Learning Contracts

Contracts take a number of forms that begin with an agreement between student and teacher.

The teacher grants certain freedoms and choices about how a student will complete tasks, and the student agrees to use the freedoms appropriately in designing and completing work according to specifications.

Strategy: Learning Contracts

Designing a Differentiated Learning Contract

A Learning Contract has the following components

1. A Skills Component
   - Focus is on skills-based tasks
   - Assignments are based on pre-assessment of students’ readiness
   - Students work at their own level and pace

2. A content component
   - Focus is on applying, extending, or enriching key content (ideas, understandings)
   - Requires sense making and production
   - Assignment is based on readiness or interest

3. A Time Line
   - Teacher sets completion date and check-in requirements
   - Students select order of work (except for required meetings and homework)

4. The Agreement
   - The teacher agrees to let students have freedom to plan their time
   - Students agree to use the time responsibly
   - Guidelines for working are spelled out
   - Consequences for ineffective use of freedom are delineated
   - Signatures of the teacher, student and parent (if appropriate) are placed on the agreement

READING CONTRACT
Choose an activity from each shape group. Cut out your three choices and glue them below. You are responsible for finishing these activities by __________. Have fun!

This contract belongs to ________________________

- Make a poster advertising yourself as a good friend. Use words and pictures to help make people want to be your friend. Make sure your name is an important part of the poster.
- Make a two-sided circle-rama. Use it to tell people what makes you a good friend. Use pictures and words and make sure your name is an important part of the display.
- Make a mobile that shows what makes you a good friend. Use pictures and words to hang on your mobile. Write your name on the top of the mobile in beautiful letters.
- Get with a friend and make a puppet show about a problem and the solution in your book.
- Get with a friend and act out a problem and its solution from your book.
- Meet with me and tell me about a problem and its solution from the story. Then tell me about a problem you have had and how you solved it.
- Draw a picture of a problem in the story. Then use words to tell about the problem and how the characters solved their problem.
- Write a letter to one of the characters in your book. Tell them about a problem you have. Then have them write back with a solution to your problem.
- Think about another problem one of the characters in your book might have. Write a new story for the book about the problem and tell how it was solved.
**Personal Agenda**

**Agenda for:**

**Starting Date:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Special Instructions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Complete Hypercard stack showing how a volcano works</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read your personal choice biography</td>
<td>Be sure to show scientific accuracy &amp; computer skill</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Practice adding fraction by completing number problems &amp; word problems on pp 101-106 of workbook</td>
<td>Keep a reading log of your progress</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Come to the teacher or a friend for help if you get stuck</td>
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</table>

**Special Instructions**

- Be sure to show scientific accuracy & computer skill
- Keep a reading log of your progress
- Come to the teacher or a friend for help if you get stuck

Remember to complete your daily planning log; I’ll call on you for conferences & instructions.

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**Personal Agenda**

**Agenda for:**

**Starting Date:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher &amp; student initials at completion</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Special Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Montgomery County, MD
Personal Agenda

**TASK**
- Complete research for an article on why volcanoes are where they are for our science newspaper. Write the article. Have the editor review it with you. Revise as needed
- Complete at least 2 spelling cycles

**Special Instructions**
- Watch your punctuation and spelling! Don’t let them hurt your great skill at organizing ideas.

Work Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Actual</th>
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</table>
The Red Contract

Key Skills: Graphing and Measuring
Key Concepts: Relative Sizes

Note to User: This is a Grade 3 math contract for students below grade level in these skills

Read
- How big is a foot?

Apply
- Work with a friend to graph the size of at least 6 things on the list of "10 terrific things." Label each thing with how you know the size

Extend
- Make a group story or one of your own – that uses measurement and at least one graph. Turn it into a book at the author center

The Green Contract

Key Skills: Graphing and Measuring
Key Concepts: Relative Sizes

Note to User: This is a Grade 3 math contract for students at or near grade level in these skills

Read
- Alexander Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday or Ten Kids, No Pets

Apply
- Complete the math madness book that goes with the story you read.

Extend
- Now, make a math madness book based on your story about kids and pets or money that comes and goes. Directions are at the author center
The Blue Contract

Key Skills: Graphing and Measuring
Key Concepts: Relative Sizes

Note to User: This is a Grade 3 math contract for students advanced in these skills

Read

Complete the extension problems on graphing on page 7 of our math book. Use a new monograph if you need to work.

Apply

Dinosaur

Research a kind of dinosaur or airplane. Figure out how big it is. Graph its size on graph paper or on the blacktop outside our room. Label it by name and size.

