



Lesson #11

Taking the Lead

Students are empowered to serve as Presidents of their own Board of Directors. Their task is to identify and communicate energy conservation strategies in a presentation that is targeted to a specific audience: the members of their Board — which is to say, their family members. This lesson works well as a culminating activity after other EnerAction lessons because it gives students an opportunity to demonstrate and apply their knowledge about energy and the environment.

Subject Areas

Media Literacy, Social Studies,
Language Arts

Student Skills

information gathering, assessing,
reasoned judgment, critical
thinking, communication,
reflecting

Developing Vocabulary

Board of Directors, energy
conservation, energy waste,
energy efficiency

RELATED BACKGROUNDERS



**Energy
Needs**



**Taking
Action**

Learning Objectives

- ◆ clarify and articulate personal opinions about energy use and waste
- ◆ understand ways to influence opinions through awareness and promotion
- ◆ reflect on their potential to change others' behaviour and attitudes about energy use
- ◆ communicate their knowledge through effective communications

Materials You Need

- ◆ copies of the handout, Energy-Related Rules and Responsibilities of the President of the Board of Directors
- ◆ copies of the handout, Board of Directors Change Chart
- ◆ two EnerAction backgrounders (optional)—*Energy Needs: The Ways We Use Energy* and *Taking Action: Personal Choices About Energy Use*

Time Estimate

Lead In

Main Activity

Wrap Up

45 minutes

150 minutes

90 minutes

5
HOURS

Sample schedule of activities

This culminating lesson is best taught over several weeks.

Week 1	Day 1	Lead in activity, steps 1 to 6: 45 minutes
	Day 2	Main activity, steps 7 & 8: 30 minutes
	Day 3	Main activity, step 9: 60 minutes
	Days 4, 5	Homework time for student presentations, some class time for check-in with teams
Week 2	Day 6, 7	Main activity, steps 10 & 11: 60 minutes
	Days 8–10	Board presentations at home
Week 3	Days 11, 12	Board presentations at home
	Day 13	Wrap up activity, steps 12 & 13: 30 minutes
	Day 14	Wrap up activity, step 14: 30 minutes
Week 4	Days 15–19	Display family commitments in the classroom
Week 8	Day 40	Wrap up activity, step 15: 30 minutes

What You Do

Lead In

45 minutes

Lead In

1. Discuss students' views on energy use and conservation. Ask them to describe the ways that their families use energy, and then ask them how they think their families could reduce their energy use. Record a list of ways to conserve energy on the board.
2. Explain that now is the time for students to take leadership! You are designating them the President of their families' Board of Directors. Ask them for their definitions of a Board of Directors. Then explain to them that it is a group of people, led by a President, who are chosen to govern the affairs of an organization. In this activity, their entire family is the organization, and the students will lead it. They will be responsible for governing the affairs of the family as they relate to energy use and conservation.
3. Give students a couple of minutes to list their ideas about what they see as their roles and responsibilities now that they are President of their own Board of Directors:
 - ◆ to develop rules for turning lights off?
 - ◆ to teach family members about energy conservation?
 - ◆ to limit the number of hours that each family member can watch TV, use the computer or use a particular appliance?
4. Ask volunteers to share their lists. Put their answers on the board, and when you have a good cross-section of energy conservation ideas, ask students to identify the five ideas that they consider to be the most important and the most relevant to their family. Give students a copy of the Energy-Related Rules and Responsibilities handout. Ask them to record those five ideas and sign the document.



