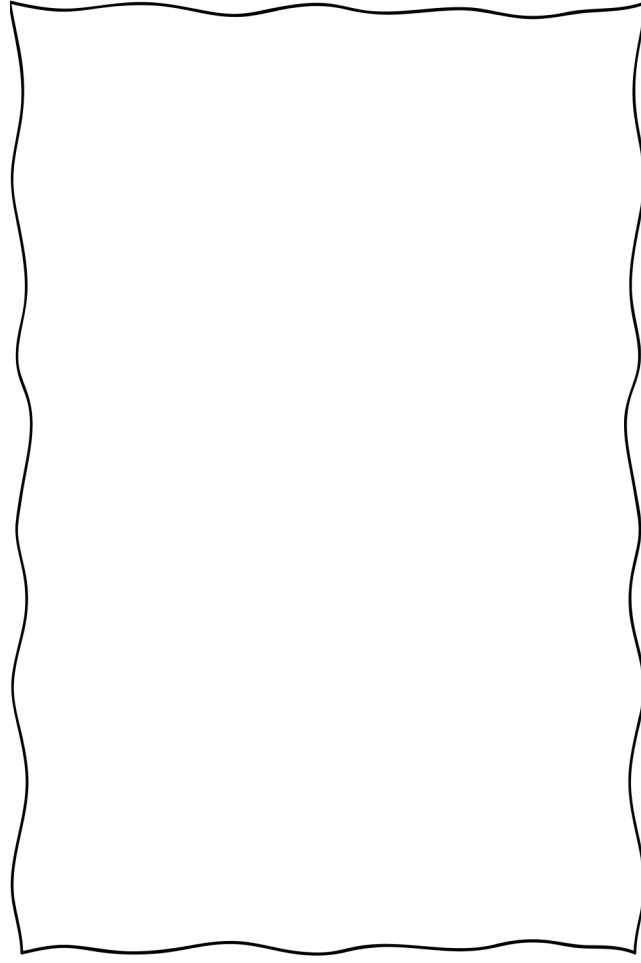
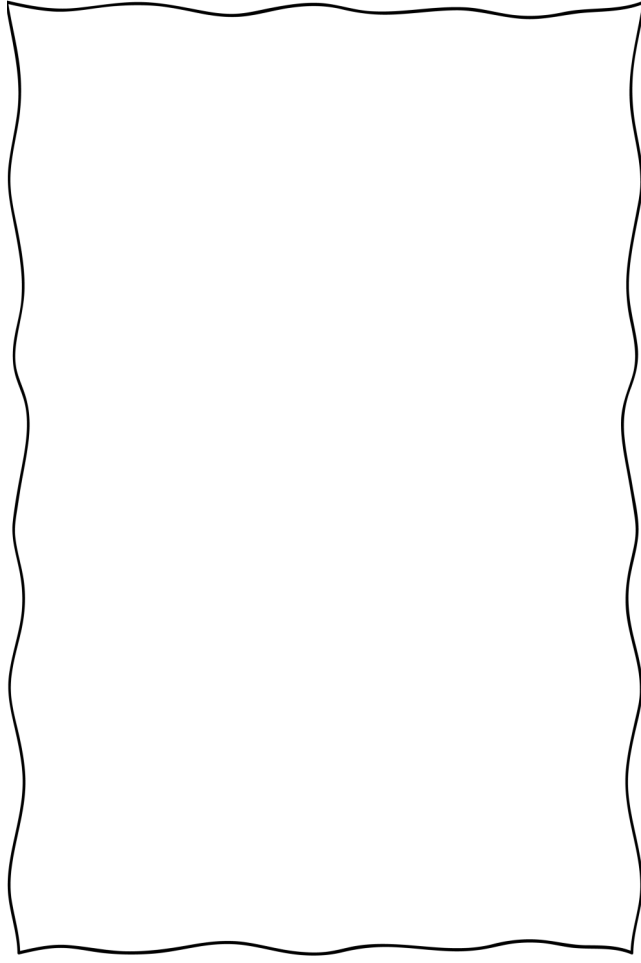
7

Just a Dream was written in 1990. How might the story have been different if it was written last year?

8

What actions can we take now so that our future doesn't turn out like Walter's first dream?

