

THE WORLD AS AN APPLE

This exercise uses an apple, to illustrate our dependency on the biosphere.

Discuss each step and what each part of the apple represents as you demonstrate this activity

Slice an apple, which represents the earth, into quarters.

Set aside three quarters to represent the oceans.

Slice the remaining quarter into two pieces and remove one of the pieces that represents the land that is inhospitable for people to inhabit (deserts, flood plains, steep mountains).

The remaining $\frac{1}{8}$ of the apple represents the land where people live, but not all of which may grow the foods needed for survival.

Slice the remaining $\frac{1}{8}$ of the original apple into four sections and set aside three of the sections. These represent areas with climates too rocky, too steep, or too cold to produce food.

Carefully peel the remaining $\frac{1}{32}$ slice of the earth. This represents the surface, the very thin skin of the earth's crust, or topsoil upon which humanity depends. It is less than five feet deep and is capable of producing a relatively fixed amount of food. Due to erosion and over farming, we lose 24 billion tons of it per year. It takes 100 years for one inch of topsoil to form. Trees planted as stream buffers can prevent erosion of topsoil, and are effective recyclers of soil nutrients.