Dark or Airport Control

Extend

Make a book in which you combine math and dinosaurs or airplanes, or something else big. It can be a number fact book, a counting book, or a problem book. Instructions are at the author center.

Poetry Contract

Creating a rhyming wheel using spelling lists

Use your rhyming wheel to write like Shel Silverstein

Write an acrostic poem; include alliteration

Write a cinquain

Computer art

Write about you

Interpret “How to Eat a Poem.”

Research a famous person and write a clerihew

Illustrate a new poem

Student choice #1

Student choice #2

Student choice #3
### Poetry Contract

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student choice #1</th>
<th>Student choice #2</th>
<th>Student choice #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creating a rhyming wheel using spelling lists and dictionary</strong></td>
<td><strong>Use your rhyming wheel to write a poem that makes you laugh</strong></td>
<td><strong>Write an acrostic poem using alliteration and onomatopoeia</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Write a diamonte</strong></td>
<td><strong>Computer art</strong></td>
<td><strong>Write about you</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpret “Unfolding Bud”</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research a famous person and write a bio-poem</strong></td>
<td><strong>Illustrate the meaning of a new poem</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student choice #1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student choice #2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student choice #3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Learning Contract----Think Tac Toe

**Ancient Civilizations – Grade 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As an ancient mapmaker, you are commissioned to create a map of your land including all natural land forms, a compass rose and a scale. Also find examples of each land form in a modern civilization.</th>
<th>Imagine that you are an ancient citizen who awakens to discover that all water has evaporated. Explain in detail how this would alter your way of life. Also, do this for the town where you live.</th>
<th>Assume you are persuading others to visit your ancient civilization. Design a descriptive, accurate travel brochure. Include both natural and man-made elements that would attract tourists.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>You are an ancient scribe. Write and illustrate a thorough description of a famous character from each time period being studied. Profile yourself also.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assume the identity of a famous person from the given time period. Create a journal entry reflecting the ideas, values, and components of daily life for that person &amp; you.</strong></td>
<td><strong>You are a famous sculptor. Create a 3D representation of a well-known leader, god, goddess, or common citizen. Include a museum exhibit card.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written language is an essential part of everyday life. Your task is to create an alphabet. Include a translation into modern English, a written description of the language development a &amp; a 3D artifact of the new language.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recreate in 3D form a famous work of architecture from your time period. Compare and contrast this piece to one piece of modern day architecture. Find one example of this architecture’s presence in modern day society.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Find a way to explain and show the importance of music and the arts to your culture. Also show at least 2 examples with roots in our time.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Charles Kyle & Kathy Reed * Illinois
Novel Think Tac-Toe

Directions: Select & complete one activity from each horizontal row to help you and others think about your novel. Remember to make your work:

» Thoughtful
» Original
» Rich with detail
» accurate

Novel Think-Tac-Toe  *basic version*
Directions: Select and complete one activity from each horizontal row to help you and others think about your novel. Remember to make your work thoughtful, original, rich with detail, and accurate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a pair of collages that compares you and a character from the book. Compare and contrast physical and personality traits. Label your collages so viewers understand your thinking.</td>
<td>Write a bio-poem about yourself and another about a main character in the book so your readers see how you and the characters are alike and different. Be sure to included the most important traits in each poem.</td>
<td>Write a recipe or set of directions for how you would solve a problem and another for how a main character in the book would solve a problem. Your list should help us know you and the character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw/paint and write a greeting card that invites us into the scenery and mood of an important part of the book. Be sure the verse helps us understand what is important in the scene and why.</td>
<td>Make a model or map of a key place in your life, and an important one in the novel. Find a way to help viewers understand both what the places are like and why they are important in your life and the characters’.</td>
<td>Make 2 timelines. The first should illustrate and describe at least 6-8 shifts in settings in the book. The second should explain and illustrate how the mood changes with the change in setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using books of proverbs and/or quotations, find at least 6-8 that you feel reflect what’s important about the novel’s theme. Find at least 6-8 that do the same for your life. Display them and explain your choices.</td>
<td>Interview a key character from the book to find out what lessons he/she thinks we should learn from events in the book. Use a Parade magazine for material. Be sure the interview is thorough.</td>
<td>Find several songs you think reflect an important message from the book. Prepare an audio collage. Write an exhibit card that helps your listener understand how you think these songs express the book’s meaning.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Novel Think-Tac-Toe advanced version**

