

The lesson described here took place in an Austrian middle school in a rural region. The students are in the 6th grade and are between 11 and 13 years old. The topic of the lesson is renewable energy sources, and at the end of the lesson, the students play a board game on the topic of energy conservation.

➔ The teacher enters the classroom, fills out the class register, exchanges a few words with the supervisor of the student with autism, and the 16 students chat a little. Then the teacher's voice gets louder: "Okay, we're going to start a new topic: renewable and non-renewable energy sources. Does anyone know what that means?" Moritz raises his hand and says, "Renewable is wind and water and stuff like that, because it's always there. Non-renewable is stuff like coal." The teacher nods and asks why coal is not renewable. Moritz replies: "Yes, because we burn it and then it's gone." The students are then asked to open their textbooks and read a → double page on the topic *Where does our energy come from?* together. Most of the students have their geography vocabulary notebooks next to their textbooks.

Eva slowly begins to read and stumbles over the word 'energy consumption'. The teacher briefly helps her out and asks, "Eva, what could that word mean?" Eva just stares uncertainly at her textbook. "It's really easy, Eva, just combine the two words." Eva continues to look at the teacher uncertainly and silently. The teacher then says, "Yes, no problem, just the amount of energy that is consumed. Write that down in your vocabulary notebook if you

TEACHER'S THOUGHTS BEFORE THE LESSON

"I'll tell you right up front, the kids here are different from those in the city. And I don't just mean that hardly anyone in this class has an immigrant background. In the countryside, they have completely different issues. During break time, "vegan" is used as a swear word, no joke. And I'll be honest with you, the level of performance is crazy. I have one kid in the class, Moritz, who is really on the ball. But the rest... I like them, they're nice, but well. It's just different here than in the city."

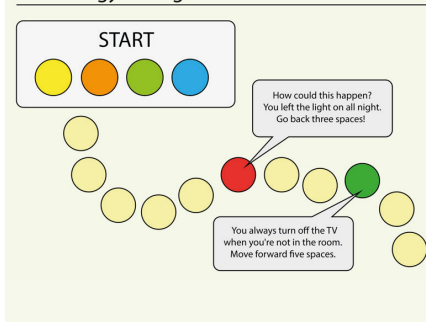
don't know it." Eva writes it down. Then another student continues reading and stumbles over the phrase greenhouse effect. Moritz raises his hand and wants to explain what it is. He confidently goes to the blackboard and begins to draw. "Yes, well, the sun shines and these rays reach the earth and are partially reflected by the earth's surface, and when there are more and more exhaust gases, such as from cars, they are reflected back and no longer leave the atmosphere." The teacher seems very pleased with the answer, praises Moritz, and asks if anyone else has any questions. Apparently not, as one student reads the last paragraph. The word sustainability appears in it. "Yes, the term sustainability – have we written that down yet? It's super important for geography!" The students nod. "When I take the train to work here every day

instead of driving, that's being environmentally conscious. Try to do that in your everyday life, too. We're going to play the energy-saving game now, and you'll get a few tips on how to do that." The students are happy that they get to play now. The teacher divides them into groups and hands out → the board game – the energy-saving game. Now they finally get to play until the bell rings.



Class situation during the energy saving game

The Energy Saving Game



GAME SITUATION

A girl asks me if I want to join her group and play. Yes, why not? The five of us sit around the playing field, and one of the students starts rolling the dice: 6. She is briefly happy, but then she sees that she

has landed on a red square. Three squares back. I ask her if she has read why. She says no, in games like this you only ever have to read the last sentence. That's true, it's enough for the game to proceed. I decide that I want to take more of an observational role here and leave it uncommented for now. Later, a student lands on a green square and is allowed to move five squares forward because she always turns off the TV when she's not in the room. I try again subtly and ask the group who turns off the TV when they leave the room. One student says she turns off the TV from time to time when her grandfather falls asleep in front of it; another student says she doesn't know, she doesn't pay attention to it.

The teacher comes over to our group in the middle of the game and says, "So, girls, we were talking about vegetarians the other day

and you all said you'd never seen one." The students nod. "Elena here is a real vegetarian." I look at the teacher questioningly, but at the same time I have to smile. Then the girl next to me looks at me pityingly and says, "It's okay, Elena, it's not that bad." I look even more confused than before; before I can answer, the teacher says, "No, Nina, it's not bad at all, quite the opposite! It's good for animals and the environment." The teacher looks at me and laughs, and I have to laugh too because of the absurdity of the situation. The students don't really understand what we're laughing about. But I'm not sure what to make of this situation either. Then Nina nudges me lightly: "It's your turn!" We just keep playing. Nina wins, I come in last, and in any case, there's no more talk of saving energy.