



## CONTINUE THE QUEST!

Schools are facing an uncertain academic year as a result of COVID-19. With that in mind, the U.S. Green Building Council - Missouri Gateway Chapter has reimagined its 2020-2021 Green Schools Quest! This year, schools throughout Missouri and Southern Illinois are invited to:

- **COMPLETE** monthly sustainability challenges, with the guidance of a Green Mentor, from October 2020 through March 2021. Challenges will be flexible, curriculum-friendly and suitable for in-person or virtual instruction.
- **CONSIDER** how existing curriculum can be viewed through the lens of sustainability principles.
- **CONNECT** with other Green Schools to share stories, discover solutions, and exchange ideas.
- **CELEBRATE** all that Green Schools are doing to build more equitable, sustainable communities.
- **CONTRIBUTE** brief updates on successes for a chance to win cash prizes.
- **CONTINUE THE QUEST** to preserve and protect our environment and improve the health and wellness of students and staff!

Register your school by January 8, 2021 to participate in the January - March challenges!

Learn more and register at  
[www.GreenSchoolsQuest.org](http://www.GreenSchoolsQuest.org).



**2020-21**

### Monthly Themes

## Rainbow of Sustainability

The primary challenge for each month in 2020-21 is to integrate sustainability into students' learning. Monthly themes challenge participants further by prompting them to examine how one of the principles outlined in the **Rainbow of Sustainability** (detailed on next page) relates to students' learning.

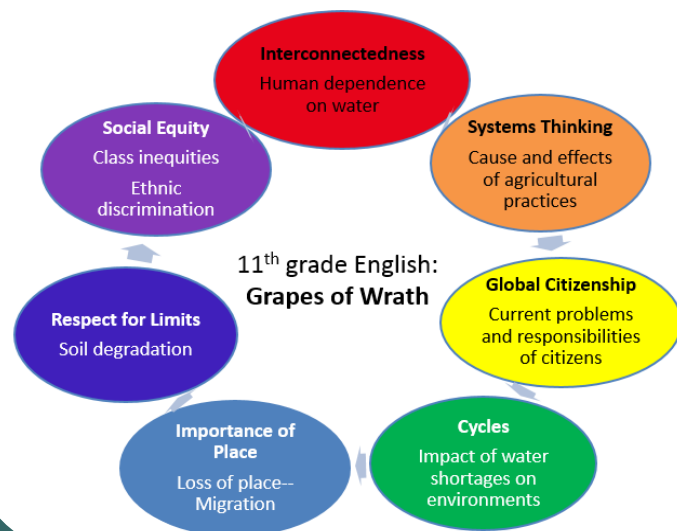
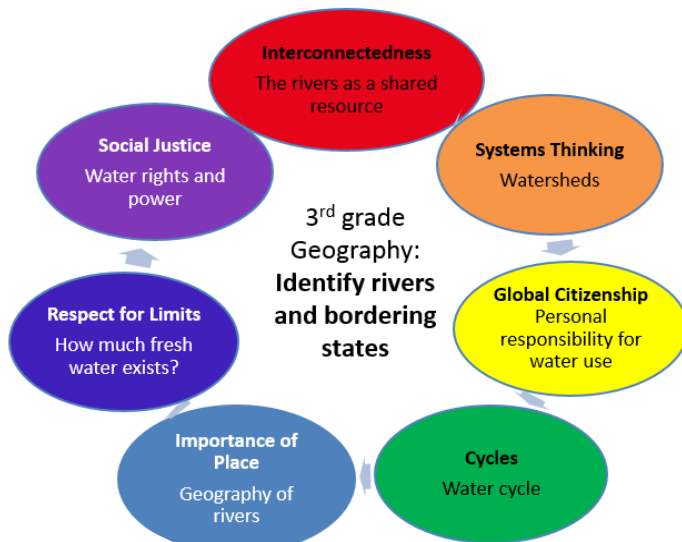
- **October: Importance of Place**
- **November: Interconnectedness**
- **December: Respect for Limits**
- **January: Systems Thinking & Cycles**
- **February: Social Justice**
- **March: Global Citizenship**

These themes may be explored through existing curriculum, by implementing a sustainability project (small or large) at school or home and examining how it connects to the monthly themes, or by engaging in an activity related to that month's principle. Students and teachers are invited to use their creativity to interpret each theme.

# Rainbow of Sustainability

Developed by Lori Diefenbacher of Webster University, the Rainbow of Sustainability is a tool for applying the lens of sustainability to curriculum. Each monthly theme for the 2020-21 Green Schools Quest represents a principle outlined in this tool. These themes may be explored through existing curriculum, by implementing a sustainability project (small or large) at school or home and examining how it connects to the monthly themes, or by engaging in an activity related to that month's principle.

All content on this page is sourced directly from Diefenbacher, Lori. "Rainbow of Sustainability." 2010, St. Louis, Webster University.



## Principles of Sustainability

### Interconnectedness

Sometimes people forget that our Planet is a web of life, where everything is connected to everything else. Humans are only one part of the web. Every community is made up of systems that revolve around one another, be they economic, environmental or social. We need to recognize and honor the connections, always striving for sustainable solutions to conflict and poor practices.

### Systems Thinking

Systems are dynamic, responsive to changes over time. When we think in terms of connected systems, we consider the impact of actions beyond the immediate, looking ahead to changes over time and space. When we view systems using cause-and-effect feedback loops, behavior-over-time graphs, and other tools of systems thinking, we can better project future consequences.

### Global Citizenship

When injustice or ignorance drives a community, individuals can take action to effect change or impact the system in a positive way. We all have a responsibility to honor and respect each other and the environment that supports us.

### Cycles

A cycle is a pattern that repeats over time with regularity. In nature we can study the water cycle, the carbon cycle, the rock cycle, and the cycle of life and death. Cycles are generally resilient because of the diversity on Earth. Loss of biodiversity is disruptive to cycles.

### Importance of Place

Every Place has its own history and needs. Awareness of local history, both natural and human, can generate a sense of unity and environmental stewardship.

### Respect for Limits

Every system has a carrying capacity, a point at which it can sustain no more. A quick reference to depleted oil reserves, fish stocks, and overpopulation demonstrates our lack of respect for limits. It is our job to maintain a state of balance within natural and human systems.

### Social Justice

All resources need to be shared with equity and fairness to meet the needs of living beings across places and generations.

### <<< Applying the tool

Examples pictured to the left illustrate how two standards may be viewed through the lens of sustainability as an opportunity to explore the important sustainability issue of water.