

IV. The Problem with Trash

WHAT?

Students investigate the ways towns dispose of solid waste.

WHY?

- To describe the responsibilities a town has for properly disposing of solid waste
- To identify the problems towns have with waste issues.
- To identify ways citizens can help with the disposing of solid waste
- To investigate recycling as one of the solutions towns have used to help with their problems of solid waste disposal

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills addressed in this lesson:

Government:

- Understand the purpose of rules that provide safety

Citizenship

- Understand characteristics of good citizenship

Social Studies Skills:

- Apply critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology
- Communicate effectively in a variety of forms.

TAKS:

- Objective 4: Political Influences on Historical Issues and Events
- Objective 5: Critical-Thinking Skills

HOW?

Materials needed:

- *The Earth and I* by Frank Asch or another book that demonstrates the problems with litter and trash
- A day's collection of trash from the classroom
- Copies of the handout titled "Some Trash We Can Recycle"
- Simulated litter site including both recyclable and non-recyclable items
- Boxes for recyclables
- Garbage bags for non-recyclables
- Gloves for students and adults to wear
- Video and/or still camera(s)
- Drawing paper
- Markers

Suggested teaching time: 2 class periods

Suggested advanced planning:

- Find out the recycling policy of the students' town.
- Arrange to create a simulated litter site on your school ground. Include both recyclable and non-recyclable materials.
- Secure parental assistance for the litter collecting simulation

Suggested Procedures:

- Ask students to look around the classroom and identify items that will eventually become trash.
- Show students a trashcan filled with items from their classroom. Discuss why the items were discarded.
- Discuss why we need to remove trash from the classroom, homes and other places.
- Read the book *The Earth and I* or another book that demonstrates the problems with litter and trash.
- Discuss how towns must take care of trash collected from people's homes, schools, and businesses. Some towns have laws about trash. Some towns provide ways for people to recycle.
- On a transparency or by distribution, give students access to the handout titled "Some Trash We Can Recycle." Ask students if they recycle items in their home. Tell students about their town's policy for recycling trash.
- Conduct a trash collection simulation on your campus.
 - Take pictures before, during, and after the simulated cleanup.
 - Provide gloves for the students and adults.
 - Provide boxes for recyclables according to your town's policies for collecting recyclable items.
 - Provide garbage bags for non-recyclables.

- Have students sort the litter appropriately.
- Discuss where their collection will go. Some of the possibilities include: it will be collected with other school trash, or that non-recyclables will be collected and the recyclables will be delivered to a designated recycling center.
- Display the pictures taken of the simulation or show the movie if you used a video camera
- In the classroom, have students make posters encouraging people to recycle.

Suggested Web Sites:

Planetpals – Friends for Earth
www.planetpals.com/index.html

Earth 911
www.earth911.org/master.asp