



Reuse It Or Lose It*

Activity P.q

GRADE LEVELS: K - 3

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

- Define reuse and recycling
- Discuss how recycling saves natural resources and helps the problem of limited landfill space
- Match items in landfills that could have been recycled with products that could have been made from each item.
- List ways that they reuse products
- List products that they have recycled
- List products that they use that are made from recycled materials

MATERIALS:

- Handout A, "Making More with Less"
- Handout B, "Reuse and Recycling" (Optional)
- Activity, "Reuse It or Lose It"
- Newsprint or other large sheet of paper

PROCEDURE:

1. Tell students that they are going to be thinking about the benefits of recycling and reuse. They also will be asked to think about how they themselves might begin to reuse and recycle products, if they have not already done so.
2. Distribute copies of Handout A, "Making More with Less." (Handout B, "Reuse and Recycling," is recommended as an alternative for younger students.)
3. Ask students to read the handout, either individually or as a class. Discuss the following questions:
 - A. What is meant by reuse? By recycling?
 - B. How do reuse and recycling save natural resources, such as oil and sand, that are used to make new products? (We do not have to use additional natural resources to make products; we can use natural resources that have already been used. This way, natural resources, such as oil for plastic and sand and lime for glass, will not be used up as quickly.)
 - C. How do reuse and recycling save natural resources, such as coal and natural gas, that are used to make electricity for energy? (Less energy resources are needed to make products from recycled goods than from natural resources.)
 - D. How do reuse and recycling help the problem of limited landfill space? (More room would be left in landfills for things that can't be recycled, used again, or burned.)

Note: You may also want to point out that burning less fossil fuels (oil, gas, and natural gas) reduces air pollution. It also helps reduce global warming and acid rain. These problems are caused partly by carbon dioxide that is released when fossil fuels are burned to make energy. Saving energy reduces the amount of fossil fuels that need to be burned.

4. Distribute the Activity, “Reuse It or Lose It.” Read and explain the directions to students. Ask them to do the worksheet.

5. Discuss the answers to the Activity: 1) computer paper; 2) soda can; 3) grass clippings; 4) plastic milk jug; 5) glass jar; and 6) tire.

6. Tell students that these are only some of the hundreds of products that can be made from recycled trash. Tell them that corrugated paper and newsprint can be used to make insulation packaging, building materials, and newspapers. Old tires can be recycled into new tires for cars, tractors and lawn mowers. And there are many, many other items that plastic can be made into.

7. On a large sheet of paper, write the title “Saving Our Natural Resources.” Write two-column headings: Reuse and Recycle.

8. Ask students to name ways that they themselves reuse products, such as washing plastic utensils, writing on both sides of paper, etc. Write these examples under the heading Reuse.

9. Tell students that many people recycle products today. But that is only half of the solution. To complete the cycle, we need to use products made of recycled material. A great way to act environmentally responsible is to recycle what we buy and to buy what has been recycled.

10. Ask students to list products that they themselves use that are made from recycled products. List these under the heading Recycle. You may also want to list items that the students have saved and taken to the recycling center.

11. Save the list for future use. Challenge students to expand this list throughout the year by reusing products and by using recycled products. Write additions on the class list.

Note: Many items are made from recycled products. For example, many people do not know that McDonald’s covered 400 playgrounds with a recycled-tire surface. Most cereal boxes and many boxes of cookies and crackers are made from recycled cardboard. You can tell by the gray color on the inside of the box. Paper towels and toilet paper are often made from recycled paper. Charmin and Ivory Snow use packaging made from recycled paper. Students should look for the recycled or recyclable symbols (three arrows forming a circle) on products. These indicate that the packaging was made from recycled materials or that they can be recycled.

Note: Answers to Activity Worksheet:

1. Paper
2. Soda can
3. Grass clippings, leaves
4. Milk jug
5. Soda bottle
6. Tire

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

1. Students may want to do research to find out how they can use recycled products. They can check with various companies to see if they use recycled products. A book called "The Environmental Shopper" contains a list of products that use recycled packaging. It is available by writing to the Pennsylvania Resources Council, 25 W. 3rd St., Media, PA 19063.
2. Students could make a sign or poster about how recycling and reuse can save natural resources, energy, or landfill space.

* Source: Du Pont Solid Waste Management Curriculum K - 6