



# Natural Resources and Their Scarcity\*

Activity M.g

GRADE LEVELS: 7 - 8

OBJECTIVE: To identify the sources of natural resources and gain an appreciation of their scarcity.

VOCABULARY: raw materials, consumption, import, export

MATERIALS: world map

## PROCEDURE:

Mount a map of the world on the wall. Have the students list the raw materials used to make paper, plastic, metal cans, aluminum cans, rubber, etc. Include oil as the energy source to manufacture these products.

Pinpoint the primary source(s) for each material on the map. You may wish to turn this into a short research activity, providing students with encyclopedias or other reference books to locate resource suppliers.

Have students find out the populations of the United States and several other countries (for example, China, India, France, Saudi Arabia, Brazil). then have them compare resource consumption among these countries.

Ask the following questions:

What countries do we import natural resources from?

Does our consumption of resources affect the people in these countries?

What resources might we export to other countries?

What could happen if other countries begin to consume as much as we do?

What could happen if available resources begin to run low? What would be the effects on society?

How might scarcity of resources affect relationships between countries?

How can we begin to lesson our dependence on foreign countries for resources? How might these actions affect individuals in our society?

Discuss solutions including reducing consumption and reusing materials.

\* Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Let's Reduce and Recycle: Curriculum for Solid Waste Awareness