



## Field Trip Vocabulary List

**The 4Rs:** Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot; four ways of conserving natural resources and making less waste

**Aluminum:** a type of metal, used to make soda cans and foil, that is extracted from a mineral ore known as bauxite

**Bale:** a large quantity of recyclables that has been compressed into a cube shape to be transported to the recycler that will create remanufactured products

**Bauxite:** the mineral that is mined and used to produce aluminum, primarily found in Australia

**Buying in bulk:** choosing to buy products in bigger, family-sized quantities instead of small or individually packaged units

**Closing the loop:** creating a cycle that uses a waste product to create a new and useful product, e.g. making compost in a worm bin or recycling used cans to make new cans

**Commingled recycling:** a method of recycling collection in which all recyclables are placed in the same curbside bin and sorted at a material recovery facility

**Compost:** the product of decomposed organic material; a nutrient-rich fertilizer that creates a healthy growing environment for plants

**Compost bin:** a container kept outside for turning food scraps (i.e. fruits, vegetables, egg shells) and yard waste into a rich fertilizer

**Conservation:** the wise and efficient use of natural resources, so Earth's supply of natural resources won't be used up

**Conveyor belt:** a machine that is used to move materials, often seen on factory assembly lines or at the grocery store checkout stand

**Cullet:** a material made of finely-ground glass that resembles sand and is used to make recycled glass items

**Decomposer:** an organism, including fungi, bacteria and invertebrates, that consumes and breaks down rotting organic material and helps return the nutrients back to the earth

**Energy:** the capacity for doing work. Energy is needed in order for anything or anyone to grow or change.

**Food scraps:** bits of leftover food that can be turned into compost instead of being thrown away and sent to the landfill. Fruits and vegetable scraps, egg shells, and coffee grounds can be put in a compost bin or worm bin, and *any* type of food can be placed in the green bin if your city has a food scrap program.

**Hazardous waste:** material that is unfit for curbside bins because it may contain toxic chemicals or substances that need special handling and disposal

**Hierarchy:** a ranking system according to relative importance

**Iron ore:** a mineral in rocks that is used to make steel

**Landfill:** an area of land designed to handle the disposal of solid waste. The garbage is usually spread out, compacted, and covered with dirt or other material in order to protect the environment in and around the landfill. The landfill is the final destination and the permanent home for anything we put in the garbage bin.

**Life cycle:** the ongoing process of life of natural and unnatural products from beginning to the end

**Materials Recovery Facility (MRF):** a facility designed to recover and sort materials that can be recycled, using machines and manual labor

**Mineral:** a naturally occurring substance, often found in rocks, formed through geological processes. Many minerals are mined and used by humans as natural resources.

**Mulch:** a material made of finely-chopped wood that is spread on top of gardens to help build healthy soil, conserve water, control weeds and reduce the need for pesticides

**Natural resource:** a material, organism, or element that is naturally occurring and is harvested and used by humans for food, energy, manufacturing, or other purposes. Examples are minerals, plants, animals, water, air and sunlight.

**Non-renewable resources:** minerals or sources of energy that can be mined or collected from the Earth, such as coal, petroleum, iron ore, copper etc. The processes needed for these natural resources to form are so slow that they may be considered gone forever once they are used up.

**Opossum-belly truck:** a large truck with an especially low bottom, designed to carry about 50,000 pounds of garbage from the transfer station to the landfill

**Organic:** materials that were once living or material produced by a living organism such as food, leaves, plant trimmings, hair, clothing fibers, paper, etc. Organic may also be used to describe food grown using sustainable agricultural methods.

**Packaging:** any material used to protect, transport, display or store a product, such as cardboard boxes, plastic wrap, styrofoam, plastic bags, etc. Packaging makes up one third of all garbage in the United States.

**Petroleum:** a substance occurring deep in the Earth that is formed from the decomposition of prehistoric organisms and is used to make gasoline, plastic, and other products.

**Recyclable:** discarded materials, such as paper, aluminum and steel cans, plastic bottles, cardboard, and glass bottles, that can be recycled and remanufactured into new products

**Recycle:** to make new products from used materials

**Reduce:** to make less waste in the first place by using less stuff

**Renewable resource:** natural resources such as plants and animals that can be harvested and reproduced again and again within a specific period of time

**Reuse:** to extend the life of an item by using it over again as it is or thinking of a new way to use it

**Rot:** to decompose organic waste (yard trimmings, food scraps, or food-soiled paper)

**Transfer:** to move something from one place to another

**Transfer Station:** a centrally-located facility that receives, sorts, and transfers municipal waste to its next destination, such as landfills, recyclers, or composting facilities

**Worm bin:** a container used to hold worms, food scraps, and bedding for composting

**Yard waste:** any type of plant matter, including leaves, grass, and branches, all of which can go in the green curbside bin or in a compost pile/bin