



Educational Resources for Remote Recycling Learning: Elementary School

These resources have been compiled to help you teach about reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting in conjunction with a unit on natural resources, conservation, or environmental science. We hope that this resource helps you spark a discussion and keep students focused on how they can continue to recycle and compost even while they are out of school.

Questions? Contact us: outreach@marinsanitary.com or 415-456-2601

Recommended Activity: Material Life Cycle Analysis

- Ask students to pick a material that they have been frequently encountering while they have been at home (cardboard delivery boxes, plastic drink bottles, aluminum soda cans, plastic bags, paperboard pasta boxes, etc.). Ask them to complete a Life Cycle Analysis on this material. What they should be trying to find out is some variation of the following:
 - How did we make this item/where did it come from?
 - We use natural resources to make everything we use
 - Can this item be recycled? You can refer students to the “[Where Does it Go, Joe?](#)” tool on the Marin Sanitary Service website, or our [flyers and posters](#) section if they become confused about this.
 - What happens to this item when we are done using it?

Recommended Activity: Visual Waste Assessment

- Have students complete a “waste log” in which they keep track of:
 - What they are disposing of
 - How they are sorting each material
 - Connected to their life cycle analysis above: what happens once they put their items in the trash, recycling, or compost?
 - Ask them to make a visual estimation of what percent of their waste is trash, recycling, and compost (this can be a good opportunity to connect to fractions or percentages, if students are learning those concepts)
 - Ask them to reflect on the experience:
 - Were they surprised by how much they threw away?
 - Were they surprised by the amount of recycling, trash, or compost they had?
 - Have their observations led them to think of any ideas to change their behavior?

Games:

- “Recycle Round Up” from National Geographic
 - This game has students prevent waste from being littered at the park – they need to sort it into trash, recycling, or compost.
 - <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/games/action-and-adventure/recycle-roundup-new/>
 - Recommended follow-up:
 - Do you ever notice litter at the park, or in other public places?
 - Why is it important to prevent litter? What harm can it do?
 - Why is correct sorting important?

Songs:

- Jack Johnson's "The 3Rs" song talks about reducing, reusing, and recycling. Don't forget to talk about the 4th R: rot!
 - Link to sing-along video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USo_vH1Jz7E

Video Resources:

- "How Recycling Works!" (4:09 minutes)
 - Description: This video gives a good high-level overview of what happens to different kinds of waste after they are disposed of.
 - Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VIRVPum9cp4>
- "Composting for Kids" (2:00 minutes)
 - Description: This video meant for elementary school students gives a good, concise overview of the benefits of composting and how it works.
 - Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHYzRaepeMw>
- "California faces recycling crisis" from ABC7News
 - Description: Local news outlet covers problems in the recycling industry, and visits MSS.
 - Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4v7jG1MvmM>
- "The Story of Plastic" from The Story of Stuff Project (~4:00 minutes long)
 - Description: Details what is going on behind the scenes with our plastics, and what happens to them after we put them in the recycling bin.
 - Link: https://youtu.be/urFZ5o0az_4
- "The Story of Stuff" from The Story of Stuff Project (~20:00 minutes)
 - Description: Focuses on how our linear "stuff" economy can't work on our finite planet with finite resources.
 - Link: <https://youtu.be/9GorqroigqM>
- "The Story of Bottled Water" from the Story of Stuff Project (~8:00 minutes)
 - Description: Explores how the water bottle industry created demand for a product we do not need, and why we should opt for refillable water bottles.
 - Link: <https://youtu.be/Se12y9hSOM0>