


RESILIENT NORTHEASTERN NEW JERSEY



Grades 11 - 12

Introduction to Resilient **NENJ**

Today, we're going to dive into a program that embodies proactive change in our community: the "Resilient Northeastern New Jersey Program." This initiative represents a comprehensive approach to addressing the impacts of climate change and fostering resilience.



You're likely well-acquainted with the concept of climate change, a global issue causing shifts in weather patterns, sea-level rise, and extreme events. The Resilient Northeastern New Jersey Program is our local response, driven by a commitment to preparing our community for these challenges.

Here are the key facets of this program:

- **Protecting Natural Spaces:** This aspect involves the strategic preservation and restoration of our natural environments, including parks, forests, and wetlands. Native plantings are used to fortify our coastal defenses and bolster local ecosystems.
- **Reducing Carbon Footprint:** To combat climate change, the program promotes sustainable practices and innovation. This includes encouraging alternative transportation methods, transitioning to renewable energy sources, and adopting energy-efficient technologies.
- **Preparing for Extreme Weather:** Our region faces increased risks from extreme weather events. The program focuses on enhancing our community's resilience through robust emergency response plans, strengthened infrastructure, and public education on disaster preparedness.



The Resilient Northeastern New Jersey Program serves as a model for local climate action and community engagement, with the aim of building a more sustainable and adaptable community.

What's exciting is that you, as emerging leaders, can actively contribute to and shape the future of this program. By deepening your knowledge of climate change, sustainability, and resilience, you're not only preparing yourself for the challenges ahead but also influencing positive change in our community and beyond.

THE RESILIENT VISIONARIES



Resilient NENJ: The Green Guardians' Resilient Adventure

In the heart of Northeastern New Jersey, a group of high school friends united by their shared passion for environmental conservation formed a tight-knit circle known as "The Resilient Visionaries." Among them was Sarah, a 16-year-old with a deep love for the natural world and a determination to make a lasting impact on her community, aligning perfectly with the goals of the Resilient Northeastern New Jersey Program.

The Resilient Visionaries aimed to address the program's key objectives, starting with:

1. Protecting Natural Spaces:

One sunny afternoon, they organized a massive community event to restore a nearby wetland. Armed with shovels and native plant seedlings, they worked tirelessly, knowing that re-establishing these vital ecosystems would safeguard against rising sea levels and provide refuge for local wildlife. Sarah was at the forefront, explaining the importance of wetlands to curious community members.

2. Reducing Carbon Footprint:

To combat climate change, The Resilient Visionaries embarked on a mission to promote eco-friendly transportation. They transformed an old bus into a solar-powered mobile classroom to teach students about clean energy and sustainable transportation options. They encouraged their peers to join the "Green Commute Challenge" by biking, walking, or using public transit to get to school.

3. Preparing for Extreme Weather:

Understanding the increased risk of extreme weather events in their region, The Resilient Visionaries worked closely with local authorities to develop a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan. They organized community-wide drills, distributed emergency kits, and educated their neighbors on staying safe during storms and floods.

As the seasons changed, The Resilient Visionaries became beacons of hope and resilience in their community. Their unwavering dedication to preserving natural spaces, reducing carbon emissions, and enhancing disaster preparedness was nothing short of inspiring. More and more people joined their cause, recognizing the importance of taking proactive steps to protect their beloved Northeastern New Jersey.

Sarah and The Resilient Visionaries knew that their efforts were about more than just meeting program goals; they were creating a legacy of resilience and environmental stewardship for generations to come. Their story was a testament to the power of young leaders, demonstrating that, when united by a common purpose, they could drive real change and ensure a brighter future for their community.

Resilient NENJ: Short Story Exercises

Workbook Exercise 1: Wetland Ecosystem Analysis

Objective: Encourage students to understand the importance of wetland ecosystems and their role in protecting against climate-related challenges, inspired by the story.

Instructions:

1. Read the story "The Resilient Visionaries" with the students.
2. Discuss the Resilient Visionaries' efforts to restore a wetland ecosystem in their community.
3. Provide a diagram or description of a wetland ecosystem, including its key components (e.g., plants, animals, water).
4. Ask students to research and list at least five benefits of wetlands, such as flood control, water purification, and wildlife habitat.
5. Encourage students to write a short essay or create a presentation explaining why preserving wetlands is crucial for community resilience and environmental conservation.
6. Discuss the role of wetlands in protecting against climate-related challenges and how their restoration contributes to resilience.

Workbook Exercise 2: Sustainable Transportation Proposal

Objective: Engage students in developing a proposal to promote sustainable transportation options in their community, inspired by the story.

Instructions:

1. Discuss the Resilient Visionaries' initiative to promote sustainable transportation, including their solar-powered mobile classroom and the "Green Commute Challenge."
2. Ask students to research different sustainable transportation options (e.g., public transit, biking, walking) and their benefits for reducing carbon emissions.
3. Provide a template for a "Sustainable Transportation Proposal" that includes sections for goals, strategies, and action steps.
4. Have students work individually or in groups to create a proposal for promoting sustainable transportation in their community. They should include details like target audiences, educational campaigns, and incentives.
5. Encourage students to present their proposals to the class, highlighting the potential impact on reducing the community's carbon footprint.
6. Discuss the importance of sustainable transportation in addressing climate change and community resilience.

Resilient NENJ: Short Story Exercises

Workbook Exercise 3: Community Emergency Preparedness Plan

Objective: Teach students the importance of emergency preparedness and engage them in developing a comprehensive community emergency preparedness plan, as demonstrated in the story.

Instructions:

1. Discuss the Resilient Visionaries' commitment to preparing their community for extreme weather events, including their emergency preparedness workshops.
2. Provide a blank "Community Emergency Preparedness Plan" template with sections for emergency contacts, evacuation routes, and emergency kit contents.
3. Ask students to work in small groups and create an emergency preparedness plan for a specific location in their community (e.g., a school, neighborhood, or community center).
4. Have each group present their plan to the class, explaining the key elements and emphasizing the importance of community-wide preparedness.
5. Discuss the role of young leaders in promoting emergency preparedness and resilience.
6. Encourage students to share their plans with local authorities or community organizations to potentially implement their ideas in real-life emergency preparedness efforts.