

Name _____

Date _____

Waste Not, Want Not – Recycling

Do you ever wonder where your garbage goes when you toss a candy wrapper or pop bottle into the trash can? Well, most of it ends up in landfills, but, at the rate at which we are throwing things away (America dumps about 5 billion tons of garbage a year!) we will soon run out of space to put it. Garbage comes from homes, schools, hospitals, offices, industry and mining, but today we are only going to talk about the trash that comes from our homes and schools. This is where we can make a difference.

Waste disposal has become such a big problem that governments, scientists and industries are all looking for solutions. If they haven't been able to sort it out yet, what can we do? Quite a lot, as it happens. First, we need to understand that most of the products we use come from our **natural resources**. That just means that the original materials come from the earth. Things like coal and oil, natural gas and different metals and sand; and growing things like trees and animals.

Second, we need to be able to tell the difference between **renewable** natural resources, which are resources that can be replaced as quickly as they are used, and **non-renewable** natural resources, which are resources we are using up far quicker than they can be replaced. Look at the materials we mentioned above. Can you guess which are renewable and which are not? Animals, plants and sand are all renewable resources but coal, oil, gas and metals were all deposited in the earth over millions of years and if we keep wasting them one day there won't be any left to use.

Third, we can help by **recycling** as much as possible. Recycling means that the product is used again instead of being thrown into a landfill. The most common products we can recycle are paper, which comes from trees, glass, which comes from sand, cans, which are made from metals and plastic packets and containers, which are made from oil.

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Waste Not, Want Not – Recycling Questions

A: What do we know about waste?

Can you explain, in your own words, what the following terms mean?

1. Natural resources
2. Renewable resources
3. Non-renewable resources
4. Recycling

B: Which waste is which?

Here are the contents of a trashcan. Can you list them under the headings: renewable resources and non-renewable resources?

Plastic milk container, paper packet, broken glass, empty can, plastic bag, magazine, eggshells, bent metal spoon, lettuce leaves, old key.

C: What would you do?

Can you think of a good plan for re-using any of the items you've listed under the non-renewable resources? Write a letter to the government to tell them your plan.

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Waste Not, Want Not – Recycling Answers

Activity A

1. Natural resources: original materials that come from the earth, like coal, oil, natural gas, metals, sand, trees and animals.
2. Renewable resources: resources that can be replaced as quickly as they are used, like animals, plants and sand.
3. Non-renewable resources: resources that we are using up quicker than they can be replaced, like coal, oil, gas and metals.
4. Recycling: reusing a product.

Preferably in the children's own words.

Activity B

Renewable resources	Non-renewable resources
Paper packet	Plastic milk container
Broken glass	Empty can
Magazine	Plastic bag
Egg shells	Bent metal spoon
Lettuce leaves	Old key

Activity C

This will depend upon the ingenuity of the children. It does not necessarily have to be practical!