

## Ethics: Issue Players and Their Positions

### Purpose

Students will learn to identify Environmental Health Problems caused by both living and nonliving things. Students will also learn to summarize Issue Components (event, problem, issue, players, and positions) involving Environmental Health Issues.

### Overview

Students will be introduced to environmental health problems and issues. They will learn the importance of human values in these issues. Examples of environmental contamination (in air, soil, water, and food) will be used to help students understand the various players involved and their positions as they relate to environmental health issues.

### Time

2 class periods

### Key Concepts

A *problem* is a situation or condition in which something or someone is at risk.

An *issue* is a problem about which two or more people or organizations disagree.

A *player* is a person or organization who has a role in an issue or its solution.

A *position* is the stand or posture taken by the player in regard to the issue or its solution.

### Skills

Upon the completion of this activity, students will be expected to be able to:

1. Communicate (either orally or in writing)
  - The concept of environmental health
  - The problems, issues, players, and positions involved in an environmental contamination event
2. Identify value positions represented by different statements related to environmental health and human behaviors.
3. Identify the value positions associated with a number of environmental health issues.

### Materials

Selected articles from the *Ethical and Critical Reading* sections of:

- Air Module    Soil Module
- Water Module    Food Module

Identifying Environmental Problems Chart

Issue Components Chart

### Background

An environmental health **problem** occurs when the condition of something or someone in the natural environment is at risk or threatened by a change. The causes of environmental health problems can either be man-made events or natural events. A sewer pipe break and air pollution from factories are problems caused by man's activities. However, natural events such as biotoxins in seafood and air pollution from volcanoes can also cause major health problems.

Human beings have little control over problems caused by natural events. There is little that can be done to prevent them. Human activities, on the other hand, are actually a

result of choices and decisions to act in a certain way. Humans do have control over the problems that they have caused by their activities.

People tend to have opinions about problems and how to solve them. A problem becomes an **issue** if two or more people (or organizations) disagree about the problem and/or its solution. Communicating an issue is a tricky skill. The first step is stating what the issue is, as clearly as possible.

Issues can become complicated. Typically, issues contain players. **Players** are the individuals, groups, or organizations involved in an issue. Environmentalists, boaters and fishermen, and tourist industry folks are players in water contamination issues. Each of the players has a point of view about what should be done. This point of view is called the player's **position**.

Take the water contamination issue as it relates to the bay. The environmentalists think that the beaches need to remain closed to insure a complete clean-up of a sewer pipe break for health and human safety. That is their position concerning that issue. The tourist industry think that keeping the beaches open is profitable and they want the beaches open. The boaters, swimmers and fishermen are divided as to their positions on the opening of the beaches - some think they should have continued recreational use of the bay, while others want the bay to remain closed a little longer to insure safer water quality.

**Procedure**

The selected articles in the *Ethical and Critical Reading* sections of the Air, Soil, Water, and Food Modules contain environmental health problems, issues, and players who have positions about these issues.

1. Before students can analyze the issue components such as the players and what their positions might be, students need to identify an environmental health problem. Students are to select a problem from the articles read. They are to describe the conditions of things in the natural environment that are at risk and that may affect human health. Make sure that students identify problems involving both the living parts (plants and animal) and nonliving parts (water, soil, air, etc) of the environment.

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**Identifying Environmental Problems**

What is the Environmental Health Event that you have selected?

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the Environmental Problems Affecting the Living Things Involved in this Event?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

What are the Environmental Problems Affecting the Nonliving Things in this Event?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

- After students have read the articles, discuss the relationship between events, problems, and issues. It is important that students understand that issues exist because humans disagree about problems and about how to solve them. Analyze the articles to find these components and complete the following chart.

### Issue Components Chart

Issue Components	Example - Manatee	Environmental Contamination (choose Air, Soil, Water, Food)
The Event	Manatee injuries from boat propellers	
The Environmental Problem	The manatee population is declining and endangered.	
The Environmental Issue	Should recreational boating be allowed in areas frequented by the Florida manatee?	
The Players	Environmentalists Boaters	
The Players' Positions	<u>Environ</u> : In favor of restricting or banning boat use in manatee areas. <u>Boaters</u> : Against banning or restricting boat use in manatee areas.	

### Student Assessment

- Have students complete the Identifying Environmental Problems Chart.
- Have students complete the Issue Components Chart.
- Have students make two drawings. The first drawing will represent one position on an environmental health issue and the other drawing will represent the other view. If there are more than two positions regarding an issue, have students pick the most opposing views to draw. Label the important parts of each drawing.