

“ONE PERSON’S TRASH”

Classroom Guide

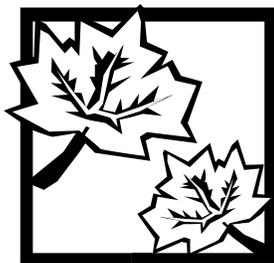
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Fall 2007

Welcome back to school! Our fall newsletter focuses on ways that we can help ourselves, our families, our communities, and our country by using our resources more wisely through waste reduction, reuse, and recycling.

If you have suggestions or comments for improving the newsletter or this Classroom Guide, please call or write us.

Have a great America Recycles Day on November 15th!



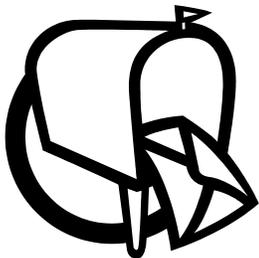
meaning that these businesses and organizations send it to you even though you didn't ask for it. Much of this unsolicited mail is also unwanted, which is why most people refer to it as “junk mail.” More than 50 percent of junk mail is discarded, much of it unopened.

For more information about junk mail, visit <http://www.newdream.org/junkmail/index.php>.

Discussion Starters

- ▣ What types of businesses and organizations seem to rely most on unsolicited mail? What do they hope to gain? What are some other means they might use to meet these goals?
- ▣ What is identity theft? How might unsolicited mail increase the risk of identity theft? What are some ways that this risk can be reduced?
- ▣ How much “junk mail” is being opened? How much is used? Do the students’ family’s make purchases or donations that they might not have made without this unsolicited mail?

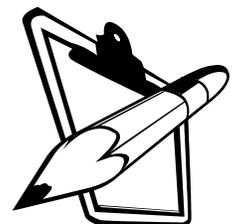
Junk Mail Investigator



According to the Center for a New American Dream, more than 100 million trees’ worth of bulk mail arrives in American mail boxes each year—the equivalent of deforesting the entire Rocky Mountain National Park every four months. This bulk mail includes catalogs, flyers, and letters from businesses that want to sell things or organizations seeking donations. Most of this bulk mail is “unsolicited,”

Extension Activity: Evaluation

Ask students to save the “junk mail” received in their homes for one week and then bring it in to class. Through the week, have them note on each piece of junk mail whether it was opened and read or just set aside. Weigh the total, and calculate the average weight of junk



mail per family. Divide the junk mail into categories. Categories might include: solicitations from businesses, solicitations from non-profit organizations, catalogs, etc. Tally the total volume of junk mail in each category. Now, calculate the percentage of this mail that was of interest to the family, having been opened, read, and possibly used to make a purchase of decision.



When your class is done, be sure to shred any of the unsolicited mail that contains personal information—and recycle that paper!

Extension Activity: Outreach

Junk mail is recyclable! Create a junk mail collage that promotes recycling of the paper products that are part of a typical family's junk mail. You might use catalogs or catalog pages, fund-raising letters, sales flyers, etc. Make your collages colorful and interesting. Promote recycling of junk mail and other paper on the collage by featuring this information prominently: 1) what junk mail and other papers are accepted for recycling; and 2) where and when are these items accepted.



Less waste, more taste

On average, each student throws away about 67 pounds of lunch waste per year. This total includes uneaten food and food scraps, as well as single-serving packages, wrappers, lunch sacks, plastic "silverware," and throw-away drink containers.

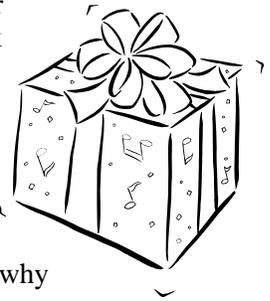


Now is a good time for your students to plan to make less lunchtime waste this year. Have your students create posters for the lunch room that publicize five ways to reduce lunchtime waste. These might include eating what is taken; carrying lunch from home in a reusable bag or box; placing foods into washable, reusable containers; recycling plastic drink bottles or aluminum beverage cans; etc.

Reader Redux

Incorporate this newsletter into your classroom as you might use a newspaper. Here are some ideas to help you get started:

- ❑ After reading "10 Tips for Greener Gift-Giving," ask each student to write a journal entry or five-paragraph essay about one item they wish they had not received or purchased. Encourage them to describe in detail why they regret owning the item.



- ❑ For one day, ask each student to keep a tally sheet and record each time he or she begins a sentence with "I want..." or "I need...." The next day,



discuss these statements. How many of the "need" statements were truly needs? Discuss the difference between wants and needs, listing on the board "needs." Discuss why we use the term "need" to describe things or items that we want. Ask student how this activity made them feel about their

statements of want and need. By the end of the day, were their attitudes or behaviors different? Why or why not?

- ❑ Take a trip to your school's library or media center. See if you can find a copy of *The Ghost Map* by Steven

Johnson. Does the media center have any of his other books? Make a list of Steven Johnson's books that are available in your school's media center. How would



you borrow the books that are not found at your media center? (*Hints:* Ask the librarian about "inter-library loans" or check your public library.)