



## Week 4: Right to a healthy environment

<b>Grade level:</b>	K to Grade 6
<b>Time:</b>	30 to 45 minutes
<b>Location:</b>	Classroom or outside
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Image of Earth from space</a></li><li>• One sheet of blue construction paper per student</li><li>• Paints or coloured pencils</li><li>• Scissors</li><li>• Pictures of <a href="#">Blue Dot logo</a> and <a href="#">David Suzuki</a> (optional)</li></ul>
<b>Purpose of the activity:</b>	To enhance critical thinking skills, embrace creativity and think about humanity's relationship with Earth
<b>Glossary:</b>	An Environmental Bill of Rights is a law that will help protect air, water and food.

Your local Member of Parliament represents you and your community in our national government. MPs create the laws, like an Environmental Bill of Rights.

### Activity: Right to a healthy environment

1. Go outside and form a circle (sitting or standing). Show a [picture of Earth](#). Ask the children if they recognize the image and how it makes them feel when they look at it.
2. Ask the children to close their eyes and picture Earth in their minds. Now, step by step, ask them to picture their country, their province, their city/town, their neighbourhood and finally their home. How do they see themselves in relation to the planet?
3. Ask them to picture Earth's oceans, mountains and forests. Picture all the living things (animals and plants) that share these resources. Do we all breathe the same air? Do we all need nutritious food? Do we all share the same water? Do we depend on each other to survive? Why is it important to protect Earth?
4. Keeping those ideas in mind, ask the children to open their eyes.

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**For K to Grade 1:** Give each student a blue construction paper circle the size of a dinner plate OR have students make their own by tracing a plate onto the blue paper and cutting it out. Ask students to draw some things they love about Earth on their circles and sign their names. Ask students to explain what they have chosen to draw and why. Display artwork on your classroom walls.

**For Grades 2 to 4:** Have students work in groups of three or four to list examples of a healthy environment. Discuss them as a class. Give each student a blue construction paper circle the size of a dinner plate OR have students make their own by tracing a plate onto the blue paper and cutting it out. Ask students to draw some things they love about Earth on their circles. On the back, ask them to write three examples of a healthy environment. Display artwork on your classroom walls.

**For Grades 4 to 6:** After they cut out blue construction paper circles the size of dinner plates, have students write short poems about how they feel about Earth. Ask them to copy their poems onto their blue circles and illustrate the circles with paintings or drawings. Hang the artwork in the school.

## Group discussion questions

- As a class, brainstorm all of the ways people can help protect Earth. Ask “Is this enough?” then have students split up into small groups to come up with new ideas. Have groups present ideas to the class.
- Watch the [Blue Dot video](#). Explain what a legal right is. Ask students if they believe they should have a right to a healthy environment. This discussion (and video) may be beyond the knowledge and comprehension of younger students, so please use your judgement and feel free to adapt or bypass this exercise entirely.
- Introduce [David Suzuki](#), one Canadian who has thought a lot about how to protect nature, and the [Blue Dot movement](#), one of the David Suzuki Foundation’s strategies to protect Earth and achieve every Canadian’s right to a healthy environment.

## Super facts

- Half of Canadians live in areas where they are exposed to unsafe levels of air pollution.
- Canada has no national safety regulations for drinking water or binding air quality standards.
- Canada allows the sale and use of hundreds of pesticide products banned in Europe and has weaker rules governing toxic substances like asbestos and formaldehyde.
- The World Health Organization and the Canadian Medical Association estimate tens of thousands of premature deaths and millions of preventable diseases are caused each year in Canada by pollution, contaminated water and other environmental hazards.

## Blue Dot Movement

- The [Blue Dot movement](#) started with a simple idea: that we all deserve the right to a healthy environment — clean air, safe water, healthy food and abundant, diverse ecosystems — and that this right belongs in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, our country’s highest law. This movement is about protecting the people and places we love.
- More than 110 nations recognize their citizens' right to live in a healthy environment. But not Canada.
- Every Canadian deserves a future that is healthier and more secure. With people from all walks of life coming together, we can make positive change happen.

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- Youth play an important role in this movement since they must live with the consequences of today's environmental policies and decisions.

### Superhero missions

- Generate ideas for what your class could do to support the Blue Dot movement and protect Earth.
- Suggestion: Create a mural representing the Blue Dot movement and environmental protection. Take a picture of it and mail it to your local Member of Parliament. OR send the Blue Dot circles created in the first part of this activity. Include a letter about the importance of a healthy environment. Write about what you learned in the Suzuki Superhero activities and why the environment is important to you. Ask your MP to pass a federal environmental bill of rights so Canadians have the right to clean air, safe water and nutritious food.