

# “ONE PERSON’S TRASH”

Classroom Guide

NASWAC • Department of Public Works  
384 Osgood Street • North Andover, MA 01845  
(978) 685-0950 • [recycle@townofnorthandover.com](mailto:recycle@townofnorthandover.com)  
[www.townofnorthandover.com/recycle](http://www.townofnorthandover.com/recycle)

## Winter 2007

Happy New Year! As we kick off what we hope will be a great year, we’re pleased to be able to be 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



## *Less waste = Better climate*

Driving fewer miles in your car, turning off unused TVs, switching from incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescents — all of these are ways to use less energy, create fewer greenhouse gases, and reduce our negative impact on the global climate. But taking out the trash? What does your trash have to do with climate change? As it turns out, quite a bit!

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) commissioned a study, which was updated in October of 2006, on the links between climate change and waste. The findings were clear — less waste can lead to a better climate by reducing energy use and releasing fewer greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.



## Discussion Starters

In discussing waste and climate change with your class, start at the personal and local level. Here are some discussion starters to use with your class:

- ❑ Think about your own use of “stuff.” Do you have a wasteful habit that you could give up? For instance, do you stop for a drink in a carry-out cup at least once a day? What if you used your own refillable mug instead? That’s one cup less every day! As a class, brainstorm some habits that might be wasteful and could be improved.

- ❑ Have you evaluated your recycling recently? When was the last time you took a look into the trash at school or at home? Did you see many recyclables? Why were they there? How can you remember and remind others to put recyclables into recycling containers instead of trash cans?
- ❑ How much do you know about composting? Does your family compost? Does the school? What about your community? Find out who composts what and report back to the class.

## Extension Activity 1

Put your students in groups of 3 to 5 people. Ask each group to write a song lyric. The song could be a rap or a ballad. It could be set to original music or set to a familiar tune. The only criteria is that each group's song lyrics must spread the message from the article, "What's Waste Got to Do With It?" Each group will need to:

- Reread "What's Waste Got to Do With It?"
- Make a list of facts or ideas to include in the song lyric.
- Select a style for the song lyric.
- Select or create a tune.
- Write the song lyric.
- Review and revise the lyric.
- Perform the song for the class.

## Extension Activity 2

Find the link between everyday actions at school, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change.

Have your class use the U.S.

EPA's **Climate CHange**

**Emission Calculator Kit** (Climate CHECK) to estimate your school's greenhouse gas emissions and find ways to create less negative impact on the climate. To download the activity and materials, visit [www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/school.html](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/school.html), scroll to "High School Students Check Your School's Climate Impact," and click on the link.



## Resources

The U.S. EPA's Climate Change website features great information for students, including interactive games. Encourage your students to visit the site: [www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/index.html).



# Calculating Compost

Reread "The Composting Cafeteria." After doing some careful reading, do some math. Answer these

questions:

- ◆ About how many employees made complaints about the program?
- ◆ On average, how many pounds of food waste were created by each employee use?
- ◆ On average, how many pounds of biobased cafeteria ware were created by each employee use?
- ◆ How many tons are in 11,370 pounds?
- ◆ If the pilot program lasted 12 weeks and the cafeteria was open five days per week, how many pounds of biobased cafeteria ware were used each work day?

## 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:

- Write a paragraph that begins: *I will save energy this year by...*
- The phrase "Spaceship Earth" is a metaphor. Describe what a metaphor is. What does the author intend in linking "spaceship" and "earth" together in this metaphor? How do you see "spaceship," "earth," or both differently by their use in this metaphor? How does the metaphor "Spaceship Earth" affect your thinking about the environment? Write another metaphor that you think will help people think about the environment in general or climate change in particular.
- Create a waste reduction quiz. Focus your quiz on activities that students could do at school.
- Do some "dumpster diving" (at home or school) and find raw materials to create your own art. You might create a picture frame, a bulletin board, a storage box, or even an artistic collage. Use your imagination!