Directions: Select and complete one activity from each horizontal row to help you and others think about your novel. Remember to make your work thoughtful, original, insightful, and elegant in expression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>A character in the book is being written up in the paper 20 years after the novel ends. Write the piece. Where has life taken him/her? Why? Now, do the same for yourself 20 years from now. Make sure both pieces are interesting feature articles.</th>
<th>You’re a “profiler”. Write and illustrate a full and useful profile of an interesting character from the book with emphasis on personality traits and mode of operating. While you’re at it, profile yourself too.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write a bio-poem about yourself and another about a main character in the book so your readers see how you and the character are alike and different. Be sure to include the most important traits in each poem.</td>
<td>Research a town/place you feel is equivalent to the one in which the novel is set. Use maps, sketches, population and other demographic data to help you make comparisons and contrasts.</td>
<td>The time and place in which people find themselves and when events happen shape those people and events in important ways. Find a way to convincingly prove that idea using this book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Make a model or a map of a key place in your life, and in important one in the novel. Find a way to help viewers understand both what the places are like and why they are important in your life and the characters’.</td>
<td>Create a multi-media presentation that fully explores a key theme from the novel. Use at least 3 media (for example painting, music, poetry, photography, drama, sculpture, calligraphy, etc.) in your exploration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out about famous people in history or current events whose experiences and lives reflect the essential themes of this novel. Show us what you’ve learned.</td>
<td>Create a multi-media presentation that fully explores a key theme from the novel. Use at least 3 media (for example painting, music, poetry, photography, drama, sculpture, calligraphy, etc.) in your exploration.</td>
<td>Find several songs you think reflect an important message from the book. Prepare an audio collage. Write an exhibit card that helps your listener understand how you think these songs express the book’s meaning.</td>
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**CIVIL WAR Advanced Level**

1. Create a series of five state maps, which include a key, that illustrates major events of the war.
2. Make a relief map of U.S. depicting places of historical and geographical significance before, during, or after the civil war.
3. Create a map which shows the South and its territory at its greatest size as a result of victories in key battles.
4. Create a collage which illustrates the economic conditions of the North and South – rich/poor for both.
5. Generate an alternative economic system which would have enabled the South to have a viable economy without slavery.
6. Create a bar graph reflecting a data base that portrays the costs of the war for the North and the South.
7. Imagine a conversation between Adams and Jefferson and turn it into a radio play as they “Look down on” the Civil War.
8. Write a poem or compose a song conveying the feelings of a slave who has just freedom.
9. Locate two “popular” songs and one slave “song.” Write an exhibit card explaining how the songs reflect the lives & times of the “singers.” Prepare an audio collage to present.
10. Prepare Jeff Davis’s response to Lincoln when he refused the command of Union forces and assumed presidency of the Confederacy.
11. Write a letter (one) from five southern people (thoughtful ones) which comprises their responses to the Gettysburg address.
Proportional Reasoning

Think-Tac-Toe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create a word problem that</th>
<th>Find a word problem from the text that requires proportional reasoning.</th>
<th>Think of a way that you use proportional reasoning in your life. Describe the situation, explain why it is proportional and how you use it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>requires proportional reasoning. Solve the problem and explain why it requires proportional reasoning.</td>
<td>Solve the problem and explain why it was proportional.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a story about a proportion in the world. You can write it, act it, video tape it, or another story form.</td>
<td>How do you recognize a proportional situation? Find a way to think about and explain proportionality.</td>
<td>Make a list of all the proportional situations in the world today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a pict-o-gram, poem or anagram of how to solve proportional problems</td>
<td>Write a list of steps for solving any proportional problem.</td>
<td>Write a list of questions to ask yourself, from encountering a problem that may be proportional through solving it.</td>
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Learning Contract—Menu Planner—Fantasyland

Destination: Fantasyland Due: 2 week

Main Dish: (Complete all)
- Select one fairy tale. Read it
  - to yourself
  - to one other person ______________________ (name)
- Complete a story map (to show characters; setting; problem; solution).
- Find five new, interesting words. Write a sentence for each word.

Side Dish – Learning Centers (Choose 1 or more)
- Comparing center: Compare this fairy tale to another story you have read. How are they alike? How are they different? Choose your design: trifold, flip book, or mini-book.
- Tape Center: Record your favorite part of the fairy tale on the recorder.
- Art Center: Illustrate the most important event in your fairy tale.

Dessert
- Listening post: Listen to a fairy tale tape of your choice.
  Title: ___________________________
- Library corner: Find another fairy tale to read.
  Title: ___________________________
Main Course
Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right and wrong answer. Your judgment is important!
• How does Turtle’s partner bring about change in her? Explain fully and illustrate your answer with examples.
• Why does Madame Hoo feel guilty during the last meeting of the heirs?
• What reason does James Hoo have for hating Samuel Westing? Explain why this is so.
• What inaccuracies does Turtle deliberately include in her summary in Chapter 30? Explain why the inaccuracies are included.

