

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Summary

Students will understand that the only way we will be able to continue on the earth the way we are now is to reduce, reuse, and recycle. They will generate ideas to limit usage of natural resources in all areas.

Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 3rd Grade

[Standard 1 Objective 3](#)

Time Frame

3 class periods of 30 minutes each

Life Skills

Aesthetics, Thinking & Reasoning, Communication, Character, Social & Civic Responsibility, Employability, Systems Thinking

Background for Teachers

Giving the principal a "heads up" that your class is going to propose a school-wide reduce, reuse and recycle campaign. Become familiar with attached websites, books, or other recycling sites. Prepare notes to go home a couple of days before beginning this lesson asking for recyclable objects and articles.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Essential Questions:

Why should we reduce, reuse and recycle?

What can and will we do to be part of the change?

Instructional Procedures

A couple of days previous to this lesson, send home notes requesting the students bring in one item that can be recycled and an article from a magazine, newspaper, or the internet that discusses recycling, reducing, or reusing. Then have the students set these items on their desks before you start the lesson.

Teacher takes a pre-filled garbage bag and scatters the clean trash around the room, making loud noises and generally being obnoxious. Then, ask the class "What am I doing?" Let the class share ideas and then ask "What should we do now? Put the items back in the trash, or is there anything else that we could use these items for?" This is the pre-assessment portion of the lesson - find out if the students can think of any other ways to use items other than throwing them away.

Ask each member of the class to pick up two items and put them on their desk, adding these items to what they've brought from home, and then give the class some think time to determine what they think the best use of the items is.

Make a class graph answering the question: "What do you do with items you are throwing away at home?"

The categories are:

- 1) Throw everything away;
- 2) Throw some things away, and recycle paper;
- 3) Throw some things away and recycle paper and cans;
- 4) Reuse or recycle most items and throw very few away.

Examine the graph and now take a second look at the items on their desks.

Ask, "Would you now do the same thing with the items on your desk that you would have done before our discussion?"

Read some of the articles about what real people do with recyclable products, and then decide again what could be done with the products on the students desk.

Next, discuss the fact that recycling paper and aluminum cans is fairly simple and necessary. But, nearly everything could be recycled or reused. And, the most important thing is to reduce the amount of materials we use in the first place. Tell the students their assignment is to think of ways to reduce the amount of material used, and to imagine real reuses for the items on their desk.

Ask what will happen if people DON'T recycle or reuse? The Magic School Bus episode brings this out as well, but it would be good for them to think it through on their own. How will the earth be affected if we choose to NOT reduce, reuse and recycle? There will be absolute consequences. Make a list of possible outcomes for inaction.

Finally, now that the students are thinking about reducing, reusing, and recycling, ask them what would happen if every person in this room decided to act more responsibly towards using natural resources? What if every person in this SCHOOL acted more responsibly? What are some things that this school could do to use natural resources (other than paper and cans) better? As a class, brainstorm several ideas and discuss pros and cons using a T chart. Then, choose the one idea that is most feasible and easiest to implement and ask the class how they want to advertise this idea to the school.

Let the students create posters etc. about their plan and post them throughout the school. Determine an appropriate time frame for the duration of the project. The teacher has the responsibility to manage the project and take care of getting the required permissions.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

The students will determine their own ideas for reusing objects and will come up with their own posters. Student assignments determined by ability. Peer assistance with project parameters.

Extensions

Students could present their ideas to a community council or PTA or other community organizations and see if the ideas could expand beyond the school. The students could also present their ideas before the faculty.

Assessment Plan

The class will develop one idea to implement to reduce, reuse or recycle in the school that does not include paper or cans.

Bibliography

Don't Throw It Out: Recycle, Renew, and Reuse to Make Things Last by Lori Baird, Yankee

Magazine, Editors of Yankee Magazine

Authors

[Katharina Hartshorn](#)

[Laura Zimmerman](#)