

REDUCE



STOPWASTE
at home • at work • at school

REDUCE

Definition

It's simple! Use less "stuff" = less waste produced!

Why?

All the "stuff" we use can be traced back to a natural resource. Like paper napkins are produced from trees and a plastic zipper is produced from petroleum (oil). When we use less stuff, we help to conserve our natural resources and prevent pollution.

Examples

- Take only the amount of paper napkins you need.
- Choose products that produce minimal waste.
- Take your lunch to school in a lunch box, not plastic bags.
- Ask for no bag at the store if you can carry what you buy.
- Use a cloth bag at the store.
- Buy durable items. Durable items have a longer life which means it would need replacement less often. Like a durable backpack that lasts all year, or more!

Discussion Questions

- Discuss the difference between our "wants" and our "needs" and how that influences what we buy.
 - What do humans need to survive?
 - What are some things people purchase as a "want?"
 - Take some of the examples from the previous question and discuss the packaging. How is it packaged? Are there difference packaging options that could produce less waste? (single snack vs. large bag of snack, a CD sold in a large, plastic packaging vs. shrink-wrapped in plastic, etc.)
- What are ways you already practice REDUCE at home? At school?
- What are other ideas to REDUCE?
- Why conserve natural resources?



REUSE



REUSE

Definition

Extending the life of an item by reusing it again as it is or creating a new use for it.

Why

By extending the life of an item, you accomplish three things:

1. you keep that item out of the landfill, and
2. you produce less waste because you don't have to use new "stuff," and
3. you avoid using our natural resources.

Examples

- Reuse plastic shopping bags for future trips to the store.
- Use a reusable drink bottle instead of a new bottle or carton each day.
- Donate old clothes, books, and toys to a charity.
- Reuse paper for art projects.
- Be creative!

Discussion Questions

- How does reusing items affect our use of natural resources?
- What are the benefits of reusing items?
- Are there disadvantages or limits to reusing? If so, what are they?
- How many different ways can you think of to reuse a plastic milk jug? A sock? A paper bag? A three-ring binder? A soup can? Etc.
- What items do we reuse at home? At school?
- What are other ideas to REUSE?

RECYCLE



RECYCLE

Definition

The process of producing new products from used material. OR The process of remanufacturing used materials into new products. Some used materials can be made into new items of the same thing, others need to be made into entirely new items.

Example: Used glass bottles can be remanufactured into new glass bottles. However, used plastic bottles can't be remanufactured into new plastic bottles, but they can be remanufactured into new materials such as pile fleece and carpet.

Why

By remanufacturing used items into new items, at three things are accomplished:

1. reduce the amount of raw natural materials needed to make the item.
2. reduce the amount of energy required to produce the new item.
3. keep materials out of the landfill.

Can you think of others?

Examples

- Recycled glass can be made into new glass bottles
- Recycled plastic bottles can be made into new pile fleece, carpets, etc.
- Recycled aluminum cans can be made into new aluminum cans
- Recycled writing paper can be made into toilet paper
- Recycled cardboard boxes can be made into new cardboard boxes

Discussion Questions

- What do you recycle at home? At school?
- What kinds of different materials can be made from used plastic? Aluminum? Steel? Paper? This question can be extended to a team research project.
- What are the benefits of recycling?
- What is the recycling program at your school?
- What influences a person's decision to recycle or not? At school, do students recycle? Why or why not?

ROT



ROT

(COMPOST)

Definition

Composting is using the natural process of decomposition to produce a rich, fertile soil amendment.

Why?

Composting food scraps and yard waste helps to reduce waste by keeping them out of the landfill. Composting is also nature's way of recycling – turning an item into something new again, a soil amendment that helps plants to grow.

Examples

Composting can be done in the yard with a compost pile or bin and also by using worms that eat vegetable and fruit scraps. Compostable organic material:

- Fruits and vegetable trimmings
- Grass clippings
- Paper napkins
- Leaves
- Bush prunings

Discussion Questions

- How does a compost pile or worm bin represent the food web?
- Why is Rot the 4th R?
- What are the benefits of composting?
- What are decomposers and what are their roles? What are consumers and their role?
- What would happen if nothing decomposed?