No matter where you live or interact with students, you can focus enrichment activities on local Earth science issues. Coastal areas likely include eroding beaches or sea cliffs. Students in seismically active areas will certainly have questions (and ideas) about Earthquakes. Regions with strong Earth resource industries present plenty of opportunities for issues that affect local families. By including topics that students already care about and have discussed before, you are sure to gain more interest—but be prepared for lots of strong pre-existing ideas.

We can also focus enrichment on recent national or global Earth events. Tsunamis, Earthquakes, Earth science discoveries in the popular press, and even geologic content in films can all provide the sparks for student curiosity.

To help students connect their knowledge of the Earth with “practical” issues, we can emphasize economic and political factors. Younger grades need to understand that fuels and consumer goods do not come from neighborhood gas stations and stores. Older grades can tackle more quantified dollar impacts as well as the critical inputs on complex and even controversial policy decisions.

[This section is adapted with permission from Why Earth Science?, a six-page publication of the American Geosciences Institute (2004). You may want to incorporate some of the information in this section into your classroom visits, as appropriate. (Why Earth Science? is downloadable from the AGI web site. It is available in both English and Spanish.)]