Get Inspired!

You have the power to change the world around you for the better. It starts with identifying a problem then taking action to find a solution. Use the organizational tool below, called a mind map, to help you explore an environmental issue you’d like to see improved.

**Issue**
- A mind map helps you organize your thoughts around a central topic.
- Use research to identify the causes, effects, possible solutions, and examples of a specific environmental issue. Fill in the boxes below with the information you find.
- Need more room? Continue your map on a separate sheet of paper.

**Cause(s)**

**Effect(s)**

**Environmental Issue**

**Possible Solutions**

**Example(s)**

**Inspire others**

Write a blog post about your environmental issue to educate the world about it. Base it on the information outlined in your mind map. Make sure your post is clear, organized, and contains well-chosen facts. For each source, list a full MLA-format citation.
Exploring STEM Careers

Find out what it takes to be a STEM professional. Choose two STEM careers to investigate further through online research. Then use the Venn diagram below to write down facts about each. In the overlapping section, write details the jobs have in common. Include information about what the jobs entail, the type of education needed, and where people in these industries work. Also, write down how the job relies on science, technology, engineering, and math.

Present It!

Create a presentation about the two careers you researched. It should explain to others what the jobs involve and how they are similar and different. Be sure to highlight the role of science, technology, engineering, and math in each role. Include visual aids to make your presentation more powerful.
Identify the Problem

Do you want to protect the planet? Start by tackling problems right in your own backyard. Use the internet to find an environmental issue affecting your community or state. Then use your research to complete the graphic organizer below. Write down the problem, what caused it to happen, and the effects it has had. Then list any ideas people have come up with to solve the issue.
Many communities are doing their part to help the environment and, in turn, their residents are reaping the benefits of going green. Use the scorecard below to evaluate the eco-friendliness of your city or town. Then brainstorm sustainable solutions to fix problem areas in your community. Base your ideas on initiatives currently being used by successful eco-cities, as well as your own creativity and research. If your community already has a small environmental footprint, explain the good green practices that helped them become so sustainable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Areas</th>
<th>Sustainability Score</th>
<th>Recommend ways to improve this area within your community, or describe your community’s current good green practices.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy: Does your community’s energy come from burning fossil fuels or cleaner, renewable sources like solar or wind power?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air Quality: Does your community have smoggy skies or high rates of asthma?</td>
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<td>Water: Where does your community get its water? Does it take measures to conserve this resource? How polluted are its waterways?</td>
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<td>Waste: Does your community have a recycling program or other ways to reduce waste? How about a composting program?</td>
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<td>Nature: Does your community have plenty of green spaces set aside for people and nature?</td>
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<td>Transportation: Does your town have bike lanes, bike-sharing programs, car sharing, public transportation, or electric vehicle charging stations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buildings: Does your local government require structures to be built using sustainable materials and technologies?</td>
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**Take a Stand**

**Low Total Score:** Select one of the recommendations you came up with to make one area of your community more sustainable. Then write an argumentative essay to explain why you think this would be an important idea to put into action for your city or town.

**High Total Score:** Write an argumentative essay in support of your community’s current good green practices. Discuss how these initiatives have helped your city thrive and why other communities should adopt similar initiatives.

**Writing Tips**

An argumentative essay should convince readers about the merits of a particular idea. When writing this type of essay:

- **Begin with a thesis statement,** which sets up what you will be writing about.
- **Support claims with evidence, not opinions.** You should then explain and interpret this evidence for your audience.
- **Acknowledge opposing views** and address their pros and cons.