

# Environmental Science: Course Syllabus and Policies

Mrs. Evans

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## Course Scope and Sequence:

Environmental Science is the study of all the interactions between humans and the earth. Environmental Science is intended as a basic overview of how the systems of the earth work, and the effects that human activities have on these systems. In addition, you will be learning the skills and habits of mind of a scientist. Knowing how observe, ask questions, and explore the answers to those questions in an organized manner is essential to any study of science. Environmental science is not just a collection of facts to be memorized for a test. Environmental science is a lifelong exploration of the world which surrounds us.

### *The adventure begins NOW!*

#### **Our Textbook will be:**

*Environmental Science* by Karen Arms. Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 2006

## Unit Pacing Guide

Topic	Chapters	Approximate Duration
<b>Unit 1: Introduction to Environmental science?</b> Introduction, science of the environment, tools of Environmental Science, the dynamic earth	1,2,3	4 weeks
<b>Unit 2: Ecology</b> The organization of life, how ecosystems work, biomes, aquatic ecosystems	4,5,6,7	6 weeks
<b>Unit 3: Populations</b> Understanding populations, the human population, biodiversity	8,9,10	5 weeks
<b>Unit 4: Water, Air &amp; Land</b> Water, air, atmosphere & climate change, land, food & agriculture	11,12,13,14,15	8 weeks
<b>Unit 5: Mineral and Energy Resources</b> Mining & mineral resources, nonrenewable energy, renewable energy, waste	16,17,18,19	7 weeks
<b>Unit 6: Our Health and Our Future</b> The environment and human health, economics, policy and the future	20,21	3 weeks
<b>Independent Research Project</b> Each student will choose a topic from the curriculum that you would like to explore in greater detail. You will perform your own research and write a formal research paper to present your findings.	varies	3 weeks

# Environmental Science Classroom Policies:

**Welcome to Environmental Science! In order to ensure that you are successful in reaching your goals this year, please take some time to become familiar with my policies and expectations for you. I am committed to doing all I can to help you learn a great deal of Environmental Science, but I also need you to make a commitment to do your part to stay on track and motivated as the year progresses.**

## **My Philosophy:**

The environment can be defined as “everything that surrounds you.” The air you breathe; the ground beneath your feet; the water that refreshes and cleans you; the animals, plants and microbes who feed and sustain you. We cannot live without any of these. Their health is our health. As decision makers and consumers, we need to understand how our actions affect the systems of the earth. Even little decisions like whether we turn off the water when we brush our teeth add up to huge environmental impacts when you consider that there are billions of people on Planet Earth making this same decision every day. My goal is to make you aware of the impacts of your daily decisions. This class is all about you. How you choose to live your life is important. I will teach you the tools to find answers to the questions that make you curious, and the knowledge to educate others about what you have learned. Together, we can make a difference!

**Science is a process, not merely a collection of facts.** To learn science, you must engage your curiosity and learn to apply the knowledge you gain to new situations.

### **1. Personal Responsibility: You will be expected to take personal responsibility for your learning.**

- If you find that you are falling behind or having difficulties with tests or assignments, it is YOUR JOB to seek assistance.
- I am available to help you after school most days. Please schedule some time where we can work out how to get you back on track.

### **2. Honor Code: True learning depends on honesty.**

- Academic Dishonesty - is defined as knowingly giving or receiving information or assistance on any graded work that is understood to be an example of individual effort. This includes copying or allowing someone to copy your work, receiving unauthorized help on any quiz or test, lab, homework or project, or falsely misrepresenting another's work as your own.
- Any violation of this honor code will result in a zero for the assignment for all involved students, and teacher contact with parents of all involved students.

### **3. Lab Work: This course involves extensive lab and field work.**

- Much of the equipment and materials we use are either expensive to replace, potentially dangerous, or both.
- In order for me to insure your safety and maintain a good learning environment, you must behave like a scientist while in lab.
- Practice good listening and observation skills, handle equipment as instructed and NEVER engage in wild or dangerous behavior or unauthorized experimentation.
- Failure to follow GHS lab policies will result in loss of lab privileges.
- You will have a difficult time passing Environmental Science without your lab grades!!!

### **4. To earn full credit on your work it must be turned in on the due date.**

- Late work will be penalized 10% for every day past the due date it is received.
- Due dates will always be posted on the agenda boards, so please check them daily.

- If you miss a test, lab, or assignment due to an excused absence, it is your responsibility to ask me for the assignment or arrange a time to make up the lab or test. You have five days from your return to complete all missed work without being considered late.

**5. Weekly & Daily Agendas:**

- Each week's agenda will be posted on the side chalkboard. This is my best estimate of what we will be doing each day, but we will remain flexible as needed.
- Each day, the day's agenda and essential question is posted on the left side of the front board. Please read this as soon as you enter the room and copy down on your daily log sheet. You will answer the essential question at the end of the period using what you have learned in class that day. Every Friday, you will turn in this sheet for a grade.

**6. Required Materials:** Each student will need to bring these to class EVERY DAY!

- pencils, and pens in blue or black ink only
- 3-ring binder with lined notebook paper dedicated solely to Environmental Science
- Basic calculator
- You WILL NOT need to bring your textbook. We have a class set that we can use ☺

## Environmental Science Classroom Procedures:

**The following procedures should be followed at all times:**

**1. Come to class on time and immediately take your seat.**

- You are on time only if you are in the room and ready to work when the tardy bell rings.
- We will start class promptly every day and you do not want to miss any of our time together!
- The first assignment every day will be to copy the agenda and essential question onto your daily log sheet.

