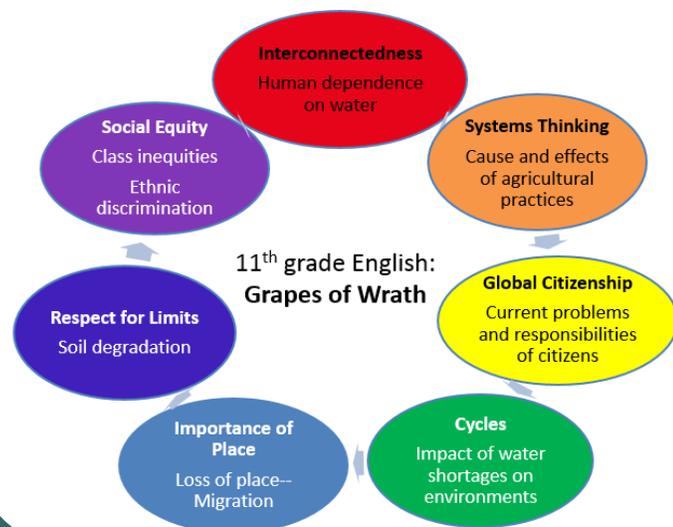
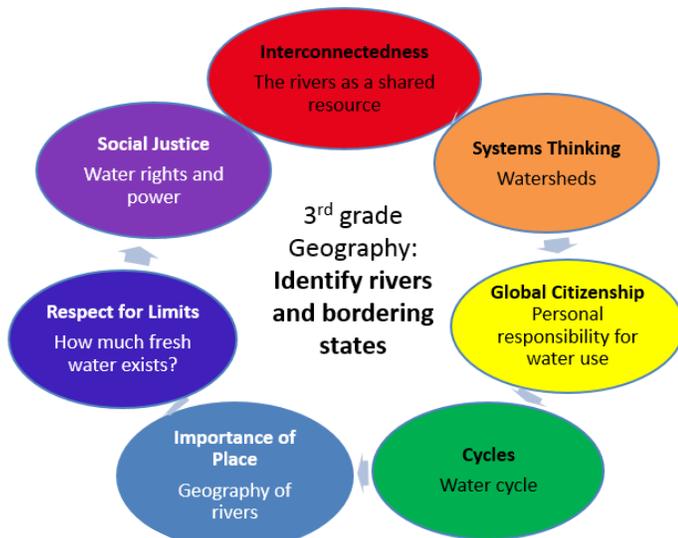


# Rainbow of Sustainability

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.