



Sustainability Stations

Pre-Visit Vocabulary (5-8)

Biodegradable – a substance that is able to be broken down by bacteria, fungi or other simple organisms to a material which is chemically different; capable of decomposing naturally over a relatively short period of time.

Phosphates – a type of pollution that enters water ways from cleaning supplies, fertilizer, or human and animal waste. Too much phosphate added to water will cause algae and weedy plants to grow quickly, using up oxygen in the water that fish and other aquatic organisms need to survive.

Landfill – a little more than half of the trash that people throw away in America ends up buried in a landfill. A landfill is a carefully designed structure that is built to receive trash and minimize its impact on the environment through the use of a bottom liner and a daily cover of soil. Being isolated from air, water and light, trash in the landfill breaks down incredibly slowly. Old landfills have been uncovered to reveal newspapers that have not decomposed in over 40 years.

Fossil Fuels – non-renewable resources that provide more than 85% of the energy used in the United States. Fossil fuels formed from plants that lived 300 million years ago. Coal, oil and natural gas are all examples of fossil fuels.

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) – a chemical compound released into the atmosphere through natural processes and human activities. Natural sources of CO₂ include volcanic eruptions and the respiration of humans and animals. Human activities that burn fossil fuel add CO₂ to the atmosphere, such as generating power, driving a car, or manufacturing products.

Toxicant – a substance that causes injury, illness, or death to a living thing; a poison.