

GETTING STARTED WITH ENERGY - SUPPORT PACKAGE



Draft Snakes

Did you know that drafts can waste from 5% to 30% of your total energy usage? Draft snakes are an excellent way to prevent heat loss, save energy, and stay warm in the winter! This simple solution can block cold drafts from creeping in at your windows and doors while keeping the warm air inside. There are many different ways to make draft snakes, but this no-sew method is great for all ages!

Making draft snakes with students is a great way to introduce them to the concept of energy. During the discussion we can start to talk about how human choices affect the Earth. It is critical to show children how to care for the world, and that changing our habits can reduce human impact on the environment. We can teach children to conserve energy every day with hands-on learning activities, such as draft snakes, to see their knowledge in action.

Draft snakes can be made with any fabric material and stuffing, but knit material, like cuffing, a long sock, or a long sleeve, is easiest to work with and requires no sewing.

Action Plan

Introducing children to save energy is a great way to begin. Before making draft snakes to take home, it's good to start with a book such as [10 Things I Can Do to Help My World - Melanie Walsh](#). Students may need help with some of these steps. An extra helping hand will make the activity easier.

Step 1- Gather the necessary supplies needed. Send a notice to parents asking for some of these items:

- Knee socks, leggings, a sleeve from a long sleeve t-shirt, or knit cuffing. Knit fabric is best!
- Scissors
- Stuffing – Use any old textiles, such as an old t-shirt, pillow stuffing, or crumpled newspaper, etc.
- Markers (washable ink for young children), and other art supplies to decorate

Step 2- Take turns going to an accessible window to feel the window sill under the window. Ask the students, “Is it colder than the rest of the room?” Then, place a sample draft snake in the window and have them feel the window again, and ask them if it feels warmer. When students return to their seats, prepare to make the draft snakes. Explain how the draft snakes will help them stay warm in the winter, while keeping warm air inside. Saving energy is an important part of protecting our planet!

Step 3- Have students take out their odd sock. Explain again that draft snakes will help stop drafts, save energy, and help the planet. Show students [how to tie an overhand knot](#) on one end of the snake so it is an open ended tube with one closed end (for socks or leggings you can skip steps 3 and 4).



Step 4- Instruct the students to put the snake material on their arm like a sleeve. Pull it all the way up the arm until they can hold the knot in their hand (the knot will be outside but their hand is inside). Have the students hold the knot tightly with this inside hand, and then peel the sleeve off, turning it inside out. Now the knot should be inside their snake.



Step 5- Here comes the fun part: stuffing the snake! There are lots of stuffing options. Use scrap materials such as an old t-shirt, crumpled newspaper, or paper from the recycle bin. Students may need some assistance, and crumpling up paper will take some time. Another option is to use an old, rolled up t-shirt. Make sure to leave some room at the end to tie the tail.



STEP 6- Once the snakes are stuffed, the students need to tie the other end, to ensure the stuffing stays in the snake. Make another overhand knot and pull it tight.

STEP 7- Time to decorate! Now that the body of the snake is done, have students decorate as they wish. They can draw on snake eyes, a tongue, polka-dots, a snake skin pattern and more. See what great designs the students come up with!



Step 8- Once the snakes are all decorated and the students are happy with their designs, ask the students where they're going to put the draft snakes when they get home. You can remind them to put them in windows, at the base of a door, or wherever drafts come into the home. Students may even wish to place them by the window in the classroom for the day. Have the children wrap their snakes around themselves, and ask if they feel warm. You can then ask the children what their draft snakes are doing when placed by a window or door. The answer you want to hear is: "Saving energy!"

Wrap Up- After the draft snakes are all done, and placed by a window, or tucked away in backpacks, the children could then have story time with a book like [Snug - Carol Thompson](#). This is another great book suggestion! The picture book helps the children connect with staying warm. There are lots of other great children's books that talk about saving energy and how to help our planet.

Invite a Green Schools NS Engagement Officer to your school virtually or in-person to support your school's efforts to waste less energy!



Figure 1: Completed GSNS Draft Snakes



Figure 2: GSNS Draft Snakes stopping window drafts

Facts to Share

- If air leaks like drafts were combined for an average home, there would be a hole the size of a basketball in your wall!
- Did you know that 7,000 tonnes of textiles are recycled annually?
- Did you also know that another 30,000 tonnes of textiles are still sent to Nova Scotia landfills?
- Visit [Divert Nova Scotia's](#) web site for more great facts and resources.
- For other fun activities, ideas and resources visit [Textile Waste Diversion - Kids Corner](#)

Resources

[Green Schools Salt Springs Elementary - Gets Efficient and Makes Draft Snakes](#)

[Green Schools NS Draft Snakes](#)

[Green Schools NS Resources](#)

[Green Schools NS Energy Efficiency Pinterest Board](#)

[GSNS Green Upcycling Pinterest Board](#)

[GSNS Minimizing Waste Pinterest Board](#)

[Efficiency NS](#)

[Association for Textile Recycling \(After Wear\)](#)

