

What Can We Do With This?

Lesson 1 What Gets Thrown Away?

Objectives

- Students will become more aware of how much they could be recycling.
- Students will identify where "garbage" items can be recycled and which organizations are responsible for their collection.
- Students will be aware of what environmental fees/levies are for.

Materials

An assortment of common items thrown into the waste basket/garbage or a set of pictures demonstrating common waste items

Instructional Procedures

- 1) Show the students the variety of waste items you have collected, or alternatively have a bag of common items for small groups to work with. Explain to the students that these are items that are commonly found in the trash. Have the students record the items.
- 2) Discuss the term "compostable". Compostable refers to items that are organic and will decay.
 - * Teacher Note * Although materials like meat, dairy products and animal waste are organic, they are not encouraged for use in household composting. This is due to odors and creatures that may be attracted to these items.
- 3) Discuss what is involved in reusing an item. Reusing deals with reusing the product again without any changes to it other than cleaning. A reused item does not change form. Example: reusing a plastic bag for carrying groceries or carrying lunch.
- 4) Discuss what recycling refers to. Recycling requires an item to go through a series of steps (collection, processing, shipping, manufacturing, etc) in order for the item to be made into a raw material. Recycling requires more resources and energy than reusing. Recycled items do change form. Example: glass being recycled into fiberglass.
- 5) Have students complete the checklist for each "garbage" item, outlining whether the item can be recycled, reused, or if it is suitable for household composting.

- 6) As a class, share the students' answers. Make sure students give reasons for their answers.
- 7) Have students go to www.recyclesaskatchewan.ca and check to see which "garbage" items are covered by Saskatchewan recycling organizations. (beverage containers [tetra, plastic and aluminum], tires, electronics, paint, oil). Then the students should research where each item can be recycled in their area (<http://www.saskwastereduction.ca/dbase.php>). If the item cannot be found at these sites try to Google "recycle -----". Students should record findings on worksheet.
- 8) Ask students what steps recyclable materials must go through before they are made into new products (collection, preparation for shipping, transportation to recycling facilities, processing into new products.)
One way to pay for these steps is an environmental handling fee. This is a small fee charged when you buy things (eg. when you buy a pop). This money is used to pay for collecting, processing and shipping the materials. The five programs in Recycle Saskatchewan are all funded this way.
Teacher Note These fees also ensure that all communities have access to recycling facilities. The environmental fees are paid up front to ensure that consumers and manufacturers are made responsible for the environmental consequences of products and their packages. Consumers (us) need to fulfill their responsibility by taking these items to the appropriate collection centre.
As a group, discuss what items we regularly put aside for recycling that are not represented by Recycle Saskatchewan (paper, cardboard, metal). Why do you think this is? Conduct a discussion about whether students would be willing to pay a charge for paper/metal, etc. Explain that without a fee to cover the recycling costs, many communities are discontinuing paper/cardboard recycling.
- 9) Have students revisit the initial "garbage" list. How much of the "garbage" was truly garbage?

Lesson 2 What Do I Buy?

Objectives

- * Students will evaluate and question their consumer choices based on packaging
- * Students will “take action” by writing a letter to a company questioning excessive packaging

Materials

Several prepackaged materials - should have a variety of packaging (examples: a lip balm that is marketed loose with a sticker closure, a lip balm that is marketed loose with plastic wrap and a lip balm packaged on cardboard or in a box; milk in a carton, and milk in a plastic jug)

Instructional Procedures

- 1) Show the students one set of packaged materials. Discuss the packaging and the differences.
- 2) Discuss the packaging from a composting and recycling and consumer point of view. (example: the lip balm - which packaging is better for the consumer? For recycling? For composting? Why would the manufacturers use a full cardboard sheet to package a small item? Why would they use a shrink wrap style package?, etc)
- 3) Look at the packaging again, looking for recycled content.
* Teacher note * See the attached document (mobius.doc) for a description of what each one means.
Does this information change what the students may or may not buy? Why is it important to have this information on the packaging?
- 4) Have students choose (or assign) a consumable item they might buy for themselves. Ask them to write a short essay on the packaging of their item outlining:
 - the variety of packaging available for the item
 - the packaging's impact on the environment
 - whether or not the packaging can be recycled
 - which kind of packaging they would choose to buy the item in
 - recommendations on how they think the item could be environmentally-responsibly packaged

5) Have students write a letter questioning a company's packaging choices. They could share some of their ideas on improving the packaging, and facts they have learned about packaging.



The Mobius loop on a dark background indicates that a product contains recycled materials. A percentage in the logo's center may appear, indicating how much of the product was made of recycled materials; no percentage listed implies that the product is made of 100% recycled content.



The Mobius loop on a light background indicates that a packaging or product can be recycled where facilities exist. Visit your city's or municipality's website for more information on local recycling programs, as well as to locate your residential recycling and composting facilities.

What Can We Do With This – Packaging Wordfind

p c k p m y d c r c c c y b s g t a x n
 q m o o a b t e m o d k u y t b m l k a
 e g a m q a m r n c o e t v e z z l x r
 m t w d p u d s r u y i p b w n b i i v
 p y p m s o u o s s l m y p a h b f f w
 p h r n y m s i s i q n a o r p i d v p
 l e o e a p d t b n x d n o d r p n f s
 a c z b c r a i a g m y l r s m o a x k
 s c l p l y s e h b j g j b h r q l n b
 t e o o m n c i s n l r f t i i a y t n
 i m z v o x r l j u t e u g p i v w f b
 c i z p m g t f e q e u s g a r b a g e
 c h s a a u n l c h h r e d a i x y v a
 a e j v o v w i t n z n e k a j a l p r
 r c m c v c g t g h v p f e v p o f f j
 n q k n f p s j m a o j r p m j w z b y
 d r a o b d r a c s k q m f s q t c g x
 s e i v e l t y i n w c o m f e q l v w
 m a n u f a c t u r e r a d n g x m i m
 u m r r p e k k e m w f l p r g h k i y

Word Bank

stewardship	reuse	cardboard
responsibility	recycle	compostable
plastic	packaging	consumable
manufacturer	levies	consumer
landfill	garbage	deposit
fees		