

Living with Ed: Jay and the Big House

TV and movie actor Ed Begley, perhaps the “greenest” man in Hollywood, rides his electric car to the Academy Awards and powers his home with the sun and his stationary bike. But Living with Ed and his environmentalist passion isn't always a walk in the park for wife, Rachelle. This first-of-its-kind reality green show chronicles life with an earth-friendly fanatic with humor and heart.

About this Episode

In this episode, Ed takes an interesting assignment and speaks to his counterparts — muscle car fans — about the future of electric cars. Speaking of muscle cars, he then stops by Jay Leno's garage. Jay gives Ed a history lesson about environmentally conscious cars and proves that even car enthusiasts who love speed can be energy conscious. Unbeknownst to Ed, Rachelle checks out a spacious new (and not solar-powered!) house for sale.

Vocabulary

- Market
- Relocate
- Hydro-powered
- Enthusiast
- Energy-efficient
- Hybrid
- Volts
- Amps
- Fuel-cell
- Solar
- Convert
- Moxie

Discussion Questions

1. This episode focuses on the energy efficiency of houses and cars. Have students discuss how they would rate their own house and cars' energy efficiency and why.
2. Jay Leno makes a guest appearance on this episode. Ask students if they know who Jay Leno is and what he is best known for. In addition to being a comedian and television star, Jay Leno is a passionate car enthusiast. Ask students what they think it means to be a car enthusiast and the types of cars they'd expect to see in Jay's personal garage.
3. In the episode, Jay Leno says, “You can be an automobile enthusiast and still be environmentally sensitive.” Ask students what they think Jay means with this quote. Do students agree or disagree?

Suggested Activities

Prioritize (Language Arts, Design)

Ed and Rachelle clearly have different and sometimes conflicting priorities for their home. Have students create two lists: one that illustrates Ed's priorities and one that illustrates Rachelle's. In what ways do they conflict? In what ways, if any, do they complement each other? Have students share 3-5 priorities they have for their own home. Which of these priorities, if any, are met by their current home? Then have students interview each member of their own family to learn *their* priorities and how, if at all, their current home meets those priorities. How would students and family members change their current homes to better meet their priorities? Are their changes realistic? Finally, have students pair up with a classmate and design a Dream Home that meets at least two of each person's priorities. Have them present their homes to the class, sharing their process for and challenges with compromise.

How's the Drive? (Science, Language Arts, Technology)

During his visit to Jay Leno's garage, Jay and Ed discuss and look at many different types of cars, some more energy efficient than others. Have students find or create a definition for an "energy efficient" car. How is energy efficiency measured in cars? Why is it so important that cars be energy efficient? Is it more, less or just as important as it was 50 years ago? What about 50 years from now? How would students describe their own cars' energy efficiency? How many miles per gallon does their car get? In what ways does it use fuel? Have students give examples of energy efficient cars from the episode and based on their own knowledge. Then have student groups select one of the following types of cars: Those that use regular gasoline, hybrids, electric cars, and fuel cell cars. Have the groups research information about their car including how it works, how it uses energy, the pros and cons of owning/driving this type of car, average costs, and how, if at all, it responds to energy concerns. Have students draw conclusions about whether they'd ever own this type of car, along with reasons for their answer. Have all groups present their research and have the class discuss the following questions: Which cars are most likely to be used in the next 50 years? Which types of cars are most fuel efficient? What can be done to increase a car's energy efficiency? Why would someone drive a car that was not energy efficient? More information can be found at www.fueleconomy.gov.

Track It (Science, Math, Technology)

Have students track the following information about their cars for three months: number of miles driven, amount spent on gasoline, average cost of gasoline per gallon, and number of times required to fill up or put gasoline in car. If students do not own a car, have them ask a teacher if they can track information about his or her car. Have students share their results with the class. Which cars are most fuel efficient? Which are least? What most surprises students? Which cars would they be most likely to buy based on this exercise? Specific car ratings and comparisons can be found at <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/bestworst.shtml>. **Extension:** Have students write a letter to their parents explaining what they've learned about their own car's energy efficiency and persuading their parents to make the same or a different purchase the next time they must buy a car.