

Unit planner

Aims of the unit

Looking after the environment is probably the most important challenge we face. Everyone can make changes to their everyday lives to help protect the environment in some way. Small steps such as using our cars less and recycling our rubbish can all make significant differences. This unit aims to help children understand the importance of making these changes and encourages them to behave as responsible members of the community.

Key concept

Understanding why and how we should look after the community and the environment.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit:

- All the children should be able to explain why it is important to protect the community and the environment. They should be able to identify common causes of pollution in the local area (including their school), such as litter and vehicle fumes.
- Most should understand the basic concepts of recycling and reusing materials to save energy and resources.
- Some may be able to generate new ideas both for looking after the community and the environment and ways of encouraging others to do the same.

Curriculum links

PSHE

- Preparing to play an active role as citizens

Every Child Matters

- Make a positive contribution

SEAL themes

- Changes

Geography

- Geographical enquiry and skills: pupils should be taught to ask geographical questions; observe and record; express their own views about people, places and environments; communicate in different ways.

Vocabulary

Environment, community, local, school, homes, pollution, recycling, wildlife, property

Organisation

The activities in this unit may be worked through in the order in which they appear or in any order to suit your ongoing planning. All of the activities are introduced as part of whole-class teaching. The follow-up activities include a range of individual, paired, small-group and whole-class work.

Looking after our environment

Resources

You will need the following resources to complete the activities in this unit:

Core photocopiable pages

Page 90 Let's clean up

Page 91 My report

Page 92 Respect!

Page 93 Self-evaluation sheet

CD-ROM

Interactive activities:

- Tidy up!
- Recycling bins
- Green spaces

Photocopiables:

- Let's clean up (support)
- Let's clean up (extension)
- My report (extension)
- Respect! (extension)

Plus core photocopiables as above

Templates, cards and illustrations:

- Being responsible
- Who's responsible?
- I can help
- My plan

Children's booklet:

- Looking after our environment

Evaluation

The self-evaluation sheet and children's booklet have been designed to allow the children to assess how much they have learned about looking after the environment during this unit. It is suggested that the child responds to the evaluation by either drawing or writing answers according to his or her ability. Some guidance from an adult helper may be necessary.

Watch points

Be aware of the different types of homes in which children may live. Avoid criticising untidy or dirty homes, but encourage the children to take positive steps to improve their own environments.

Let's talk

Circle time and thinking activities

These questions will get the children thinking and talking about how they can look after their community and the environment. Ensure, before beginning the discussion, that the children understand the words 'community' and 'environment'. Encourage them to think about their home environment first before extending the discussion to thinking about the local area and, if appropriate for the maturity of the class, the world environment.

1 What is a community? How many communities are you part of? What is the local community? What do you like about living in a community? What is the environment? What other environments are there?

2 Do you think it is important to look after your home? Why? What would your home be like if you didn't look after it? How do you help look after your home?

3 How do we look after our school? Who keeps the school clean for us? Who looks after the grounds? How can you help to look after our school? Is it important to look after our school? Why?

4 How many of you live near school? How many live further away? What is it like where you live? What are the best things about where you live? What are the worst things? How could you help to look after where you live?

5 What do you know about pollution? Is it a good or bad thing? Why? What pollutes our streets? What pollutes the rivers? What could you do to help stop pollution?

7 Have you ever made something new from something old? What did you make? Were you pleased with what you made?

8 Do you or your families care for wildlife? What do you do? How many of you put food out for the birds in winter? Why is this a good thing to do? How else could you care for wildlife?

9 Can you think of any green spaces near school? Have you visited these places? What are they like? What do you do there? How do you look after these green spaces?

10 Do you always remember to ask if you want to borrow something from a friend? Is it important to do this? Why? How do you feel if someone takes something of yours without asking?



6 How many of you recycle at home? What things do you recycle? Why is it good to recycle? How do we recycle things at school?

