

"ONE PERSON'S TRASH"

Classroom Guide

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Happy New Year! As we kick off what we hope will be a great year, we're pleased to be able to join your class through our newsletter, which is designed to provide useful information

about local waste reduction and recycling programs.

In this Classroom Guide, we give you ideas so that you can incorporate the newsletter into your classroom instruction, helping meet your educational goals and teach your standards and helping us share this important information about our community.

Our winter newsletter focuses on ways that we can save money and resources 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.



Living smaller on the planet



Ecological footprints are what our choices leave behind on the planet. These "footprints" include how many resources we use, how much energy we expend, and how much waste we create.

Discussion

Before discussing ecological footprints as a class, divide your students into five groups and ask each group to go to one of the websites listed under "Learn More! Do More!" After exploring the website and reading more about the subject, ask each group to summarize what they learned for the class. Then, discuss the following items as a class:

- What are at least three reasons that Americans have, on average, larger ecological footprints than those in other countries?
- How does household size (the average number of people living in each household) affect our ecological footprints? Why?
- Do the choices made by youth really matter? If so, how?
- What types of choices can have the largest positive impact (making our footprints smaller)? What types of choices have the largest negative impacts (making our footprints bigger)?

- How might we convince people to make more positive choices?

Extension Activity 1

Write a limerick about ecological footprints. Topics might include food selections, housing choices, transportation, waste reduction and recycling, or energy use. A limerick is a five-line poem in which lines one, two, and five rhyme and lines three and four rhyme. Here is an example:

There once was a man named Michael,
Who never liked to recycle.
He filled his trash,
And wasted his cash,
'Til he realized the landfill was frightful.

Extension Activity 2

Ask each student to go to www.myfootprint.org to calculate his or her “ecological footprint.” On the board, have each student anonymously record his or her footprint (20 acres, 28 acres, etc.). Once all of the footprint values are recorded, calculate the class average. Discuss what the students learned about their own resource use. Which areas created the greatest impact (food, housing, transportation, etc.)? What choices could lead to smaller footprints? How easy would it be to make these changes?

Extension Activity 3

As a class, create a group, or serial, story entitled “The Tale of Big Foot” (not the yeti, but a human user of lots of resources). In writing a group story, each student will contribute one paragraph. As a class, give your “big foot” character a name, a setting, and a conflict. Then, brainstorm a first paragraph. Once the first paragraph is written, begin passing the story from student to student. Each student will, in turn, read what has already been written and then extend the story by adding the next paragraph. The final student will write the conclusion.

When the story is complete, post it on a classroom bulletin board or make copies for the class.



Reader Redux

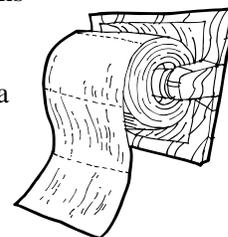
Incorporate this newsletter into your classroom as you might use a newspaper. Whether you’re teaching art or language arts or sociology, you can use articles in our newsletter to teach the skills and proficiencies that you’re focusing on each day. Here are some “reuse” activities to help you get started:

- Select one of the everyday items photographed by Chris Jordan: office paper; aluminum cans; plastic beverage bottles; cell phones; paper grocery bags; plastic shopping bags; household batteries; children’s blocks; or toothpicks. Brainstorm a list of improvements that could be made to the selected item. Be as creative as possible!



- Find three words in the newsletter that are unfamiliar to you. Write the meaning of each (use the dictionary or encyclopedia) and then write words that are synonyms or have similar parts or origins.

- In your journal, list the tissue paper products that your family uses at home. Put a checkmark or star next to each item that contains recycled-content paper. (If you aren’t sure, check the product labels.) Now, write a five-paragraph persuasive essay to convince your family to start using recycled-content tissue products or to use more recycled-content products. If you need more information, go to www.conservatree.org/paper/PaperTypes/tissueoverview.shtml#intro.



- Václav Havel said, “The only lost cause is one we give up on before we enter the struggle.” Make a list of movies that deal with heroes or heroines who face a “lost cause” and refuse to give up. What is the outcome in each? How does the refusal to give up change the heroes/heroines, as well as the people around them?

