



Environmental Law Centre

Tragedy of the Commons Game Rules

- Each group of students represents a small fishing village and the students are fishers who are supporting their families. Each village surrounds a lake with fish in it that can be eaten or sold.
- This game will be played in five rounds; each round represents a year. Each year the students go fishing. Each student must collect at least one fish each round in order to feed him or herself.
 - No fish: you and your family starve and you are out of the game.
 - One fish: you survive but your family starves.
 - Two fish: your family survives.
 - More than two fish: You can sell them for a profit.
- At the end of the year the fish repopulate. This means that the instructor will double the amount of fish that are left in the lake at the end of each round.
- There will be five years consisting of 'fishing' and 'repopulating'. Those students who have the most fish at the end of the activity will have the most profit and therefore 'win'.
- If anyone starves (i.e. do not collect at least one fish) then they have died and cannot fish the next year.
- No talking is allowed during the activity.

Need help or want to provide some feedback? Contact elc@elc.ab.ca or 780-424-5099

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