Activities

Activity 1: The community and the environment

Talk about the words 'community' and 'environment'. What do they mean? Invite the children to write down their ideas or to complete the first column in the chart on the self-evaluation sheet for this section. (Keep these notes to use in activity 11 **Make a difference!**)

Ask the children to describe how they can take care of their environment. How are they responsible for their environment at home? Do they keep their rooms tidy and help with jobs, such as recycling and collecting leaves? Now talk about the school environment. Can the children think of things they can do to improve the environment at school? For example, they can keep the classroom tidy and not drop litter in the playground. Why is it important to do these things?

Can the class think of important things that we all have to do to care for our communities? Ask the children to write the most important community issue they can think of on a leaf-shaped piece of paper and create a classroom tree display.

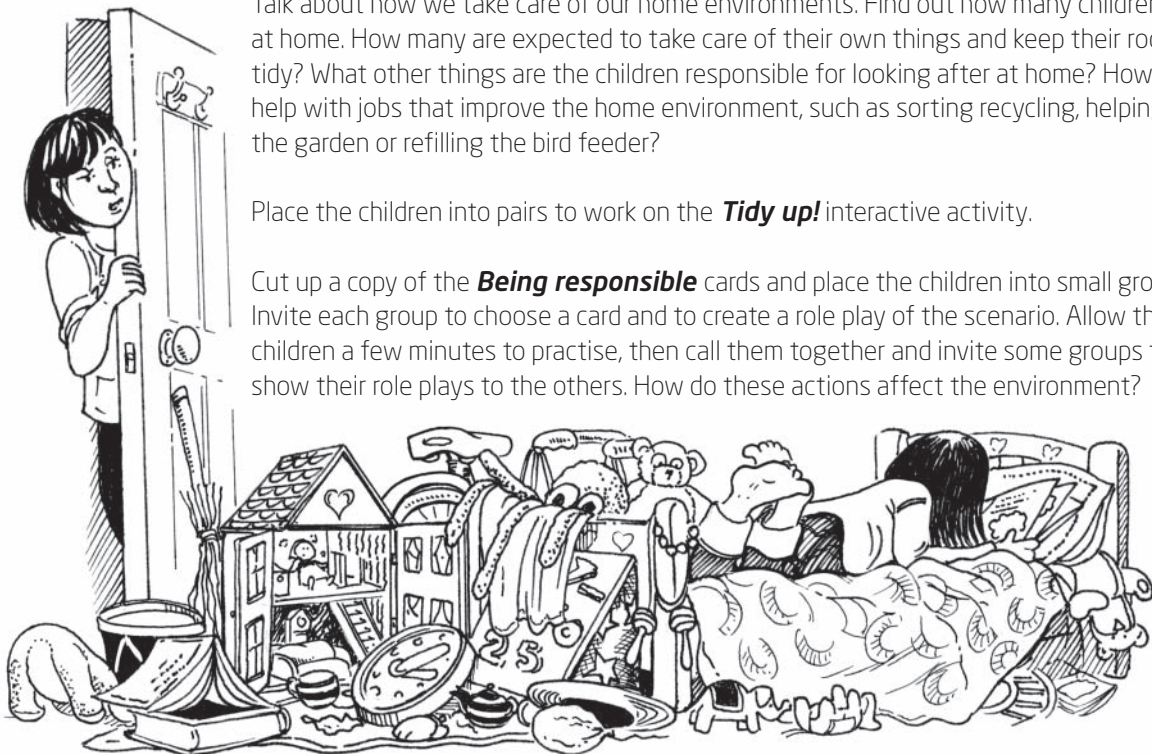
Give each child a copy of photocopiable page 90 **Let's clean up** (core), or the support or extension version on the CD-ROM to complete.

Activity 2: My home environment

Talk about how we take care of our home environments. Find out how many children help at home. How many are expected to take care of their own things and keep their rooms tidy? What other things are the children responsible for looking after at home? How many help with jobs that improve the home environment, such as sorting recycling, helping in the garden or refilling the bird feeder?

Place the children into pairs to work on the **Tidy up!** interactive activity.

