

WASTE CHALLENGE | TEACHER GUIDE



Activity Overview:

In this challenge, students will ask a custodian about how your school recycles! Once they've learned how to recycle in school, they will make a recycling poster to give to a younger student. They then will teach a younger student how to properly recycle and give them the recycling poster to remind them the do's and don'ts of recycling in school!

Prep Time: 5-10 minutes to print posters and student guides

Activity Duration: 30 minutes-1 hour (all activities included)

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Common Core

- *RL.4.1b b. 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.*

MA Comprehensive Health

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

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Student guide*
- *Recycling poster*
- *Coloring materials*



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Our country has a major waste generation and management problem. Americans create a total of 258 million tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) each year, with nearly two-thirds of it (169 million tons) ending up in landfills or incinerators. That is equivalent to the combined weight of 708 Empire State Buildings! In America each person produces 3.5 pounds of waste, with a population of 300 million people that means 18.4 billion ft. of space is occupied by trash! If this trash was put into a landfill that was 400 feet deep, it would still cover over 1,000 acres of land. Much of what is thrown away or burned can easily be recycled, composted, or repurposed. The most important step in the waste cycle is reducing consumption of single use items. When garbage is put into landfills, toxic chemicals such as CFCs and BPA leach into the soil, groundwater, and drinking water. Landfills also put off dangerous gasses like carbon dioxide, methane, ammonia, sulfides and more. Methane is a greenhouse gas which is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide. When methane gas is created and released it intensifies climate change. Additionally, when trash is burned, toxic chemicals are released into the atmosphere contributing to smog and acid rain. Ultimately, there is no safe way to dispose of trash. As a society, it is critical we decrease the amount of waste being generated. This can be done by reducing our consumption, shifting purchases to reusable items rather than single use items, recycling, composting and buying in bulk.



ACTIVITY RUNDOWN

1. Explain the activity to students.
2. Either invite a custodian into your classroom or go visit them to ask how to properly recycle in your school.
3. Return to your classroom and have students put the information they learned on their poster templates!
4. Students can then color their posters.
5. Go over expectations before students go into a younger classroom to teach.
6. Students will bring their completed posters and a student challenge guide with them to go teach a younger student about how to properly recycle. They will also give the younger student the recycling poster to help remind them how to recycle.
7. Optional: students can go back and visit after a week to see how their younger student is doing with recycling!