

RECYCLING LESSON PLAN

Grade Level: K-8

Lesson Overview: Students will discuss the meaning of garbage, waste and trash. They will then investigate their classroom trash to learn about the variety and amount of trash they produce. This will lead to a discussion on recycling and the feasibility of starting a recycling project at their school.

TEKS: Science: K.6(A), K.9(C), 1.5(AB), 1.6(A), 1.7(A), 2.5(AB), 2.7(A), 2.10(B), 3.7(A), 3.11(A), 5.11(C), 7.14(C), 8.5(A,B,C), 8.14(C)

Social Studies: K.14(A,B), 1.6(A,B), 1.16(A,B,C), 2.7(A,B), 2.8(A,B,D), 2.10(C),



34(AC), 3.11(A,B), 4.5(A), 4.9(B,C), 4.18(A), 4.21(B), 5.24(D), 6.6(B,C), 6.9(B), 7.20(D)

Time: Setting the Stage: 30 minutes

Activity One: 15 minutes + one day to accumulate trash

Activity Two: 1 hour

Materials: rubber gloves, two trashcans, several sheets of used newspaper to use as a floor covering, class trash accumulated over one day

Vocabulary: garbage, waste, trash, recycle, reduce, sanitary, unsanitary, contaminate

Setting the Stage

Place the words "Garbage, Waste, and Trash" on the board. Ask students to jot down the first three things that they think about when they see these words. Then ask students to share their thoughts and record them on the list for activity two. Then divide the class into small groups of three or four. Ask each group to brainstorm a list of all the kinds of garbage, trash, and waste they throw away in their classroom each day.

Ask students: "Look at our list. How can we determine if our class really throws away this amount and these types of waste?" (students will propose collecting the trash for a period of time, then examining it.) With the class, develop an investigative process for doing this, then set aside the next day to implement the investigation.

Activity One: Day One- Investigating Our Classroom Trash

NOTE: Prior to doing this activity arrange with your custodians to leave the trash in the classroom until the end of the next day.

Mark two trashcans, one for food waste, used tissue, and other unsanitary items and one for all other trash.

Place the two trashcans and a scale in front of the class at the beginning of the day. Explain that one can is for unsanitary waste and that the other is for all other trash. Show examples of kinds of trash to put in each. Ask students to use the appropriate containers throughout the day. Weigh the cans and record their weight while they are still empty. Ask the students to predict how much each can will weigh at the end of the day and record their predictions.

Activity Two: Day Two- what is in our trash?

(Caution: wear rubber gloves when handling the trash.) Bring the class together in a circle near the trashcans. Place their chart of "Trash in Our Class" from the starter activity on the board. Place newspaper on the floor in the middle of the circle and set the two cans and the scale on the paper.

Put on a pair of rubber gloves. Through questions and answers, help students understand the safety and health procedure you took by wearing gloves. Explain that people in the waste disposal business would use such items as well.

Show the class the can with the food waste and other unsanitary trash. Discuss why these items need to be separated from the other trash. Point out that in a recycling program, items such as these would "contaminate" the recyclables. Discuss the word contaminate and why it would be a problem. Weigh this can and compare it to the weight of the can when empty. Discuss any differences. Also compare the weight with the students' predictions. Set this can aside for pickup by the custodians.

Have a student weigh the second can of trash and compare it to the weight of the empty can and with the students' predictions.

Scatter the contents of this trashcan on the newspaper so students can see what they threw away and categorize it. Ask questions such as:

1. Are there any items here that surprise you? What?
2. Why did you throw away some of these items?
3. How does this pile of trash compare to the original list? (Make adjustments to this list as students discuss this question.)
4. What feelings do you have about the waste our class has thrown away?
5. How could we record data about this trash on a visual organizer, such as a graph?
6. What should we do with this trash? (As a student proposes an idea, follow through on them.)

Discussion Questions

Have the students answer these questions in journals or as a small group discussion.

1. Does our class have a trash problem?
2. Why do I need to be concerned about the trash I throw away?
3. What kinds of activities did I do that generate the most trash?
4. What can I do to reduce the trash in the classroom?

Extension

Create a recycling program at your school based on the answers to discussion question 4. This could start as an awareness campaign about the amount and variety of trash your school has and turn into a full-scale paper, aluminum, and plastic recycling campaign. Or, it could be anything in between.

Resources

For help on starting a recycling campaign check out the Watt Watchers of Texas Recycling Rangers program.



Q: HOW MANY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHT BULB?

A: NONE. "I CAN'T DO ANYTHING UNLESS YOU COMPLETE A LIGHT BULB DESIGN CHANGE REQUEST FORM."