

The Effects of Trash and Garbage On the Environment

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Objectives:

- To recognize the importance of solid waste management.
- To be able to identify the four "R's"; reuse, reduce, recycle and recover.
- To understand what a landfill is.
- To analyze individual solid waste management habits.
- To understand what is biodegradable and what is non-biodegradable.
- To understand why composting is a landfill alternative.
- To understand some of the associated pollution problems.
- To understand how incineration reduces waste and produces emission.
- To view the video tape "The Rotten Truth" in order to enhance individual knowledge of solid waste disposal and the recycling process.

Activity:

Learn the vocabulary and the categories of waste that occur daily. Questions--What is garbage? Where does it go? Discuss landfills and problems that relate to the landfills. Review or introduce the concepts of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover. Set up a bulletin board divided into sections with the four "R's" categories as headings. Have students begin tacking up items appropriate to each heading and have them explain why the items belong in that category. Some items may be appropriate to more than one category Review video tape, "The Rotten Truth" and give a short quiz on information from the video. Make a Compost Column. Discuss the conditions of the various kinds of waste. Discuss biodegradability. Compare compost to real landfills. Discuss the potential environmental problems associated with waste in landfills (leachate, contamination of water, smell, methane gas, garbage truck traffic, litter, scavenging birds, loss of natural resources and energy.)

Evaluation:

Students should be able to tell the difference between natural and human made materials, packaging and non-packaging items, animals, plants and minerals, renewable and nonrenewable resources and be able to identify compostable and recyclable materials.

Conclusion:

As educators and consumers, we are entrusted with the job of teaching students how to make intelligent decisions about solid waste. These decisions can begin in the schools and continue in the homes and stores. The solid waste dilemma will not go away. Changing our way of disposing of trash and garbage will help reduce the amount of garbage that ends up in landfills. Solving the solid waste disposal problem will take a major overhaul in our lifestyle. As consumers and educators, we can accept this challenge and help educate our citizens for change.