# Just a Dream Discussion Cards



# Just a Dream Journaling

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Read or listen to Just a Dream by Chris Van Allsburg. Choose three of the discussion questions, and copy them into the boxes on the left. Then write your response to each question on the lines next to it.

Question

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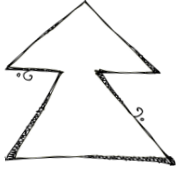
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My Response

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Question

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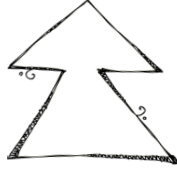
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My Response

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Question

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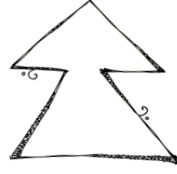
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My Response

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# Just a Dream Environmental Issues Sorting Cards



Walter was too busy to sort the trash for recycling.

Walter woke up in the middle of a huge dump.

Walter saw men cutting down trees to make toothpicks.

Walter's bed ended up on the rim of a giant smokestack.

Walter saw an enormous hotel on the top of Mount Everest.

Walter saw fishermen who were celebrating because they caught a fish.

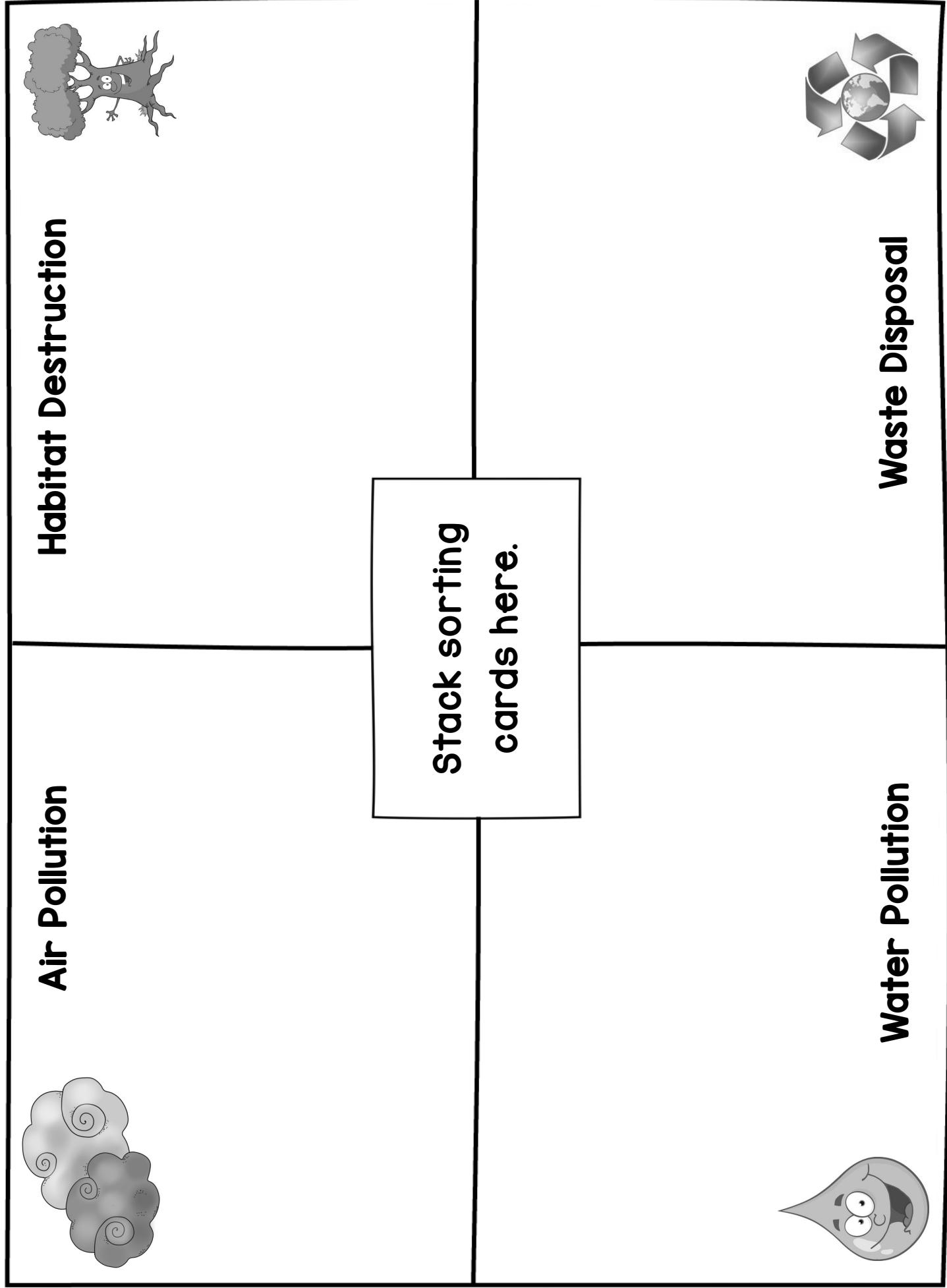
Walter's bed landed on a highway where cars were stuck in a traffic jam.