Cut up a copy of the **Being responsible** cards and place the children into small groups. Invite each group to choose a card and to create a role play of the scenario. Allow the children a few minutes to practise, then call them together and invite some groups to show their role plays to the others. How do these actions affect the environment?



Activity 3: My school environment

Talk about why it is important to look after the school environment. Who is responsible for keeping the school clean and tidy? Is it just the cleaners' job or should everyone help? What things do the children appreciate about a tidy school? For example, it's nice to sit in clean classrooms and not to have litter in the playground. What would school be like if no one looked after it? Encourage all the children to participate in the discussion.

At playtime, invite the children to observe how other children in school use the playground. Do they all respect the area? Are some children harming the environment? They may spot children dropping paper or food, or not respecting trees or plants in the school grounds.

Show children the **Who's responsible?** template on the whiteboard, and ask them to think about the questions as you walk around the school. Observe busy areas such as the cloakrooms, washrooms, dining hall and so on. Ask them to look for anything that makes the school environment untidy or dirty.

Back in the classroom, spend time talking about what the children have observed then encourage them to complete their own copy of the **Who's responsible?** template.

Activity 4: The local environment

Talk about the area immediately surrounding the school. Is it a good environment? Who is responsible for keeping it clean and tidy? Encourage the children to give reasons for their answers.

If possible, take the children on a fact-finding walk around the local area to assess its general level of upkeep. Try to find examples of clean and dirty areas.

Ask the children what they discovered from their walk. What was good about the environment? What was not? Who might be responsible for clearing up litter? What other things need to be done to create a good environment?

Give the children a copy of photocopiable page 91 **My report** (core) or the extension version on the CD-ROM. This is a scaffolded activity to help the children write up their findings. At the end of the session, invite the children to share their reports with the others and to discuss their findings.

Looking after our environment

Activity 5: Pollution

Talk about the problem of pollution. Give the children a simple definition of the word 'pollution' – for example, *Things that make our environment dirty or dangerous*. Ask them to think back to the work you did in activity 3. Point out that one of the main problems was the litter and the objects left lying around that made the school look untidy.

Now ask the children to think about other environments other than school. What sorts of pollution cause problems in towns? For example – litter, traffic noise and fumes, factory smoke.

Can the children think of ways to help reduce pollution in towns? For example, they could take their litter home with them and use environmentally friendly ways of travelling to school, such as walking, creating a walking bus, taking public transport or riding a bike. List the children's ideas on the board and invite them to vote on one they think they should do to help the environment.

Extension

Using the ***I can help*** template, encourage the children to write down three things they could do to help reduce pollution.

Activity 6: Recycling

Before you do this activity, collect information from your local council about the recycling services available in your area.

Find out what the children understand by recycling. Do they recycle things at home? Why do they think recycling is important?

Working in groups, let the children look through the information you have gathered. Try to arrange the groups to include a competent reader in each. Discuss what each group has found out.

Now invite small groups of children to complete the ***Recycling bins*** interactive activity. They need to sort the items of rubbish into the correct recycling bins.

Extension

Set up a series of bins in your classroom and collect materials for recycling and composting.

Activity 7: New from old

Before you do this activity, collect items (or pictures of items) that have been made from recycled goods. For example – greetings cards made from recycled paper, recycled plastic carrier bags, pencils made from vending machine cups, and fleece jackets made from recycled plastic. Talk about each one with the class.

Ask the children why they think it is important to recycle things in this way. You can also talk about how things such as carrier bags do not have to be thrown away after one use, but can be reused again and again.

Point out that, in school, things are often recycled or reused. For example, children may use scrap paper to write notes, or use old cardboard in art lessons. Place the children into pairs or small groups and ask them to create a 'rubbish monster' using a selection of cartons, boxes, yogurt pots and cardboard. Encourage them to think of names for their monsters and to make name labels.

