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Activities

What's in the Air?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The air we breathe is mostly a mixture of two nonmetals, nitrogen and oxygen. It also has other substances we don't want to be breathing. In this Planet Diary activity, you'll take a look at what's in the air we breathe.

Directions

- Ozone is one of the "bad guys" in our air. Go to the Environmental Protection Agency's Air Now for Students. Select *How Ozone is Formed*, then click *Start*. Use the controls to pause or replay the animation. Then answer Workspace questions 1 and 2.
- Return to the Air Now page and select *O_3: Good Up High, Bad Nearby* from the animation menu. Click *Start* to watch the clip. Answer questions 3 and 4.
- Select the *Particle Pollution* animation and click *Start*. After watching it, answer question 5.
- The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a daily reading of how polluted the air is around the nation. Look at the color code for *Air Quality Index* in the column on the right. Click the Air Now link below the AQI color code for Today's Air Quality Forecast. Look closely at the map of air quality conditions across the United States today. Select your state from the pull-down below the map. Then choose your local within your state to get the latest air quality forecast. Answer the last question.
- Try yuor skill controlling pollution with this fun Smog City 2 interactive simulation.

Workspace

1. What are the main sources of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds (VOCs)?

2. How is ozone formed in the atmosphere?

3. Explain the meaning of "good up high, bad nearby" for ozone.

4. What destroyed much of the ozone in the stratosphere?

5. Why do pollution particles smaller than 10 micrometers present the biggest health hazard? Where do these fine particles come from?

6. What is today's AQI color and air hazard level for your local area? Summarize today's AQI report for your area, including any special health hazard warnings.

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