Walter stood on the edge of the Grand Canyon, but couldn't see it because of the smog.

A duck landed on Walter's bed when it couldn't find the pond where it used to land.

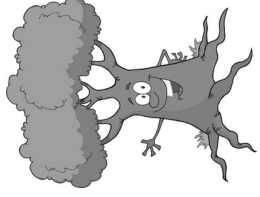
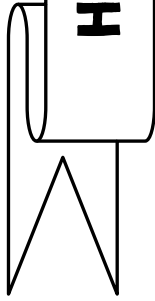


# Environmental Issues Graphic Organizer



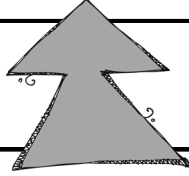
# Exploring Environmental Issues

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Problems

A large rectangular box containing 15 horizontal lines for writing.

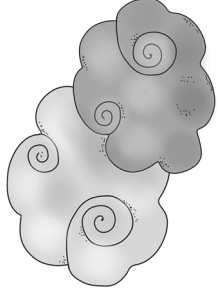
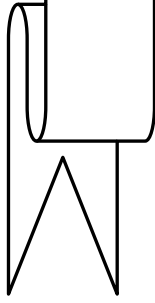


Solutions

A large rectangular box containing 15 horizontal lines for writing.

# Exploring Environmental Issues

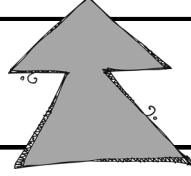
Name \_\_\_\_\_



Problems

Solutions

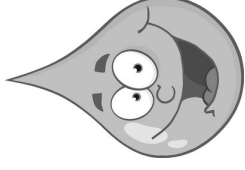
Handwriting practice area for "Problems" with 12 horizontal lines.



Handwriting practice area for "Solutions" with 12 horizontal lines.

# Exploring Environmental Issues

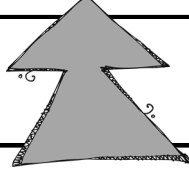
Name \_\_\_\_\_



Problems

Solutions

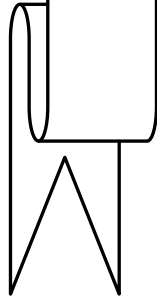
Handwriting practice area for "Problems" with 12 horizontal lines.



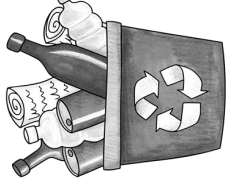
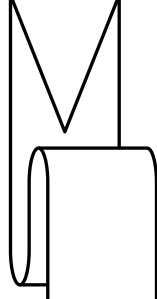
Handwriting practice area for "Solutions" with 12 horizontal lines.

# Exploring Environmental Issues

Name \_\_\_\_\_



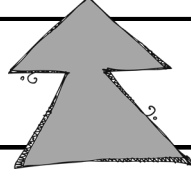
## Waste Disposal



Problems

Solutions

Handwriting practice area for 'Problems' with 12 horizontal lines.

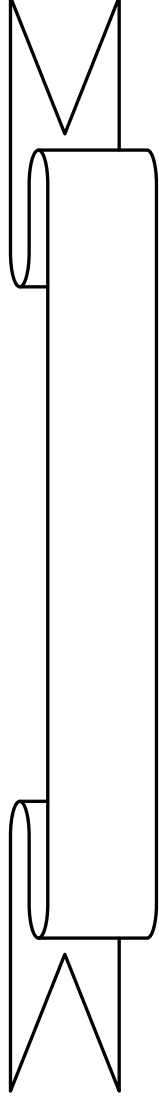


Handwriting practice area for 'Solutions' with 12 horizontal lines.



