



TEACHER GUIDE

NATURAL RESOURCES GRADES K-2

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

- **Children may think that we have an unlimited supply of usable water.**
Children see water everywhere. This may lead them to believe that there is plenty of clean water available, and we do not have to worry about running out. In reality, only a small percentage (about 0.3 percent) is freshwater usable by humans.
- **Children may think we will never run out of natural resources.**
The earth's resources are not unlimited. Humans are using more natural resources than at any other time in the earth's history. Some resources could run out or become scarce. Scientific research suggests that we could run out of fossil fuels in less than 80 years.
- **Children may think "man-made" materials do not come from natural resources.**
Nearly all things that humans build, mix and assemble come from the Earth's resources. For example, a robot is not found in nature, but it is made from natural resources like metal, plastic (fossil fuels), rubber, etc.

WHAT ARE NATURAL RESOURCES?

A natural resource is a material that comes from Earth and is used to make the products people need for food, shelter, clothing, entertainment, etc. Natural resources include things like plants, soil, sunshine, water, fossil fuels, air, wildlife, metals and minerals. For example, plants are used for food and medicine; fossil fuels are used for energy, heating and cooling. Metals like gold are used in jewelry and electronics.

WHAT ARE RENEWABLE RESOURCES?

A renewable resource is a resource that can easily be replenished and therefore will not run out. For example, solar power and wind power are renewable because these are not going to run out anytime soon.

WHAT ARE NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES?

A natural resource that when it is used up, will not exist again in a human lifetime. Fossil fuels are considered non-renewable because they take millions of years to naturally form.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Children may have difficulty identifying natural resources that are not in their natural state, for example: wood from a tree=pencils, paper, books or a house. Providing children the opportunity to look at pictures, read “How a ___ is made” books, and sort materials will help them conceptualize.

