

Saving energy at school and home



Lesson at a glance

Open as energy detectives: spot anything in the classroom using energy it may not need. Name wasting versus saving energy with classroom examples, then lead a short two-stop indoor walk where pairs tick or sketch lights, screens or chargers left on. Back in class, pupils draw one labelled saving action on the same Investigation Journal page, make a bright switch-it-off reminder card in pairs, share where it should go, and close with simple reasons saving energy helps school and planet.

Learning objectives

- Spot places where energy is being wasted at school
- Suggest and share one practical way to save energy at school or home

Before the bell – prep

Print the energy detective Investigation Journal page per pupil. Gather clipboards (one per pair), pencils, card, markers or crayons, and sticky tack. Plan a two-stop indoor route only (e.g. classroom door, then corridor or cloakroom) and warn nearby staff. Pre-write short card stems on the board.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
clipboard	1	group	classroom	a piece of stiff card or a hardback book to rest paper on
pencil	1	pupil	classroom	crayon
blank card for reminder signs (A5 or half A4)	1	group	classroom	recycled cereal-box card cut into rectangles
markers or crayons	1	group	classroom	coloured pencils
sticky tack	1	class	classroom	masking tape loops (check surfaces first)
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	classroom	plain paper with a drawing box ruled on

**Safety watch-point**

Pupils must not touch switches, plugs or taps unless an adult says so. View toilets and wet areas from the doorway only; stay together on the short indoor route.

**Teaching moves**

- **Getting Started:** Keep the hook light and seated. Ask one or two pupils to point at a light, screen or charger brick and say whether it needs to be on right now. Pair pupils now so partners are ready before the walk; leave clipboards and card materials packed until later.
- **What is wasted energy?:** Treat energy as already known. Chunk only the two detective words with one classroom example each: wasting = on when nobody needs it; saving = switch off when finished. Say the worked model aloud before you leave — wonder, check a corridor light, decide it is waste, plan a reminder.
- **Energy detective walk:** Lead the whole class on a calm two-stop route only, protecting return time inside the 10 minutes. At each stop ask: what do you notice, and is anything using energy we do not need? Keep the focus on lights and idle screens; frame loose charger bricks as a careful habit to check. Pupils must not touch switches, plugs or taps.
- **Record one way to save energy:** Treat this as a second job on the same page, not a tidy-up of the walk tick. Model a new clear labelled drawing of one saving action (switch off the light / tablet). Put word cards on the board and circulate so each pair says: I can save energy by...
- **Make a switch-it-off card:** Give each pair one card and markers. Model one finished card in under a minute: bold light, screen or charger plus a short board stem. Protect finishing time — usable reminder, not open design talk. If tight, pairs draw and stick a printed wording strip.
- **Share our reminder cards:** Invite about four pairs only: card up, where it goes, one saving job. Revoice placement ideas and fold others in with a quick whole-class choice question. Celebrate useful places more than fancy drawing; collect cards to site later with staff agreement.
- **Why saving energy helps:** Put the anchor reason on the board first — school does not pay for energy nobody is using — then brief pair talk and a short share. Keep reasons hopeful and age-fit; avoid fear or guilt. Optional home noticing stays extra, not journal work.

**What it should show**

Pupils typically notice corridor or cloakroom lights and idle screens; some mention a charger brick. Journal saving drawings and cards should show switching off a light, screen or tablet with a short label. If little is left on, they still name what would waste energy. Off-track if they draw never using lights, or turn the walk tick into the only drawing — model the two separate page jobs.



Misconceptions & interventions

- **Saving energy means we should never use lights or screens.** — Revoice on the spot: we use lights and screens when we need them, and switch them off when we finish. Point at the classroom lamp or board as a needed-now example.
- **Only big machines waste energy; a small light or idle screen does not count.** — At the walk stop, ask who is using that light or screen right now. Link back to the cloakroom-light example: small everyday waste still uses energy nobody needs.
- **Children caused the problem and should feel guilty about the planet.** — Frame agency, not blame: small switch-off actions help every day. Use the hopeful board reasons — school pays less; people look after energy and the planet.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• On the walk, pairs point and name one thing (light / screen / charger) and make a simple tick or mark. • Offer board word cards (light, screen, switch off, save energy) and a copied stem for the reminder card.	• Pairs sketch the place they noticed and whisper one practical fix before drawing the saving action. • Ask them to say the full sentence: I can save energy by...	• Pairs choose a clear school placement for their card and explain how it helps next time someone leaves. • In the reasons talk, add a second simple school or planet reason beyond the board anchor.

Cross-curricular hook

Links to SPHE responsible citizenship and simple English labels — short switch-off stems pupils can read and copy.