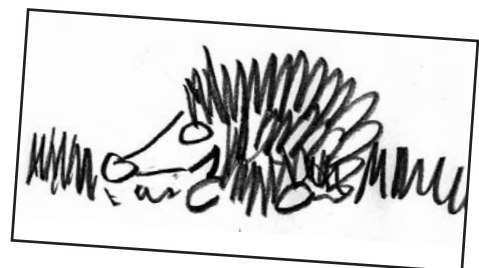
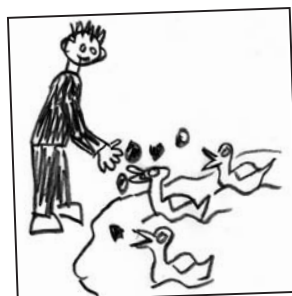
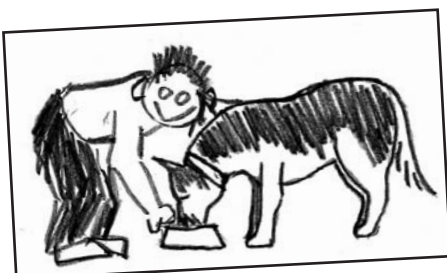
Activity 8: Caring for wildlife

Before you do this activity, visit the WWF and RSPB websites and familiarise yourself with the content. Display the websites on the whiteboard or allow the children to investigate them in small groups. Spend time ensuring that the children understand what wildlife is and talk about wildlife they have observed in your local area.

Discuss the importance of caring for wildlife. What do the children think would happen if our wildlife disappeared? Why do they think some wildlife is in danger? Can the children think of any local areas where pollution has harmed wildlife? Encourage all the children to give their opinions.

Look at the websites again and talk about how charities raise awareness of the problems facing wild animals and plants. Working in pairs, invite the children to design a poster that tells people how to look after wildlife – for example, by not dropping litter that could be harmful or by putting out food for wild birds.

Caring for animals



Looking after our environment

Activity 9: Green spaces

Arrange a visit to a local beauty spot or park. Remind the children that trees and green spaces are important as they help to reduce air pollution. Encourage the children to make notes about or draw pictures of the places they like best.

Back in the classroom, ask the children to talk about what they have seen. They can refer to their notes or drawings to help them remember. Now ask them to think about what they could do to look after green spaces. For example, they could put their litter in the bin, keep off flowerbeds in the park, and be careful not to damage gates and fences in the countryside.

In pairs, ask the children to complete the **Green spaces** interactive activity. This involves highlighting examples of people caring for and damaging green spaces.

Activity 10: Respecting the environment

Ask the children how they feel if someone damages something that belongs to them, such as a favourite toy. Do any of them have younger brothers and sisters who have ever broken anything of theirs? How did they feel?

Now talk about respecting the community property, such as parks, ponds, the seaside and the environment. Why do the children think it is important to respect these things?

Look at photocopiable page 92 **Respect!** on the whiteboard and talk about what is happening in the pictures. Now place the children into groups and ask them to create role-play scenarios where children are damaging community property or the environment. One person in each group should play the role of the owner of the property. Allow time for the children to practise their role plays before they perform them to the rest of the class.

Invite the children to complete photocopiable page 92 **Respect!** (core) or the extension version on the CD-ROM.

Activity 11: Make a difference!

Hand out the lists of ideas that the children wrote in activity 1 **The community and the environment**. Allow them time to re-read what they wrote and encourage them to reflect on what they have learned since then. What did they think before? What do they think now?

Take the opportunity to point out that everyone can make a difference to the welfare of the environment. Tell the children that they are all going to make a five-point plan. To help them remember to look after the environment. To get them started, write a class list of ideas – for example, *Always put litter in the bin; Don't hurt animals or damage plants*.

Using the **My plan** template, ask the children to write or draw five things they should remember about looking after the environment.

Children can now complete the self-evaluation sheet and/or the children's booklet.

Activity 12: All views considered

Ask the children to reflect on all the work done in this unit. What is the most important thing they have learned? Children could ask members of the School Council to come and talk to them about how they deal with environmental issues in the school and its surroundings. Encourage the children to tell council members of any concerns they have after the research they have carried out during the unit.

