

**I. Objectives:**

1. “Collaborate with classmates in developing a consensus resolution to a timely environmental problem.”
2. “Demonstrate critical thinking skills in writing and other projects that evaluate and synthesize information in a logical manner.”

**II. Assignment:**

1. You are the members of the town council. Part of your job is to make presentations to the local residents and business owners at town meetings. At the last town meeting, one of the following debates arose. You do not have a ready solution to the issue, but must present the council’s position at the next town meeting. In the meantime, you realize that you must research the topic thoroughly and prepare a coherent report to present at the next meeting.
2. Prepare a fifteen minute skit or debate to present at the next town meeting (our class will be the “mock” town meeting) regarding one of the environmental cases listed below. If you are interested in a particular environmental issue that is not listed here and would like to report on that, you must have your topic approved.
3. You should include information about the economic impact, the social impact, and the science involved with the particular environmental topic.
4. Use critical thinking skills to explore the benefits and drawbacks associated with the topic you choose. Also, you will need to come to consensus on the issue as a group after thoroughly researching your topic. **What specific actions do you recommend for the future of your town?**
5. You are expected to use scholarly resources when researching your topic. Look for books or scholarly journal articles obtained through the library’s subscription databases. Be sure to carefully evaluate any Internet sources that you use.
6. As a group, submit an Annotated Bibliography identifying what information came from what source. Use proper MLA or APA formatting. You must include a citation to at least one book, one journal article, and one credible Internet website.

**CASES:**

1. Global Warming/Climate Change: At a recent town meeting, many residents wanted to know what our township is doing about global warming. They wanted to know what state and federal incentives are available to help residents, businesses and the township reduce the carbon footprint of the town by converting to renewable energy sources. Many residents are calling for any new development to be powered primarily by renewable energy. Others feel that the entire issue of human induced global warming does not even exist and that any warming and climate change is due to natural earth cycles. They fear that government interference will negatively impact the township’s economic viability and restrict personal choices. After researching both sides, what are the township’s options and what is your council’s position?
2. Fracking: Your community is located on Marcellus shale rock formations believed to contain stores of natural gas. Representatives from gas companies have been approaching homeowners offering financial incentives in turn for drilling rights on their property. The residents are divided on their opinions and are seeking a leadership stance from the town council. Economic times are hard and some residents welcome the offer of income and claim that drilling will help all Americans as it may reduce the dependence upon foreign oil. Others are concerned about the environmental impact of fracking upon water resources, human health, and the well-being of

- other species. Explore the pros and cons associated with fracking, and present the town council's stance.
3. Clean Water: At a recent town meeting several residents complained that the streams and water supply in the township aren't what they used to be. Possible causes discussed were industrial activity, soil erosion on stream banks, insufficient sewage treatment, run-off from development, and fertilizers and pesticides used by the farmers. Clean water advocates say we need tighter restrictions on businesses, homeowners, and farmers. They also recommend adding native wetland plants along stream banks and around water retention basins to form a buffer from run-off and to prevent erosion of the bank. Others say that the recommendations by the clean water advocates will cause businesses and farms to fail and taxes to increase. Present both sides and the position of the town council.
  4. Recycling/Composting: A resident is upset because the township will no longer provide recycling of all recyclables and composting of yard waste. The costs of collection, recycling and composting have gone up. Advocates say that recycling and composting are the right things to do and that the township should provide for the composting of yard waste and recycling of plastic, paper, cardboard, aluminum, glass, and steel. Others say that our taxes are too high. Present the pros and cons of recycling in the township. What is your council's position?
  5. Developing Farmland: Progressive Reality has made an offer to buy the Smith farm which contains 400 acres of fertile soil, a lake and adjacent wetland used as nesting grounds for great blue herons and as habitat and breeding areas for endangered red-bellied turtles and leopard frogs. Their proposal is to put in a new housing development and open the lake as a concession for public swimming and recreation. Advocates say the housing development would bring high income taxpayers to the township and that the lake concession would bring extra money and jobs to the town. Others say that this would put a drain on the infrastructure and have dire consequences for the natural environment. Present the pros and cons of developing farmland in the township. What is your council's position?
  6. Transportation Infrastructure Improvement: The state department of transportation has proposed construction of a bypass to connect I-95 and the PA turnpike. The township has been asked to choose one of three locations for roadway placement: 1) through an existing housing development; 2) through existing strip shopping centers; or 3) through a protected wetland and nature preserve, which is the habitat for rare PA plant and animal species. The township has called a residents' meeting to resolve which location suits the residents best. The community is deeply divided. Present the pros and cons of each proposed approach and devise a feasible solution.

### III. Assessment Rubric:

<b>Environmental Sustainability Group Project</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
All sides of issue addressed	20	
Economic impact, social impact, and science presented	60	
Evidence of critical thinking skills & creativity	40	
Consensus reached	15	
Properly formatted and detailed Annotated Bibliography submitted with appropriate use of resources including at least one book, one journal article and one credible Internet website	20	
Overall quality of presentation	20	
Final grade on environmental sustainability project	<b>175</b>	

