

## LIFE CYCLE OF STUFF CHALLENGE | TEACHER GUIDE



### Activity Overview:

In this activity, students will be organizing a textile recycling bin to be placed at the front of their school. Students will create and hang posters around the school to advertise the bin and encourage their peers to donate their textiles. Once the textile bin is set up, students will travel to different classrooms to teach other students about why it's important to recycle textiles instead of throwing them away! Students will then hang their posters around the school to encourage others to recycle their textiles.

**Prep Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Activity Duration:** 45-60 minutes

## STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

### Common Core

- *RL.4.1b: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.*
- *RL.4.1d: Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.*
- *RL.4.4: Report on a topic, text, procedure, or solution to a mathematical problem, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace and use appropriate vocabulary.*

### NGSS

- *4-ESS3-1: Obtain and combine information to describe that energy and fuels are derived from natural resources and their uses affect the environment.*

### MA Comprehensive Health

- *5.7.CE.6: Use accurate information when discussing environmental health issues (e.g., littering, deforestation, recycling, climate change, clean water) that impact people's health. [HE]*

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- "Textile Recycling" posters
- Coloring materials
- Writing materials
- Mini lesson plan (for students)





## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Most people never consider the connection between natural resources and their stuff. An incredible amount of energy and raw materials go into the production of everyday items. For example, it takes up to 715 gallons of water to produce a single cotton t-shirt and 1,800 gallons of water to make enough cotton for just one pair of jeans. Yet in today's society, wasting resources is acceptable and commonplace. Natural resources should be valued greatly and more diligently conserved. Working towards a zero waste lifestyle can reduce the reliance on limited natural resources.

Disposal completes the "life cycle of stuff." Items can either be recycled, reused, upcycled, or put into the trash. It can take a plastic bottle up to 1,000 years to biodegrade if it is not recycled. Recycling, reusing, and upcycling eliminates early steps in the "life cycle of stuff" preventing the depletion of natural resources. Using reusable bags, containers and silverware, donating old clothes and toys, and buying only necessary items are simple methods to cut down waste in everyday life. Taking steps towards living a zero waste lifestyle lessens society's dependence on resources and reduces waste production. The protection of natural resources ultimately benefits not only the environment but also human health as well.



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. As a fourth grade team, organize a textile recycling bin at the front of the school. It is recommended that the textile recycling bin is kept out for a month. As a team, choose a local consignment/thrift store to donate the textiles to!
2. Provide students with the following information for their posters: dates of textile recycling, where textiles will be donated, and where to find the textile recycling bin.
3. Pass out the posters and provide access to coloring materials.
4. Students will color their posters as neatly as they are able.
5. Go over expectations of going into another classroom to teach a younger student.
6. Go over what students should teach the younger students (talking points). Students may need a brief recap depending on how long ago they received the Natural Resources lesson from Change is Simple. Students should fill out their mini lesson plans during this conversation.
  - a. What are natural resources?
  - b. What are textiles?
  - c. Why is it important to recycle or donate textiles rather than just throwing them away?
7. Have students spend around 5 minutes teaching a younger student about the importance of recycling textiles. Students should bring their completed posters with them in order to provide the class with all of the details for the textile recycling bin!
8. Completed posters will be hung up around the school to encourage staff and students to donate their textiles.