**2. How to format your papers:**

- Any work done on notebook paper must be in the following format: *Upper right hand corner:* Name (first & last), Date, Class period. *First line:* Assignment Title (will be given, usually written on the board)
- Please make every effort to write neatly!
- If not otherwise directed, always write out any questions given, and write your answers in complete sentences.

**3. Raise your hand and wait to be called on if you have something to say or need to leave your seat for any reason.**

**4. Treat every person in the classroom with dignity and respect.**

- Please avoid using language that may be taken as critical, offensive, or insulting to any one in the room.

**5. Do your best to listen to others before speaking.**

- This will keep you from having to ask questions which have been already answered.

**6. Ask for help if you need it.**

- There are no stupid questions in this room.
- If you do not understand the instructions or have a question about something we are learning, I guarantee there is someone else with the same question but too shy to ask.

**7. Maintain a positive attitude.**

- I am here to help you succeed in learning environmental science.
- Trust me, and I will teach you more than you ever wanted to know!

**8. If you are absent:**

- Make up work is only accepted if your absence was documented as excused.
- On the day you return from your absence, please check the weekly agenda to see what you have missed.
- I will keep copies of all handouts on the front desk.
- Pick up anything you have missed and see me in the last few minutes of the period or during a quiet work time to discuss any questions you may have.
- You have five days from your return to complete all missed work without being considered late.

**9. If you need to leave the room:**

- You must have a hall pass to leave the room.
- I will give each student 6 hall passes per 9 weeks.
- If you have permission to leave the room, fill out one of your passes and give to me to sign.
- Sign out on the Pass sign out sheet by the door with your name and time you leave.
- When you return to the room, sign in with the time you return and place your used pass in the basket next to the sign in/out sheet.
- At the end of the 9 weeks, you will be able to turn in any unused passes for 5 points extra credit each.

**10. How to say good bye:**

- We will be working right up to the bell, please keep an eye on the clock and make sure you give yourself enough time to clean up your work area or lab station before you leave.
- If you leave a mess behind, participation points will be deducted!
- If you finish working before the bell rings, please pack up your belongings and sit quietly until you are released by the teacher.
- Lining up at the door will not be permitted.

**11. If you choose to be disruptive:**

- For our class to be a success, we must all agree to “play by the rules.”
- If you choose to disregard the rules or act in a disruptive manner, there will be the following consequences:

**Step 1: Conference and Warning** (This is your chance to correct your behavior on your own)

**Step 2: Parent Contact** (At this point we need the help of your parent to correct your behavior)

**Step 3: Dean’s Referral** (For severe or dangerous behavior this may be step 1)

# Environmental Science Grading Policy:

**A. Your grade will be based on a total point system.** At any time you may calculate your grade by totaling the number of points you have earned and dividing your total by the total points possible. I will hand out grade sheets for you to use for this purpose. Your learning will be assessed based on the following types of assignments:

**Guided Reading Questions / Problem Sets (GR): 20 points each (one per chapter):**

- For each chapter, you will answer a questions to guide your thinking as we learn the material.
- You need to work on this every night as your regular homework. It will be due on the day of the test.
- It is your responsibility to ask for help if there is any question you do not understand.
- This is to be completed individually by each student. You may not copy another student's work.

**Daily Agenda & Essential Question Learning Log Sheets: 10 points each (one per week)**

- Everyday when you get to class, copy the agenda and essential question from the front board.
- At the end of class, answer the essential question using what you learned in class.
- This sheet will be collected every Friday for a grade.
- If you are absent, check the agenda log book on the front table and copy what you have missed from there (not from another student!)

**Vocabulary Exercises: 10-20 points each (one or more per chapter)**

- We will be learning new vocabulary words for each chapter.
- You will be using several strategies: foldables, word diagrams, etc. to build your vocabulary.

**Labs: 20 points each (4 + per 9 weeks)**

- We will be doing labs on an almost daily basis throughout most of the year.
- Each lab will be due for grading 2 days after our last in-class data collection day for that lab. In addition, a few selected labs will require formal lab write-ups.

**Current Events: 20 points each (Due last school day of every month)**

- Each month you will be required to read one news article related to any issue in environmental science that interests you.
- You need to write a brief abstract of the most pertinent facts in the article (100 words max), and a reaction "editorial" or essay about YOUR feelings concerning the topic (at least 250 words).

**Tests: 50 - 100 points each (Approx. 2-3 / 9 weeks)**

- Tests will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, essay and diagram questions, and will usually cover the material from one chapter in your textbook.
- There will be calculations as well. Remember to bring your calculator with you every test day!

**Participation: 100 points per 9 weeks**

- Each 9 weeks you may earn up to 100 participation points for coming to class prepared with all your necessary supplies, paying attention in class, participating in class discussions and activities and helping to maintain a safe and orderly classroom atmosphere.
- Behavior that is disruptive or off task will make it impossible for you to earn participation points.

**B. The Alachua County grading scale is used for this course.**

A = 90 - 100  
B+ = 87 - 89  
B = 80 - 86  
C+ = 77 - 79

C = 70 - 76  
D+ = 67 - 69  
D = 60 - 66  
F = 0 - 59

*Each semester grade will be calculated as follows:*

1<sup>st</sup> 9 weeks = 45%

2<sup>nd</sup> 9 weeks = 45%

Semester Exam = 10%

*I am looking forward to a great year of ecological exploration with you! Together we will surely make this year one to remember (in a good way). Thank you in advance for your hard work and positive attitude 😊.*

**I have read Ms. Evans' syllabus and understand what is expected of me in Environmental Science. I also understand all of Ms. Evans' policies and I agree to follow them in her classroom.**

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Student's Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's email address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Name (Please Print)

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Parent's email address

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Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's email address

***Please use the space below to tell me anything you think I need to know to help you achieve your academic goals for this course.***