Ask the children to give their views on what the biggest dangers to the environment are. Ensure that everyone listens politely while others express their opinions, and encourage discussion and debate.

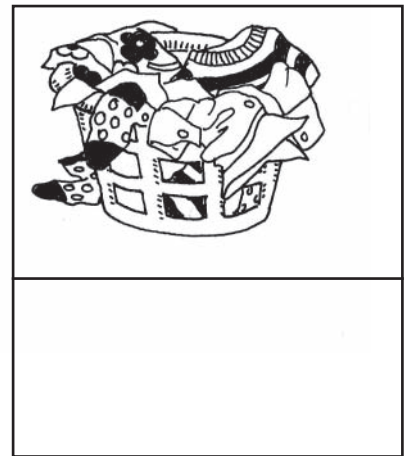
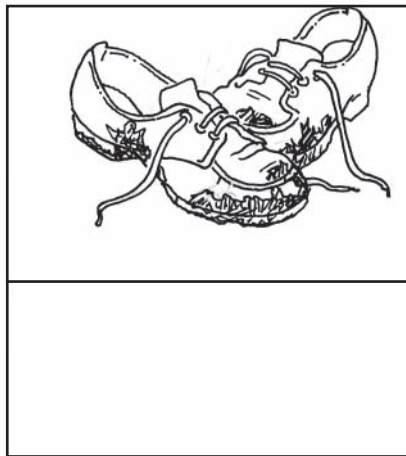
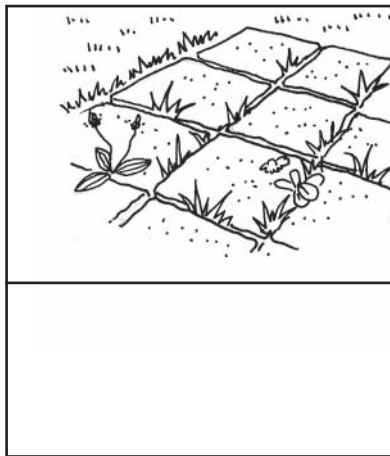
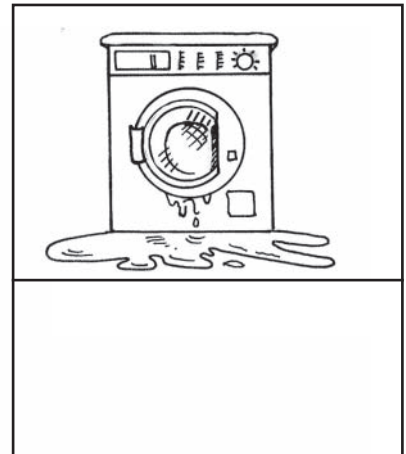
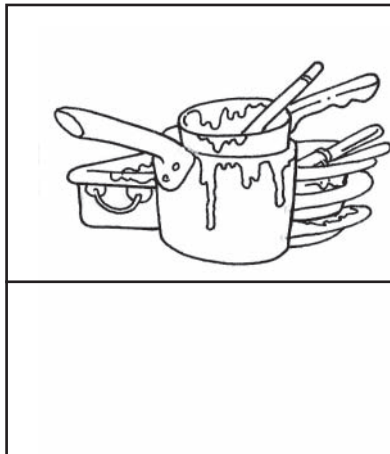
Remind the children that they can choose whether or not to look after the environment, but that there are consequences if they don't. Invite the children to give some examples – for example, *If we don't throw litter away properly, it may harm animals*.



Looking after our environment

Let's clean up

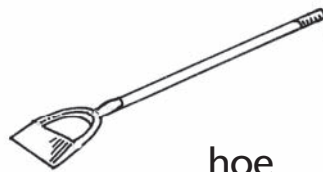
What do you need to help you clean these things? Cut out the word cards and stick them in the correct places.



washing-up liquid



washing powder



mop and bucket



My report

Draw a picture of the place.



