

RESILIENT NORTHEASTERN NEW JERSEY



Ages 12 - 13

Introduction to Resilient **NENJ**

Today, we're going to delve into something important called the "Resilient Northeastern New Jersey Program." This program is like a dedicated group of community leaders and experts who have come together to make our town in Northeastern New Jersey resilient in the face of a changing climate.



Now, you're probably aware that climate change is causing some significant shifts in our environment, like more extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and unpredictable patterns.

The Resilient Northeastern New Jersey Program is our town's response to these challenges.

Here are the main goals of this program:

- **Protecting Natural Spaces:** They aim to safeguard our local natural areas, such as parks, forests, and wetlands. This involves planting native vegetation to create barriers against rising seas and provide habitats for wildlife.
- **Reducing Carbon Footprint:** The program is focused on reducing our community's contribution to climate change by promoting energy efficiency and sustainable practices. This includes encouraging less car use, more energy-efficient appliances, and renewable energy sources.
- **Preparing for Extreme Weather:** To ensure our safety during storms and floods, the program helps us prepare with emergency plans and resilient infrastructure. This way, we're ready to face the challenges posed by extreme weather events.



So, the Resilient Northeastern New Jersey Program is essentially our town's "climate insurance policy." It's a way to make sure we're equipped to handle the changes happening around us. And here's the cool part – you can be part of this initiative too! Learning about climate change, conservation, and sustainability is a great way for young minds like yours to contribute to our community's resilience and a better future for all.

***THE ECO-SQUAD'S
RESILIENT ADVENTURE***



Resilient NENJ: The Eco-Squad's Resilient Adventure

Once upon a time, in a little neighborhood in Northeastern New Jersey, lived a curious and eco-conscious teenager named Maya. Maya had always been fascinated by nature and the environment. She believed in making a difference in her community and protecting the beautiful natural spaces around her.

One sunny afternoon, as Maya was planting flowers in her garden, she received a message from her best friend, Ethan. It was an invitation to join a special group called the "Eco-Squad." The Eco-Squad was a close-knit group of friends who were passionate about environmental conservation and inspired by the goals of the Resilient Northeastern New Jersey Program.

Maya, excited about this opportunity, headed over to the local park to meet Ethan and the rest of the squad. There, she met Lily, a tech-savvy inventor, Noah, an enthusiastic tree hugger, and Sophia, a talented artist who used her skills to raise environmental awareness.

Their mission was to address the three main goals of the Resilient Northeastern New Jersey Program:

- **Protecting Natural Spaces:**

The Eco-Squad decided to tackle this goal first. They organized a community clean-up event at the local marshland. Armed with gloves and garbage bags, they set out to collect litter that had accumulated in this beautiful natural area over time. As they worked together, they not only cleaned up the marsh but also educated passersby about the importance of keeping nature clean and pristine.

- **Reducing Carbon Footprint:**

To address this goal, the Eco-Squad decided to promote biking as an eco-friendly alternative to cars. They hosted "Bike to School" days, encouraging their classmates and neighbors to leave their cars at home and pedal to their destinations. They also organized a "bike decorating" event to make biking even more fun, complete with colorful streamers and creative designs.

- **Preparing for Extreme Weather:**

To ensure their community was prepared for extreme weather events, the Eco-Squad conducted workshops on emergency preparedness. They taught their neighbors how to create emergency kits, establish communication plans, and stay safe during storms and floods. They even helped organize mock drills to practice what to do in case of an emergency.

As the seasons passed, the Eco-Squad became well-known in their community for their dedication to environmental causes. More and more people joined their efforts, and together they made a real impact on the neighborhood's resilience in the face of climate change.

Maya and her friends had not only embraced the goals of the Resilient Northeastern New Jersey Program but had also shown that even young teenagers could lead the way in creating a greener and more resilient community. Their story inspired many others to follow in their eco-friendly footsteps, creating a better future for Northeastern New Jersey and the planet.



Resilient NENJ: Short Story Exercises

Workbook Exercise 1: Environmental Awareness Poster

Objective: Encourage students to express their understanding of the importance of protecting natural spaces, inspired by the story.

Instructions:

1. Read the story "The Eco-Squad's Adventure" with the students.
2. Discuss the Eco-Squad's efforts to protect natural spaces, specifically the clean-up event at the marsh.
3. Ask each student to create an eye-catching poster that highlights the importance of keeping natural spaces clean and free of litter.
4. In their posters, students should include a powerful message or slogan related to environmental conservation.
5. Provide art supplies like colored pencils, markers, or digital design tools for students to use.
6. Encourage them to share their posters with the class and explain the message they chose.

Workbook Exercise 2: Emergency Preparedness Plan

Objective: Teach students the importance of being prepared for extreme weather events, as demonstrated by the Eco-Squad.

Instructions:

1. Discuss the Eco-Squad's commitment to helping their community prepare for extreme weather events, including their workshops on emergency preparedness.
2. Ask students to create their own "Emergency Preparedness Plan" for their household. They should include the following:
 3. A list of essential items to include in an emergency kit (e.g., flashlights, first aid supplies, non-perishable food, water).
 4. An emergency communication plan, including a designated meeting place for family members.
 5. Steps to follow during a storm or flood, such as staying informed through weather updates.
6. Encourage students to discuss their plans with their families and ensure that everyone is aware of the emergency procedures.
7. Have a class discussion about the importance of being prepared for emergencies and share any interesting insights or lessons learned from their plans.