



Lesson: Trash or Treasure?

Grade: K-3

Subject: English, Arts

Objectives:

Students will:

- recognize the many things that can be saved and reused
- realize that trading or reselling are good alternatives to throwing away
- identify reuse as an important way to help the environment

Teaching Time:

approximately 40 minutes

Materials: poem, "Hector the Collector" from *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein; variety of items that have been "rescued" from the waste can, such as old clothing, a broken tool, a toy, recyclable packaging, etc.; worksheet, Throw Away or Reuse? What I Can Do;

Extension: space for a swap meet.

Concept adapted from the Association of Vermont Recyclers and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (see Acknowledgements)



Background:

Buying less is an important part of changing the consumer habits that contribute to the waste stream. One of the main ways we can reduce the amount of trash ending up in Oregon landfills is to renew the life of an object by redefining its purpose and by using it again. Trading items can help us reduce the amount of new items we need to buy, and therefore the amount of resources needed to make new products.

Procedures:

- Read the poem, "Hector the Collector." Discuss author's message about junk and treasure. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of "collecting" such as not throwing things away that may still have a purpose or that can be reused by someone or made into an art project, etc. On the other hand, collecting may lead us into behaviors of having and wanting more and more things. Draw from "Needs and Wants" and help students come to some conclusion about how much stuff is "enough" and ways to be happy without buying more and more things.
- **Let's talk about finding more uses for things that we believe are no longer useful to us.**
- **Who might like to play with a toy that you longer want?** (A younger sibling, friends, children who don't have many toys).
- **Are you taller than you were a year ago? What did you do with your old clothes? Can you share clothes you have outgrown with brothers or sisters or friends who are smaller?**
- As a class, brainstorm the benefits of reusing things. They should mention saving money, helping others, prolonging the life of landfills, reducing pollution, and saving natural resources.
- Show the class some examples of items that you have "rescued" from the trash, such as an old shirt, broken tool, toy, recyclable packaging, etc.
- **Which of these items can be reused for its original purpose? Which can be used in a new way?** Students should state that some broken items could be repaired and used again, or that clothing could simply be worn by someone else.
- Use an old box to create a class treasure trunk. Decorate it and remind students to fill it with collectable treasures - REUSABLE MATERIALS!

Reflection/Response:

- Have each student complete the worksheet, "Throw Away or Reuse? What I Can Do."
- Have students bring in "rescued" items from their home trash and have class identify ways it can be reused.
- Older students might write a summary of the class lesson, connecting reuse with the reduction of waste.
- Create a "reused" art object out of assembled materials (for example, make a giraffe or dinosaur--see Let's Make a Mask activity in the Resource section).

- Have students appreciate and discuss the qualities of each person's or group of students artwork and creative use of the materials.

Extensions:

- Have a class contest to name the class treasure trunk (i.e. Planet Protector Box). Try to think of more positive names rather than using a negative word like "junk."
- Organize a school-wide swap meet or clothes drive to be donated to charity.
- Ask parents to donate reusable art supplies (i.e. greeting cards, office paper, etc.)

Common Curriculum Goal:

English: Literature

- Read a variety of literary forms (e.g., novels, poems, plays, short stories, autobiographies, essays) of varying complexity from a variety of cultures and time periods.
- Analyze the development and treatment of themes in a literary work.

Arts: Aesthetics and Art Criticism

- Use of knowledge of technical, organizational and aesthetic elements to describe and analyze one's own art and the art of others.
- Respond to works of art, giving reasons for preferences.

Grade 3 Benchmark:

Students will:

- identify a story, poem, play, or non-fiction selection.
- identify main and supporting characters.
- identify events important to the development of the plot.
- identify setting, including place and time period of a story.

Recognize artistic elements in works of art.

Describe an idea or feeling connected with viewing or hearing a work of art.



Worksheet: Throw Away or Reuse: What I Can Do?

Student Name: _____

Draw a line from each item in the garbage can to show where it is being reused again instead of thrown away!





Artwork by Gina Guddemi, Grade 12, St. Mary's Academy. Submitted for the Metro Regional Services Earth Day Bill Board Contest, 2001.