Using Resources Without Harming Our Planet

KS4 BIOLOGY SUSTAINABILITY ECOSYSTEMS Ages 11-16 ⏰ 3 min read

What Are Natural Resources?

Natural resources are things we take from Earth that we need to survive and live comfortably. These include **water**, **soil**, **forests**, **fossil fuels** like oil and coal, **metals**, and **fish** in our oceans. Every product we use—from our phones to our clothes—comes from natural resources.

The problem is that we use resources faster than nature can replace them. We also create pollution and damage **ecosystems** when we extract and use these resources.

The Three-Step Solution: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Scientists and environmental experts suggest a simple approach: **reduce, reuse, recycle**. **Reducing** means using less stuff in the first place. **Reusing** means using something again instead of throwing it away. **Recycling** means turning old materials into new products.

Think of it like your pocket money: if you spend less, buy things that last, and reuse what you have, you'll have more money left over. The same works for Earth's resources.

Sustainable Practices That Work

Sustainable agriculture grows food without exhausting the soil or poisoning water. Farmers rotate crops, use less chemicals, and protect **biodiversity**. **Renewable energy** from sun and wind replaces coal and oil. **Protected areas** like nature reserves keep **habitats** safe for animals and plants.

Businesses are also changing. Some companies use **sustainable materials** instead of plastic. Others commit to **carbon neutrality**, meaning they release no net **greenhouse gases**.

What Can You Do?

You don't need to wait for adults to fix everything. You can reduce your **carbon footprint** by walking or cycling instead of driving, eating less meat, buying fewer new clothes, and reusing items. Every small choice adds up when millions of people make it.

The key message is this: we can use Earth's resources, but we must be **responsible** about it. By protecting forests, oceans, and soil now, we ensure clean air, fresh water, and healthy food for ourselves and generations to come.

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