Side Dishes
Choose 2 from the choices below: You may go back for more once you’ve finished the main course!
• How does the author use chess as a unifying agent in the story? Give several examples.
• How does Westing overcome needs in the heirs’ lives by this insightful parings? Be specific.
• How does the mistake in Sydelle’s identity prove beneficial to the other heirs? Again, be specific.
• How does the author stress Westing’s appreciation for America? Give examples.
• How does the setting serve as a microcosm for the heirs? Be specific. Give examples. (micro = small; cosmos = world/order)

Dessert
Dessert is optional! You may pass on dessert, or you may indulge in any that appeal to you! Enjoy!
• Research the writing of a will. Why might you want a lawyer to help with the writing of a will? Find out what might invalidate a will. Try to locate some interesting or humorous wills. Culminate this activity by writing your own will.
• Cinquain a character from the novel. Please include an illustration of your character with the poem.
• Write an obituary for one of the characters in the novel. Read some obituaries in the local newspaper for preparation. Include an appropriate illustration with your obituary.
• Research the history of the abacus. Locate an abacus and learn to use it. Compare the abacus and calculator discussing their advantages and disadvantages. Share what you learned with the class.

Poetry Matters Book Project
Main Dish: You must complete all of these tasks.
1. Create a colorful and artistic cover for your poetry book.
2. Include at least 3 samples of your own poetry.
3. Include poems from at least 3 different authors you think are excellent examples of inner (heart map) and/or outer vision (imagery, similes, metaphors). They should be different forms and/or styles.
4. Share at least one poem (your own or another author) with the class.
5. Include your heart map.
6. Create a list of wild, wonderful, and/or wacky words for writing. Put at least 2 on our word wall and place the list in your book.
Side Dishes: Select at least 2 tasks from the following list.

1. Illustrate at least one of the poems in your collection.
2. Use musical instruments to accompany a poem while sharing it.
3. Do a dramatic interpretation of a poem.
4. Write, revise, edit and illustrate at least 2 haiku poems.
5. Write, revise, edit and illustrate at least 2 cinquain poems.
6. Write, revise, edit and illustrate an alliterative poem.
7. Write, revise, edit and illustrate or musically accompany a poem using onomatopoeia.
8. Create a list of poetic phrases from a variety of books. Note what book each one was selected from.

Dessert: Choose as many as these as you would like to be an X Factor Learner!

1. Type your poems and import pictures to illustrate them.
2. Illustrate all of your poems.
3. Collect metaphors and similes and create a way to display them.
4. Research a known poet. Tell us about his/her life and style of writing. Also, let us know why you find this poet interesting.
5. Learn about narrative poems and write at least one.
6. Create a shape poem. Use color and illustration to present it.
7. Create a Table of Contents for your book.
9. Create a poem for 2 voices and perform it.
10. Choose 2 different poems to compare and contrast. Explain how they are similar and different.
WHERE IN THE WORLD?
A STUDY OF ECOSYSTEMS & BIOMES

At the end of this unit of study, students should....

KNOW:
- the components of an ecosystem
- the defining characteristics of a biome
- where the major biomes are located in the world
- how living things obtain energy
- the difference between producers and consumers
- how food chains and webs are created
- biodiversity varies from ecosystem to ecosystem (biome to biome)

UNDERSTAND:
- Organisms live in specific ecosystems and take part in cycles of energy and matter.
- A variety of organisms assume different roles in the systems and interact to form a dynamic whole.
- Organisms suffer when ecosystems or cycles are disturbed.
- Habitat destruction reduces biodiversity and affects the lives of humans.

BE ABLE TO DO:
- use the scientific process
- make scientific observations of ecosystems
- communicate information about observations and ideas
- collect, organize, and present data
- work in cooperative activities
- use multiple resources to complete research on a given biome
- describe the components of an ecosystem and a biome
- create a map locating the biome
- create a food chain/food web
- identify the climate, landforms, plants and animals of a biome
- create a model of a biome
- create a web of information using inspiration software
- set goals, evaluate work

Main Dish: (complete all)
1. Locate where your biome exists. Create a map which shows its location. Include a compass rose, a legend, and the names of the continents.
2. Identify the biome climate. Find a way to share your info.
3. Identify and list the major biome landforms.
4. Identify and list the plants and animals unique to your biome.
5. Read pps. 259-267 in the green science books. Create a food web for your biome.
6. After completing 1-5, contribute to the creation of a mini-biosphere which represents all that you have learned. Share it at a celebration of learning on Thursday, December 20.