Is this a clean or dirty place? Why? _____

How could you make it cleaner? _____

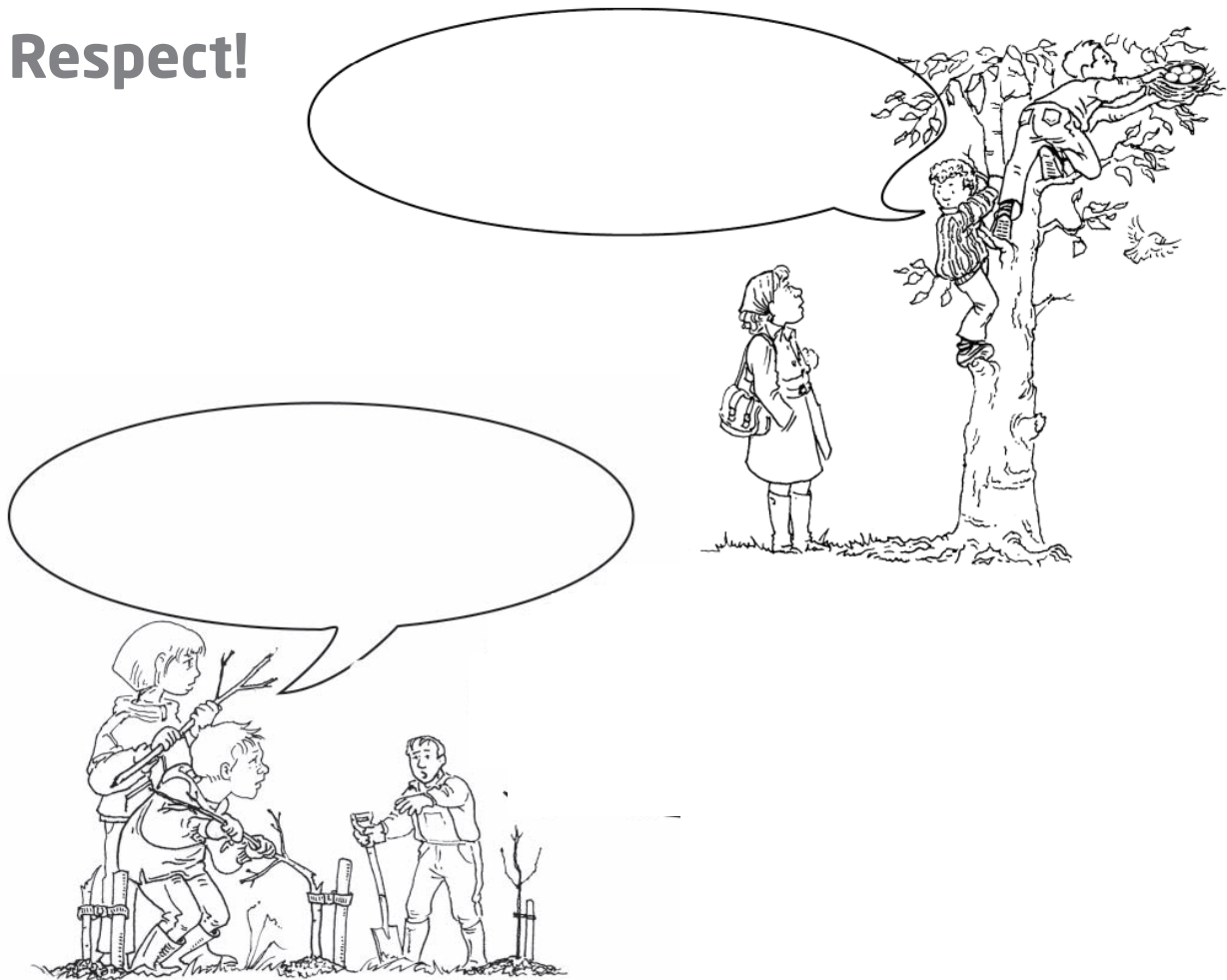
Who could help you? _____

Help words

street road litter rubbish newspapers bins
pollution neighbours friends sweep

Looking after our environment

Respect!