What You Do

Lead In (continued)

5. Encourage students to think about their responsibilities and how they intend to influence their Board to use energy more wisely. Hand out the Board of Directors Change Chart. Students put their own names in the first blank space and then write down what they do to waste energy. Write these categories on the board to help them:
 - ◆ Entertainment: How much TV do you watch? Do you leave the TV on when you are not in the room? Do you leave the radio playing when you are not there?
 - ◆ Water Use: Do you leave the tap running while you brush your teeth? Do you take long showers?
 - ◆ Trash: Do you put everything in the trash, or do you always recycle those things that can be recycled?
 - ◆ Lighting & Appliances: Do you encourage your family to use energy efficient lights and appliances? Are there lights and appliances that can be turned off when not in use?
 - ◆ Heating: Do you put on a sweater when you are cold, or do you turn the heat up?
 - ◆ Transportation: Do you travel by car when you could walk or ride a bike instead?
6. After they have entered the information about themselves, ask students to write down the names of other members of their family and then use the same categories to identify ways for each of them to improve their energy savings. Give students ten minutes to complete the chart and then talk as a group about the exercise.

Main Activity

90 minutes

Main Activity

7. Ask students to think about their favourite commercials on TV and what it is that makes them effective. Generate a list of the strategies that directors rely on to persuade audiences to use their products:
 - ◆ the use of humour, catchy music and effective lighting
 - ◆ testimony from a known leader such as Wayne Gretzky, David Beckham or Rick Hansen
 - ◆ before-and-after and other comparative data
 - ◆ evidence from polls or research studies
 - ◆ a sense of belonging to a special club
 - ◆ claims of superiority and effectiveness
 - ◆ targeted audiences – different commercials target different groups of people depending on the product/service.

What You Do

Main Activity (continued)

8. After reviewing a number of strategies, challenge each student to plan a presentation to promote energy conservation to their own Board of Directors. The presentation can consist of a brief video, a poster, PowerPoint or some other medium. Presidents can rely on the information recorded on their Change Chart to help them target their presentations to the needs of their specific audience.
9. Give students at least one class period to decide on the form of their presentation and to begin planning. Provide them with adequate homework time to shape their presentation. You could hold a discussion about some of the challenges that students might face:
 - ◆ Is there someone in your family who might not want to change their behaviour to conserve energy? Why?
 - ◆ How will your presentation reach a family member who is resistant to change?
 - ◆ Can you describe this activity to your family members soon so that they are aware of their involvement?
10. Select a day for the students to preview their presentations with a classmate or in small groups of 4 or 5. Students can present for one another, providing support and feedback. Working in pairs or small groups, they can also troubleshoot any problems they have had in developing their presentations.
11. Give students a range of dates within which to deliver their presentation to their Board of Directors.

Wrap Up

90 minutes

Wrap Up

12. After all students have delivered their presentations to their Board of Directors, have a class discussion to talk about the results:
 - ◆ Did you prepare your family for the presentation?
 - ◆ How did your family members respond to your presentation?
 - ◆ Did they ask you any questions about energy use and conservation? Were you able to answer their questions?
 - ◆ Do you think your family members will change some of their behaviour and begin using energy more wisely? If yes, what do you think they will do? If no, why do you think they are resistant to change?
 - ◆ What do you believe would be the easiest energy conservation change to make in your home? Why?
13. Record the predicted behaviour changes on the board. Ask students to identify five commitments their family can make toward becoming more energy efficient.



What You Do

Wrap Up (continued)

14. Tell students to create a document that lists the five commitments and provides space for each family member to write his or her signature. By signing, family members are committing to do their part in helping conserve energy. Students can ask each family member to sign the document to demonstrate his or her personal commitment to energy conservation. When all families have signed the documents, they can be displayed throughout the classroom to remind students of the impact their presentations.
15. Revisit this activity in one month to discuss students' challenges and successes in keeping these commitments and to reflect on what they have learned.

