

# Saving energy for the planet



### Lesson at a glance

Open with a photo of an empty classroom with lights still on and ask whether energy is being used when nobody needs it. Teach the two key ideas—energy waste and saving energy—then lead a short whole-class indoor walk spotting lights, heaters by open doors, and boards left on. Back in class, pupils record two finds and a matching saving idea on the Investigation Journal page, agree three class energy-saving rules, and make simple signs to share.

### Learning objectives

- Find examples of energy waste at school and say why saving energy helps the planet
- Agree and present simple class energy-saving rules

### Before the bell – prep

Print one Investigation Journal page per pupil and leave journals plus pencils in class—nothing leaves the room. Plan a short indoor route (classroom, corridor, hall entrance, toilets from the doorway) and tell nearby staff you will pass quietly. Have spare card and markers ready for pair signs.

### Materials

| Item                                                | Qty | Per   | Source             | Low-cost substitute                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Investigation Journal page                          | 1   | pupil | provided printable | a plain A4 sheet ruled into two boxes labelled waste found and our rule |
| pencil                                              | 1   | pupil | classroom          | any writing or drawing tool the child already uses                      |
| card for energy-saving signs                        | 1   | pair  | classroom          | the back of a used cereal box cut into a rectangle                      |
| markers or crayons                                  | 1   | pair  | classroom          | coloured pencils                                                        |
| blu-tack or masking tape for displaying signs later | 1   | class | classroom          | ask the caretaker to pin signs on a noticeboard                         |



### Safety watch-point

Stay together as one calm line; no running. Do not enter rooms without permission; mind wet floors near sinks; an adult opens any outside door if used.



### Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Keep these three minutes light. Show the empty-room photo on the IWB, or point to a nearby lit empty space. Take a few quick ideas only—accept every answer—and spark curiosity that energy can be used when nobody needs it.
- **What is energy waste?:** Teach only the two board lines: energy waste is using energy when nobody needs it; saving energy is using what we need then switching off. Model the wonder–predict–check cycle aloud, take hands-up guesses for the walk, and head off the idea that saving means never using lights or heat.
- **Energy-waste walk:** Lead one calm line on the short indoor route. Pause at two or three spots and prompt: Is energy being used? Does anybody need it right now? What could we change? Keep voices low; no clipboards. At the last stop, restate: remember two finds to write about when we get back.
- **Record our findings:** Before journals open, spend about one minute naming finds together and write two or three on the IWB. Then hand out pages and circulate with starters: I found... Energy was being wasted because... We could save energy by... Match each saving idea to the waste spotted.
- **Agree our class rules:** Spend about one minute on the planet reason—less wasted power looks after the world we share—then steer four minutes to three doable promises from the IWB finds (switch lights off when leaving; close doors when the heater is on; turn the board off when we leave). Write the three rules large for the sign step.
- **Make and share our signs:** Give each pair one card and markers: one short rule from the class list plus one simple picture, large clear letters. Share three or four pairs quickly—hold up, read the rule, name the place—one kind clap, then next. Collect the rest for later display with principal or caretaker permission.



### What it should show

Pupils typically name corridor lights, boards or screens left on, heaters near open doors, and empty rooms still lit. A successful journal page shows at least one real walk find plus a matching saving action. If little waste is visible, celebrate careful habits and use a prepared wasteful-scene photo so the class still has a concrete example.



Misconceptions & interventions

- **Saving energy means we must sit in the dark or be cold.** — Revoice the board line: we use lights and heat when we need them, then switch off when we do not. Comfort and safety still matter—saving is stopping waste, not going without.
- **A dripping tap is the same kind of waste as lights left on.** — If a child notices a drip, briefly say supplying water also uses energy, then steer back to the core look-fors: lights, heat, boards/screens and open doors so the energy idea stays clear.

Differentiation

| Emerging                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Developing                                                                                                                                                                    | Proficient                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Let the pupil draw the waste and dictate a short saving idea for you or a partner to scribe key words; they may record a class find from the shared IWB naming talk if their own memory blanks.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prompt them to match the saving idea tightly to the waste they saw and say the place in school where the rule should apply.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask them to add where the idea should be used across the school, or—if they finish a sign early—design a second home-noticing sign on spare paper (still paper only).</li></ul> |

Cross-curricular hook

Links to SPHE care for the environment and English procedural writing as pairs craft one short, clear rule for their sign.