

Communicate with Style (and Energetically!)

As you Energize, Investigate, and Innovate, you'll find that you're networking with a lot of people. You'll talk to people who manage buildings. You'll share your innovative ideas to get others saving energy. You may even interview people to find out what they know—so you can know it, too!

You can communicate in all kinds of ways—by e-mailing or writing letters that you mail at the post office. You might make a presentation or create an exhibit.

No matter what you do, here are five tips to make sure you get the maximum impact when you deliver your message! Once you master these, maybe you can add a tip or two of your own!

1. Say Who You Are

You are a Girl Scout! You are on a leadership journey and you are learning to use energy wisely and inspiring others to save energy, too.

Who else are you? You are part of a major force for improving the environment! There are 2.6 million Girl Scouts. About 500,000 of them are your age, and you are all trying to do something good for Earth. That's powerful. So say it loud! Say it proud!

2. Say What You Need

Be clear and specific about what you want others to know or do. If you ask, "Can you help us save energy?" it might sound very big and very hard. But if you say, "Can you help us start a once-a-week walking club for our school?" you are breaking it down and giving people a specific idea that will feel doable. You can negotiate from there! Just remember: Vague is not in vogue, and specificity is in style!

3. Show What You Know!

If the building management shuts the lights off a little earlier or stops a draft, how will that help save energy? If families carpool to the Girl Scout meeting or the library, how will that help the Earth? If your school stops wasting paper, what will be the impact?

You don't need to say a lot. Just make what you say really carry some oomph. Use the facts you are learning along this journey—the ones that mean the most to you—to inspire others. Imagine you are the anchorperson on a news program. What are the few most important things you need to say to get people to stop and listen? How can you describe how your idea for improving energy use can help people—and save energy, too? Practice what you want to say!

4. Let Your Curiosity Show!

Other people love to talk about what they know, so ask plenty of questions wherever you go. Just remember, the “W’s” (who, what, when, where, why) are usually better than the “D’s” (do, did, don’t) question openers. Why? Check this out:

- Do you manage the building’s heating system?
- Did you ever set up a bike club?

Notice that if you start with these “D’s,” the likely response will be “yes” or “no” and then you might get stuck! There’s nowhere to go!

But if you start with a W, you’ll find yourself in a richer conversation.

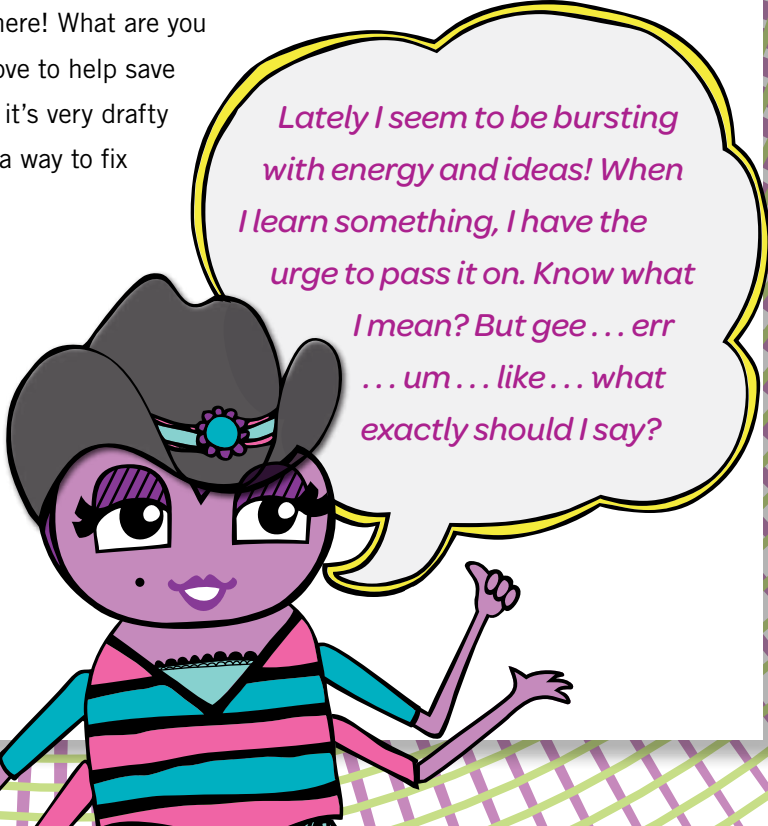
- What kind of heating system is best for this building?
- Why would a biking club be good in this town?

5. Be Kind and Positive

OK. Face it. If someone tells you, “Hey, you lazy thing! You better get walking,” you are probably not going to be very happy about it, right? And, you won’t feel very motivated to Get Moving!

But if someone invites you like this: “Guess what? Great news! Every Friday afternoon we are going to have a walking club and you can be a member,” you might stick around to hear some more, right?

No one wants to feel put down, but everyone loves a positive boost. So when you suggest that a building manager (or your mom!) repair a drafty space, don’t say: “Ah, duh . . . we’re freezing in here! What are you going to do about it?” Do say: “I’d really love to help save energy—and money—here. I noticed that it’s very drafty in this spot, and I’ll bet we could think of a way to fix it. Want to try?”



Lately I seem to be bursting with energy and ideas! When I learn something, I have the urge to pass it on. Know what I mean? But gee... err ... um... like... what exactly should I say?