Adaptations & Extensions

- **Preview all student presentations to select one.** If students make their presentations to the class as a whole, the class could choose which one(s) to present to the entire school during an assembly or at a "Night of the Notables" event that includes parents and administrators. Students can work together to adapt the chosen presentation as a class project, and present it as the culmination of their unit on energy. Ideally, students could make the presentation on Earth Day (April 22nd).
- **Introduce Sparky and Electra.** Direct students to the EnerAction website at <http://eneraction.greenlearning.ca>. Assign them the role of President of a Board of Directors that includes Electra, Sparky, EnerGuy and the Carbon Critters. Ask them to consider what challenges they would face as President of such a diverse Board. How would they appeal to members with such different views and approaches to energy? Is there a commitment that the Board could be convinced to make?
- **Appeal to school administrators as well.** Make students the President of another Board of Directors, this one consisting of the Principal, Vice Principal, teachers and/or maintenance staff. Students can work in groups to prepare presentations to the Board asking it to make the school more energy efficient.



Assessment Rubric

These criteria can be expanded or adapted to emphasize different aspects of the lesson. You can use the rubric to help students self-assess their participation and experience, and then pose follow-up questions to the class encouraging them to reflect further on their challenges and insights.

Knowledge & Understanding	1	2	3	4
Describe in detail the topic, purpose and audience for the media texts they plan to create	Demonstrates limited understanding by providing minimal features	Demonstrates some understanding by providing a few features	Demonstrates considerable understanding by providing a variety of features	Demonstrates a thorough understanding by providing an extensive range of features
Thinking	1	2	3	4
Communicate orally in a clear, coherent manner, presenting ideas, opinions and information in a readily understandable form	Limited effectiveness; communicates in a simple and fairly understandable form	Some effectiveness; communicates with a few supporting details and new ideas	Considerable effectiveness; communicates with a variety of supporting details and ideas	High degree of effectiveness; communicates with a wide variety of supporting details
Application	1	2	3	4
Analyze human use of energy and natural resources and the impact of this use on society and the environment	Demonstrates limited effective use of application skills by unfinished analysis	Demonstrates limited effective use of application skills by partial analysis	Demonstrates effective use of application skills by complete analysis	Demonstrates a high degree of application skills by extensive analysis
Evaluate ways in which humans use energy and resources, the immediate and long term effects of these uses on society, and the necessity of conservation of energy and natural resources	Demonstrates limited effective use of thinking skills by evaluating one or two examples	Demonstrates limited effective use of thinking skills by evaluating no more than three examples	Demonstrates effective use of thinking skills by evaluating no more than five examples	Demonstrates a high degree of thinking skills by evaluating more than five examples
Develop solutions to avoid wasting energy and resources both at home and at school	Limited effectiveness; makes some simple solutions	Some effectiveness; makes some simple, logical solutions	Considerable effectiveness; makes clear and logical solutions	High degree of effectiveness; Makes complex and insightful solutions
Produce a variety of media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions and techniques	Limited effectiveness; communicates in a simple and fairly understandable form	Some effectiveness; communicates with a few supporting details and new ideas	Considerable effectiveness; communicates with a variety of supporting details and ideas	High degree of effectiveness; communicates with a wide variety of supporting details



Energy-Related Rules and Responsibilities of the President of the Board of Directors

As President of the _____ (*family name*) Board of Directors, I am responsible for bringing the value of energy conservation to the Board's attention and for encouraging the Board to act on the many benefits that conservation will bring. I commit to using my knowledge to the best of my ability to help this Board learn more about energy, move towards a more energy efficient household and celebrate our achievements.

I will help do this in the following ways:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

By increasing the _____ (*family name*) Board's understanding of energy use and conservation and by encouraging them to become more energy efficient, I am helping my Board support a strong and healthy Canadian economy and environment.

(*President's signature*)



Family Members	Energy Use Activities	Energy Saving Changes
You, for example	Entertainment: • Watch a lot of TV Lighting & Appliances: • Leave lights on after I've left a room • Leave the computer on when not using it	• Watch no more than 2 hours of TV per day • Turn lights off whenever I leave a room • Turn the computer off when I am done with it

Additional changes that Board of Directors can consider :

- ◆ Change to CFL bulbs throughout the house
- ◆ Install a programmable thermostat
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