People, Resources and the Environment

Everything Is Connected

Introduction:

"Everything is connected to everything else" is often called the First Law of Ecology. This activity encourages students to consider the connections between aspects of our natural environment and human society.

Materials:

Chalkboard and chalk
or
Large pieces of butcher paper/flip chart paper
Markers
Tape

Procedures:

1. Write the words "More People" in the middle of the chalkboard. Tell students that you want them to think of what might be the environmental, economic or social impacts of there being more people. You may want to provide an example, such as… "more people"… might mean "more cars on the road" or "more houses." Next to "More People," draw an arrow and add one of these concepts. Be sure to tell students that there are no right or wrong answers, but you may ask them to explain their proposed connections. Also, let them know that the cause and effect relationship can be positive, negative or neutral.

2. Invite students to come up to the board, a few at a time, to add to this word web. They may add on to the central concept, "More People," or add on to what someone else may have contributed. For each concept that a student adds, he/she should draw arrows to any of the other concepts that form a cause and effect relationship. The object is for the class to create a large and interconnected web.

3. After all of the students have had a chance to contribute to the web and have taken their seats, walk them through the web, starting from the middle. You may wish to ask individual students to explain their additions to the web and to see if other members of the class agree or disagree.

Alternative Procedures:

Instead of having students create one large future wheel on the chalkboard, divide students into groups of three or four and distribute butcher paper and markers to each group. As cooperative groups, they will construct their future wheels, filling the paper as completely as possible. Then have each group tape up their future wheel and allow time for students to view each group's work. You may want to have a representative from each group explain some of the cause and effect relationships on their wheel.

Concepts:
In nature, everything is connected to everything else. Human population growth, for example, is a factor that can have far-reaching effects on the environment and society.

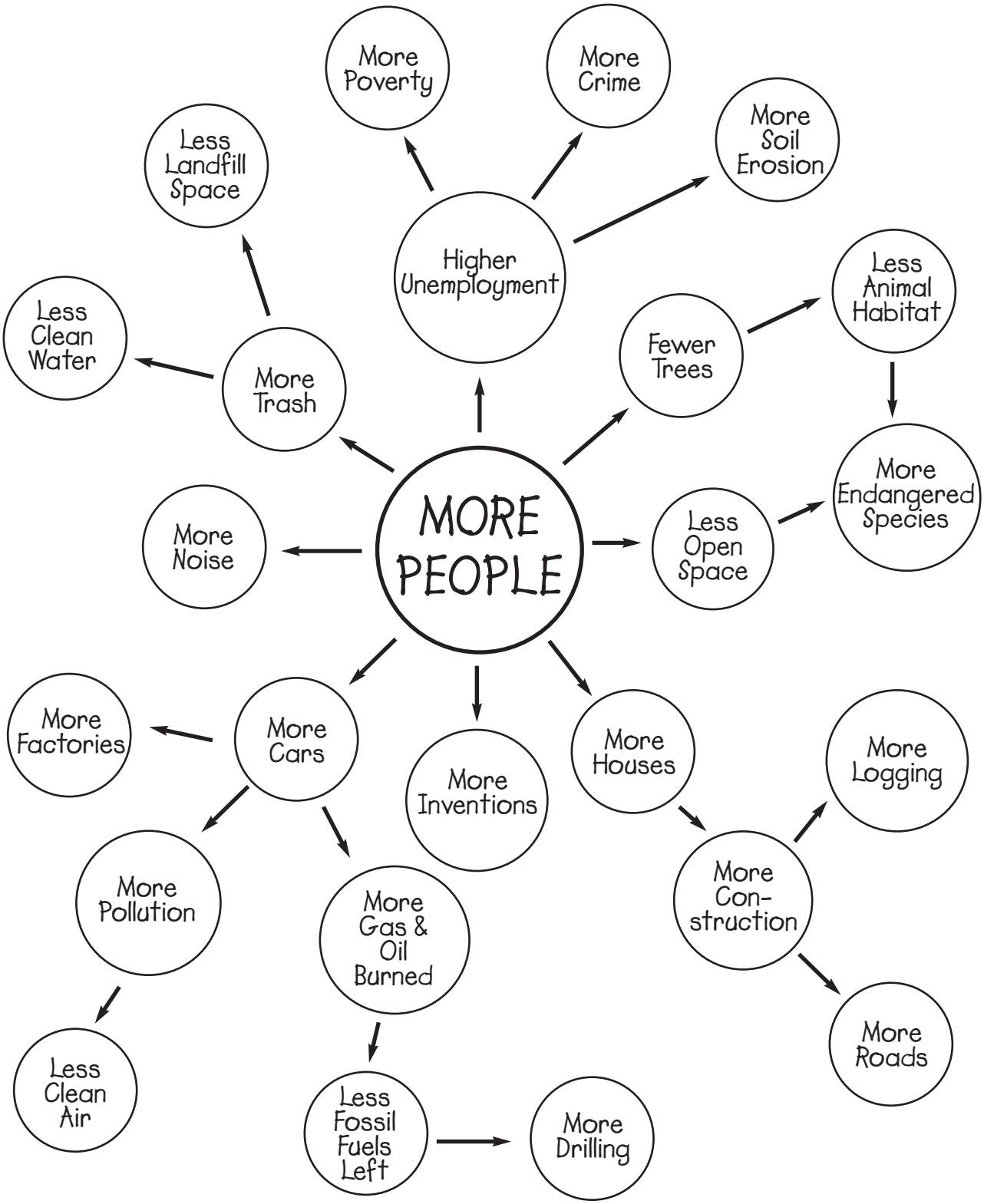
Objectives:
Students will be able to:
◆ Identify possible environmental, social, political and economic effects of a growing world population.
◆ Create a concept map within a cooperative learning group or as a class to illustrate these cause and effect relationships.

Subjects:
Science, Social Studies, Geography, Health, History

Skills:
Drawing connections, explaining cause and effect relationships, working in a cooperative group, concept mapping

Method:
Students identify ways that many factors in human society and the natural environment are interdependent by creating a concept map or "future wheel" as a class or in cooperative learning groups.

Future Wheel Sample



Follow-up Activity:

Using cut-out pictures from magazines, students can recreate their word web into a visual display on poster board or a classroom bulletin board. This way, the activity can be shared with other students in the school and with parents and community members for special event nights.