# Exploring Environmental Issues

Name \_\_\_\_\_



**Problems**

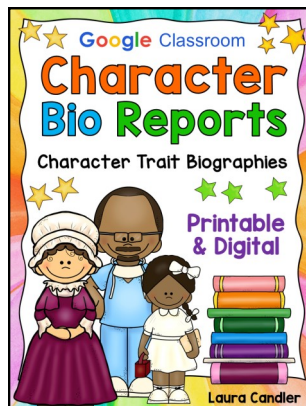
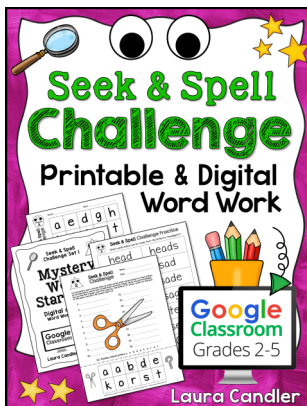
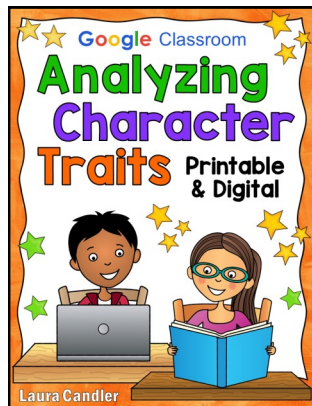
**Solutions**

A large rectangular box containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A large, grey, hand-drawn arrow points from the top of this box towards the 'Solutions' box.

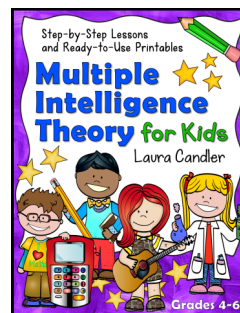
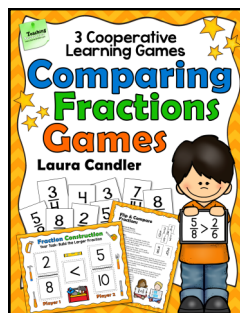
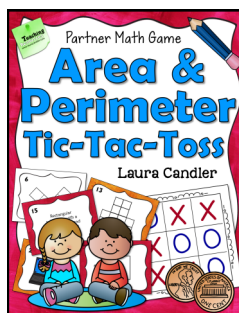
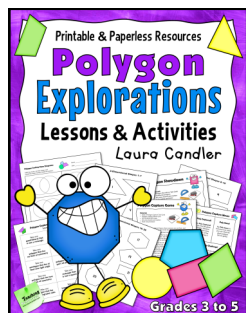
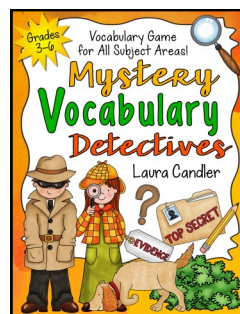
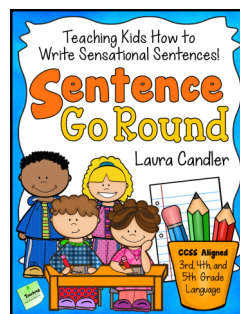
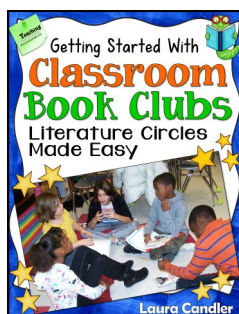
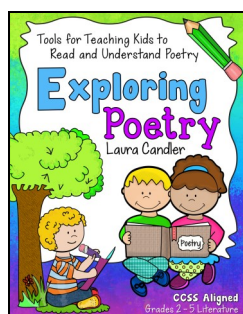
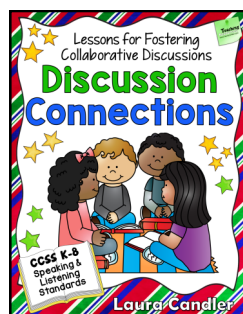
A large rectangular box containing ten horizontal lines for writing.

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