

STUDY GUIDE

STEVE TRASH – ECOLOGY IS AWESOME

BUS-IN THEATRE SHOW

Grades K–6

SHOW OVERVIEW

Steve Trash – Ecology Is Awesome is a high-energy, theatrical science show that helps students discover how **everything in the natural world is connected**.

Using **magic, music, comedy, and audience participation**, Steve introduces students to the big idea of **ecology** — the science that explains how plants, animals, people, air, water, and soil all depend on one another.

Students explore questions like:

What is ecology? What is pollution? How do we know everything is connected?

And then they learn the surprising answer:

Shhhhh... the answer is science.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After attending the show, students will be able to:

1. **Explain what ecology is**
Understand ecology as the science of connections in nature.
2. **Recognize that everything in the natural world is connected**
Learn how changes in one part of the environment affect other parts.
3. **Understand what pollution is**
Identify pollution as something that harms natural systems.
4. **Understand how science helps us know these things**
Learn that scientists study patterns, evidence, and cause-and-effect.

5. **Develop curiosity and respect for the natural world**
See themselves as observers and protectors of the environment.

KEY VOCABULARY

Ecology

The scientific study of how living and nonliving things are connected.

Environment

Everything around us — air, water, land, plants, animals, and people.

Pollution

Something added to the environment that harms living things.

Connection

The way things affect and depend on one another.

Science

The way we study the natural world by observing, asking questions, and finding evidence.

VIDEO EXTENSIONS – ECOLOGY IN ACTION

These short videos help reinforce the big ideas from the *Ecology Is Awesome* show and give students a clear, science-based way to understand how people affect the environment.

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle

https://youtu.be/uZpkyAMjeMo?si=Tome9E1i_DDQU3rN

Why this video matters:

In the show, students learn that everything in nature is connected — and that trash doesn't really disappear. This video helps explain the “magic words” of ecology:

- **Reduce** – Use less to create less waste
- **Reuse** – Use items again instead of throwing them away
- **Recycle** – Turn used materials into new products

Students see how these simple actions help protect natural resources and reduce pollution.

Quick discussion prompts:

- Which of the 3 R's do you already use?
- Which one do you think helps the environment the most?
- How do the 3 R's help nature stay balanced?



What Is Pollution?

<https://youtu.be/UwBI9ECnAtk?si=Bta8VG5Jj6yV3Nt3>

Why this video matters:

During the show, students learn that pollution in one place can affect living things far away. This video explains:

- What pollution is
- How pollution can harm air, water, land, plants, animals, and people
- Why pollution is a problem scientists study

It connects directly to the idea that **everything in nature is connected**.

Quick discussion prompts:

- What are some examples of pollution?
- How can pollution in one place affect other parts of nature?
- What can kids do to help reduce pollution?



SHOW CONNECTION: MAGIC, WONDER & SCIENCE

In the show, Steve uses magic to create *wonder* — but then helps students understand that:

- Nature isn't random
- Patterns can be observed

- Effects have causes

Science is how we discover that:

- Pollution in one place can affect animals far away
- Changes in air or water matter
- Everything in nature is connected

Magic gets our attention.

Science explains the truth.



POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions to reflect on the performance:

- What does the word *ecology* mean?
- Can you name two things in nature that are connected?
- What is pollution, and why is it a problem?
- How do scientists figure out what is happening in nature?
- Why is it important for people to understand ecology?



TRUE / FALSE – ECOLOGY CHECK

1. **Ecology is the study of connections in nature.**
 True.
2. **Pollution can affect plants, animals, and people.**
 True.
3. **Nothing in nature affects anything else.**
 False.
4. **Science helps us understand how the natural world works.**
 True.

5. Kids can notice and care about the environment.

 True.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (Classroom-Friendly)

Connection Web

Students name things in nature and draw lines showing how they connect.

Pollution or Not?

Discuss examples and decide whether they help or harm the environment.

Ecology Observation Walk

Students list things they see outdoors and how they might be connected.

“Ecology Is Awesome Because...”

Students complete the sentence with a drawing or sentence.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS (High-Level)

✓ Science

- Environmental science
- Cause and effect
- Human impact on ecosystems

✓ English Language Arts

- Listening to informational presentations
- Speaking and discussion
- Vocabulary development

✓ Civics & Character

- Responsibility
- Stewardship
- Respect for shared spaces

ABOUT STEVE TRASH

Steve Trash is the star of the PBS science series **Steve Trash Science** and a nationally recognized performer who uses **magic, music, and science** to spark curiosity and environmental awareness.

He has performed for millions of students worldwide, helping kids understand science — and why it matters.

 www.stevetrash.com

 <https://www.stevetrash.com/bio>

TEACHER TIP

This BUS-IN study guide works especially well as:

- A **big-idea science discussion**
- A **lead-in to environmental units**
- A **post-show reflection on connections and cause-and-effect**

The show plants the seed.
This guide helps it grow.