

Lesson 5: The Air Quality Health Index



Student worksheet - internet activity

1. Predict what sort of information you think you will find on a website that has the address **www.airhealth.ca**.

2. Log onto **www.airhealth.ca**. Who hosts this website? (Hint: look at the very top of the page.)

3. The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is a new index that helps Canadians protect their health each day from air pollution. How do you think an index that measures air pollution can help you to protect your health?

4. Find and record two pieces of information about the following subjects. (Hint: check the side bar.)

Subject	Information
About the AQHI	1. 2.
People who are “at risk”	1. 2.
The link between air quality and weather	1. 2.

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Student worksheet - internet activity (continued)

5. (a) Click on “your local AQHI conditions”. What image appears?

(b) Click on your province. Now, locate the Greater Toronto Area on the map and click. What happens? _____

(c) From here, click on your City (or the one that is closest to you) and then answer the questions below.

6. Find the scale below and colour it to match the colours on the scale from the website.

Colour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	+
Risk	Low (1 – 3)			Moderate (4-6)			High (7 – 10)				Very High

7. Which numbers are associated with a low health risk? _____

8. Which numbers are associated with a moderate health risk? _____

9. Which numbers are associated with a high health risk? _____

10. How do you know when the air is extremely poor? _____

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Student worksheet - internet activity (continued)

11. Find the current Air Quality Health Index reading for your city today.

a) What advice is offered to those who are “at risk” or who suffer when air pollution is high?

b) If the current reading showed a high health risk (7-10), what do you think people who are “at risk” (like people with asthma) would need to do?

12. Do you think you will use the Air Quality Health Index to help protect your own health? Explain.

13. Do you consider yourself to be “at risk” or part of the general population? How do you know?

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Teacher instructions

Introducing the activity

*Note: The federal government’s Air Quality Health Index is a tool that reports the health risk associated with local air quality on a scale from 1 to 10. A reading of 1 means low health risk and 7 or greater represents a high health risk. This index can help you and your students decide when to enjoy physical activity outdoors and when to reduce or reschedule your activities. If you are looking for additional resources on the Air Quality Health Index, the Clean Air Partnership provides a toolkit that contains video clips, radio advertisements, printable resources and web tools. **If you are interested in ordering an Air Quality Health Index toolkit, please visit http://www.cleanairpartnership.org/air_quality_health_index.***

- Before students begin using the computers, put them into small groups of three or four. You are challenging them to become “government advisory committees”! Ask students what they think is meant by the term “advisory committee”? (*A group of people who gather together to investigate a problem and recommend solutions.*) In this scenario, students will be creating recommendations for the Canadian government. Have them jot down their thoughts and present the results of their discussions to the class.
- Read the following out loud and write the questions on the board:
“Imagine that you have been asked by the government of Canada to help keep Canadians safe on the days when the air is not healthy to breathe.” Government officials would like to hear your recommendations on the following:
 - Do you think it would be a good idea to tell Canadians how much pollution is in the air every day so that they know what kind of air they are breathing? Explain your answer.
 - What would be the best way to inform Canadians about pollution levels every day: a radio announcement, a television advertisement or a website? Explain your choice.
 - If you were to create a website, how would you make it appealing to young people like yourselves?
- Once students have presented their recommendations, explain that the government (Environment Canada) has created a website that helps Canadians protect their health from air pollution and that they will be exploring it in an internet activity.

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Teacher instructions (continued)

Ideas for reviewing the worksheet

- The activity is self explanatory, but it may work best if students work in partners; one person can navigate the website and the other can record the information.
- Review the worksheet with students before they go to the internet so that they are familiar with the questions before they begin. Have them think about how closely this website comes to what they would consider appealing if they were designing it themselves.
- Once students have completed the activity, review the final question with the class: “Do you consider yourself to be “at risk” or part of the general population?” Probe a little deeper by asking them the following: What does it mean to be “at risk”. Can the level of risk change as they age? What might happen that would put them in the “at risk” category? Is there any way that they can reduce their chances of becoming “at risk”? How?