Write what the children should say in the speech bubbles.
You can use these words:

Sorry We won't do it again We'll put it back
We'll help plant some more

Are the children showing respect for the environment? _____

Is this good or bad for the environment? _____

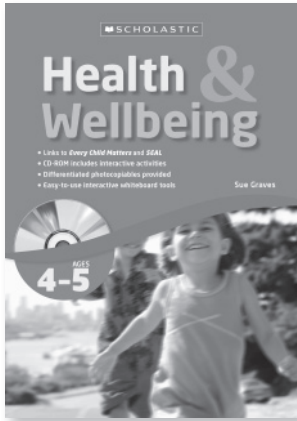
Our environment

Name _____

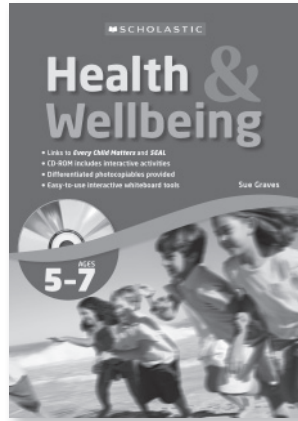
Fill in the boxes to show what you have learned about our environment.

	What I knew	What I've learned	What I'll change
The local environment			
The importance of protecting the environment			
Causes of pollution			
How to improve the environment			

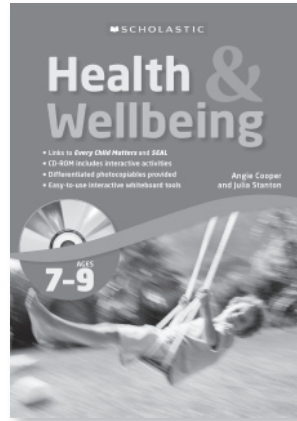
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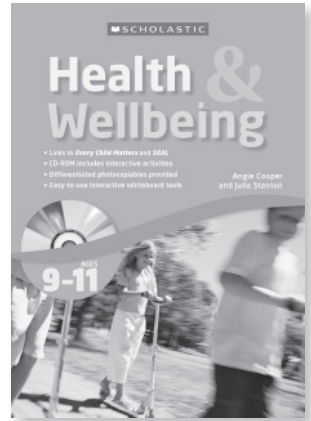
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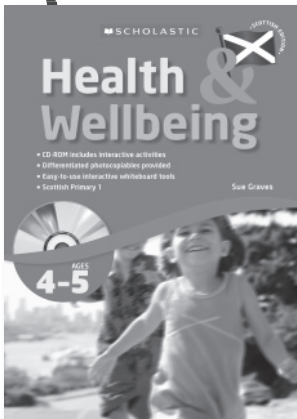
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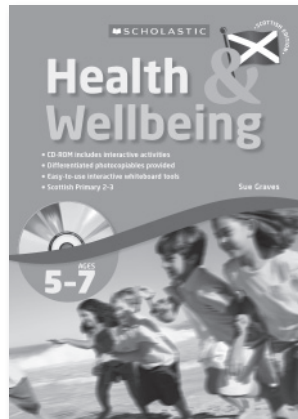
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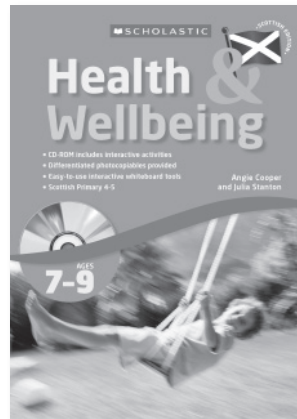
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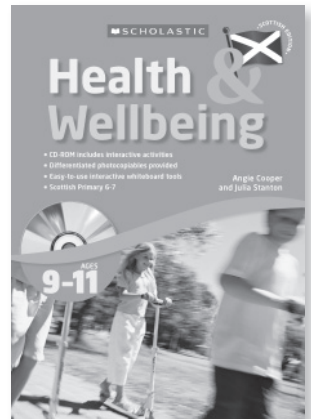
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