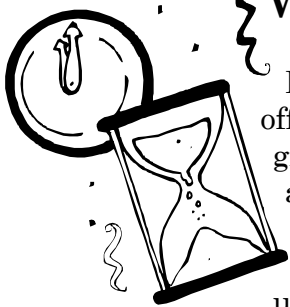


"ONE PERSON'S TRASH"

Classroom Guide

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Winter 2006



Happy New Year! As we kick off what we hope will be a great year, we're pleased to be able to join your class through our newsletter, which is designed to provide useful information about local

waste reduction and recycling programs.

In this Classroom Guide, we give you ideas so that you can incorporate the newsletter into your classroom instruction, helping meet your educational goals and teach your standards and helping us share this important information about our community.

Our winter newsletter focuses on ways that we can save money and resources through waste reduction, reuse, and recycling.

If you have suggestions or comments for improving the newsletter or this Classroom Guide, please call or write us.

On the trail of trash

In her book, *Garbage Land*:

On the Secret Trail of Trash, Elizabeth Royte

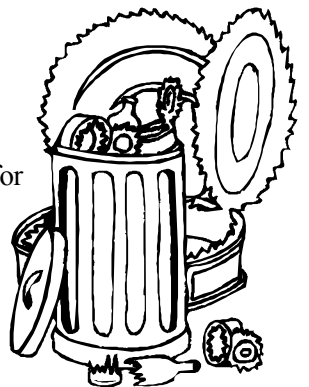
writes: "Garbage should worry us. It should prod us. We don't need better ways to get rid of things. We need to not get rid of things, either by

keeping them cycling through the system or not designing and desiring them in the first place." Central to her argument is that we must "see" our trash — no more "out of sight, out of mind." To make decisions, we need first to think about what we waste, what we throw away, and what we recycle.



Discussion Starters

- How does your family handle garbage? Does your family recycle? Who is responsible for trash and recycling?
- Litter is visible trash. What do you think when you see litter? Where do you see litter most often? Do you stop to pick it up? Have you ever littered? If so, why? If not, why not? What does litter make you think about the neighborhood or community where you see it? Have you ever participated in a litter cleanup?
- Proponents of the "Zero Waste" movement often use the slogan: *If you're not for zero waste, how much waste are you for?* Ask your students to think about this. How much waste are they FOR? How do their daily habits vote FOR or AGAINST waste? What changes to those habits could move them closer to zero waste?



"Zero waste is a philosophy and a design principle for the 21st Century; it is not simply about putting an end to landfilling. Aiming for zero waste is not an end-of-pipe solution. That is why it heralds fundamental change. Aiming for zero waste means designing products and packaging with reuse and recycling in mind. It means ending subsidies for wasting. It means closing the gap between landfill prices and their true costs. It means making manufacturers take responsibility for the entire lifecycle of their products and packaging. Zero waste efforts, just like recycling efforts before, will change the face of solid waste management in the future. *Instead of managing wastes, we will manage resources and strive to eliminate waste.*"

**The Institute for
Local Self Reliance**

Activities

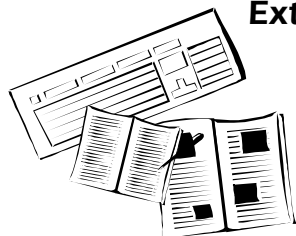
Work together as a class to find out what happens to trash and recyclables:

- ◆ Do a classroom "trash sort." For

one week, sort, categorize, and weigh all of the trash and recyclables produced in your classroom. Chart your results.

- ◆ Consider a lunch room trash sort. This is a bit messy and requires permission from the cafeteria manager and the principal. However, it can provide a lot of details about what types of foods and packaging are ending up in the trash. Again, sort, weigh, and categorize. Chart the results and post them in the lunch room.
- ◆ Ask students to do a one-day or one-week trash sort at home. This is how Elizabeth Royte began the project that led to her book, *Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash*. Have students create posters highlighting their results and display the posters for the class.

Extension Activity



Divide the class into groups. Each group will be researching how and where trash and recyclables are handled once they are picked up. Assign groups to research and interview different service providers: trash haulers, recycling haulers, recycling centers, our office, etc. Each group should find answers to questions such as: How and when are trash and recyclables collected? How and where are they transported? What happens to them once they get to their destination? What volume of trash and recyclables are handled?

To accomplish this, each group will need to find out who the service providers are, look up phone numbers, visit websites, and call to interview a staff person. Prior to this interview, each group will need to write five to 10 interview questions. Here are some ideas: How are materials supposed to be set out? What materials are accepted? What materials are not accepted? What type of trucks pick up the materials? Where does that material go?

Ask each group to create a poster that shows what the group learned. This poster might include a “flow chart” to display what happens to the materials from start (pick up) to finish (disposal or reprocessing).

Make A Difference

EPA’s “Make a Difference” campaign is aimed at educating and engaging students in resource conservation and environmental protection. This campaign helps youth make informed decisions for protecting the environment in their everyday lives. The goal is to inspire students to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste — to “make a difference” at home, at school, and in their communities.



Check out these websites:

Pre-teens — www.epa.gov/epaoswer/education/mad.htm

Teens — www.epa.gov/epaoswer/education/teens.htm

Internet Resources

Disposal & Recycling

www.booknoise.net/garbageland/index.html

www.earth911.org

www.epa.gov/garbage/disposal.htm

www.epa.gov/garbage/reduce.htm

Zero Waste

www.ecocycle.org/zero/index.cfm

www.grn.org (Click on “Zero Waste”)

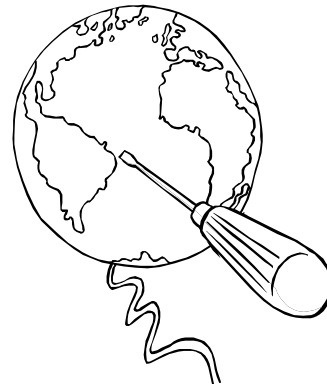
www.ilsr.org/recycling/zerowaste/index.html

www.zeri.org

www.zerowaste.ca.gov

www.zerowaste.org

Reader Redux



Incorporate this newsletter into your classroom as you might use a newspaper. Whether you’re teaching art or language arts or sociology, you can use articles in our newsletter to teach the skills and proficiencies that you’re focusing on each day. Here are some “reuse” activities to help you get started:

- Write five tips for a “new and improved” year. Be sure to include at least one activity that will benefit the local environment, such as recycling or reusing more.
- Using trash or recyclables (clean, of course), create a sculpture, a piece of jewelry, a model, or a mixed media creation. Your art should depict a theme or idea.
- Visit Chris Jordan’s website, www.chrisjordan.com, and take a look at more of his work from the exhibit “Intolerable Beauty—Portraits of American Mass Consumption.” Write a short interpretation (critical review) of his art based on your personal response, research, and properties found in the work.



- Oliver Wendell Holmes said: “The great thing in this world is not so much where you stand, as in what direction you are moving.” As you begin 2006, write three paragraphs about what direction you are or want to be moving in.
- Write a plan for low-waste Super Bowl party. Your party plan should include container recycling, buying snacks in bulk packaging, and avoiding disposables, such as paper plates, plastic cups, and paper napkins. You might even want to include food waste or paper composting!
- Here’s a problem for your students to solve. If a “moving kit” with all new boxes costs \$169 and a “moving kit” with used boxes costs 73% of that amount, how much money would the used box kit cost? How much money would your family save by choosing the used box kit? If the “moving kit” with used boxes cost only 50%, how much money would your family save?