Side Dish: (select at least one and circle your choices)
1. Create a landform or climate map for your biome. Share how these things affect the biome.
2. Find out what plants and/or animals are endangered or extinct in your biome. Why do you think this has happened? Plan a way to share your findings.
3. Make a graph or chart that shows the biodiversity of your biome. Explain why you think there is a lot or a little biodiversity in your biome.
4. Research the oxygen/carbon dioxide cycle and its role in an ecosystem. Plan a way to share your findings.
5. How has the biome changed? Create a model of your biome as it might have looked before any people inhabited it. Explain how humans affect biomes.
**Dessert (optional)**

1. Identify a favorite species in your biome and learn about it. Share what you learned.
2. Identify and research a smaller ecosystem in your biome. Share your findings.
3. Compare your biome with another biome.

I have read through this contract with my family and understand what is expected of me during our group study of biomes. I promise to work cooperatively with my group and give a personal best effort to complete the requirements by the due date.

Student signature ______________________ Date ______________________

Parent signature ______________________ Date ______________________

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**GROUP PLANNING SHEET**

Name ______________________

For ______________________ Biome ______________________ Date ______________________

1. Everyone will work to complete a biome map.

Who will be responsible for:
2. researching biome climate?

What will you do to share what you have learned?

3. researching biome flora/fauna?

What will you do to share what you have learned?

4. identifying plants and animals?

What will you do to share what you have learned?

What is your plan for everyone to read about and complete a food web?

By what date will you begin working on your model?

Develop a plan for what will be included in your model, what materials you will need, and how everyone will contribute to completing this project. Get a go ahead from Ms. Sabin or Mrs. Rex before you begin construction.
Similar Figures Menu

Imperatives (Do all 3):
1. Write a mathematical definition of “Similar Figures.” It must include all pertinent vocabulary, address all concepts and be written so that a fifth grade student would be able to understand it. Diagrams can be used to illustrate your definition.

2. Generate a list of applications for similar figures, and similarity in general. Be sure to think beyond “find a missing side…”

3. Develop a lesson to teach third grade students who are just beginning to think about similarity.

Similar Figures Menu

Negotiables (Choose 1):
1. Create a book of similar figure applications and problems. This must include at least 10 problems. They can be problems you have made up or found in books, but at least 3 must be application problems. Solve each of the problems and include an explanation as to why your solution is correct.

2. Show at least five different applications of similar figures in the real world, and make them into math problems. Solve each of the problems and explain the role of similarity. Justify why the solutions are correct.
Similar Figures Menu

Optionals:
1. Create an art project based on similarity. Write a cover sheet describing the use of similarity and how it affects the quality of the art.

2. Make a photo album showing the use of similar figures in the world around us. Use captions to explain the similarity in each picture.

3. Write a story about similar figures in a world without similarity.

4. Write a song about the beauty and mathematics of similar figures.

5. Create a “how-to” list or book about finding and creating similar figures.

Science Agenda on Chemical Problems in the Environment

Imperatives (You must do these...)

1. Select a chemical problem in the environment, define/describe the difficulties it presents, why, where, and to whom/what.

   Your choices are: global warming/greenhouse effect, ozone depletion, acid rain, air pollution, water pollution (including thermal pollution, and land/ground pollution).

2. Complete a map showing where the problem exists what/who is affected by it, and degree of impact.

3. Develop a talking paper that describes present and future solutions, as well as your recommendations.
**Negotiables** *(You must do at least one of these)*

1. Determine approximate costs of the problem in one badly affected region and develop a graphic that shows total costs and what makes the costs (for example: health costs, clean-up costs, lost revenues from land, etc.)

2. Develop a timeline of the evolution of the problem over the last 100 years, including significant dates, and factors that contributed to the change. Take the timeline into the future based on your current understanding of trends associated with the problem.

**Options** *(You may do 1 or more of these)*

1. Create a Gary Larsen-type cartoon or an editorial cartoon that makes a commentary on the problem.

2. Prepare a fictionalized account, but based on scientific fact, of a person who lives in a badly affected area. Your goal is to put a human face on the problem.

3. Develop a 60 second public service announcement (taped) to raise audience awareness of the problem and introduce positive actions citizens might take to improve the prognosis for the future.

*Based on work of Fibby Shaw*

Los Rojas Junior High–Boise, Idaho

*To be an effective citizen, it is necessary to know how to deal with problems related to science and technology*