



Recycling and Waste Reduction Pre-/Post-Test (Grades 3-5)

Circle **True** or **False** for each sentence:

- True False 1. Aluminum, glass, paper, plastic and steel can all be recycled.
- True False 2. To recycle means to make new products from old ones.
- True False 3. Buying one large bag of chips instead of several small bags does **not** help reduce waste.
- True False 4. You can give old toys to needy children instead of throwing them away to help reduce waste.
- True False 5. Compost is what a pile of decaying grass, leaves, paper, and food scraps turns into.
- True False 6. Reusing means to use something again for the same purpose or a new purpose.
- True False 7. Bringing your lunch in plastic bags instead of a reusable lunch box helps reduce waste.
- True False 8. Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to keep a light bulb lit for 12 hours!

Give two examples of how you can reduce the amount of trash you throw away:

1. _____
2. _____

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TEACHER KEY

1. **True - Aluminum, glass, paper, plastic and steel can all be recycled.**
Glass, aluminum, paper, plastic and steel are considered to be the 'big five' of recycling. Although there are other items like tires, oil and computer/electronics that are recyclable, the above five are among the easiest to recycle and the most commonly recycled in communities.
2. **True - To recycle means to make new products from old ones.**
3. **False - Buying one large bag of chips instead of several small bags *does* help reduce waste.**
It's better to buy one large bag rather than several small ones but only if you know you will use that quantity of the item. It is always better to buy the size you will use, but remember, in general, the smaller sizes of items cost more and have more packaging.
4. **True - You can give old toys to needy children instead of throwing them away to help reduce waste.**
This is a great example of reusing.
5. **True - Compost is what a pile of decaying grass, leaves, and food scraps turns into.**
Composting is a form of recycling – it's really Nature's way of recycling. Composting decomposes and transforms organic material into a soil-like product called humus. Food scraps, leaves, and yard trimmings are excellent organic materials that can be composted. Composting is an important way to recycle -- both at home and at school, where organic material is used and waste is created.
6. **True - Reusing means to use something again for the same purpose or a new purpose.**
There are many 'reuses' for commonly used objects. Glass jars are excellent for storing stuff, paper that has already been used on one side can be drawn on the other side too, plastic jugs can be refilled to hold water, and steel cans are a great way to keep items like pens and markers together. Of course there are lots of additional ways to reuse these – these are just a few examples.
7. **False - Bringing your lunch in a reusable lunch box instead of plastic bags *does* help reduce waste.**

Bringing your lunch in a reusable container reduces waste because you can reuse the container over and over again whereas using plastic bags means that every day you are creating trash that will be thrown away.

8. True - Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to keep a light bulb lit for 12 hours!

Recycling: Conserves energy For example, it is 98% more energy efficient to recycle an aluminum can than to make a new can from virgin material. Conserves resources and also protects habitat for animals! By reusing resources there is less of a need to disturb the environment by mining or harvesting virgin materials. For example, plastics come from the non-renewable resource fossil fuels; by recycling plastics there are more fossil fuel resources protected or available for other applications.

Conserves landfill space Landfills are EXPENSIVE to build and no one wants one in their backyard. Therefore, the more we do to recycle, the less need we have for landfills. Prevents litter When we properly dispose of waste or recycle, we have less litter. Litter is ugly and can harm wildlife in our environment. Makes people feel good to help protect the environment - we all feel good when we pitch in and do our part to protect the planet that we depend on for our own lives.

Examples of how you can reduce the amount of trash you throw away:

- Use both sides of a piece of paper.
- Use a pencil and erase any mistakes. If you need a perfect copy, practice on one of the papers from your "reuse" box and then copy it over.
- Borrow books or magazines from your library instead of buying your own. Books and magazines can be used many times by the whole community instead of just once by you.
- Wrap gifts in old newspapers. Use the sports pages for athletes, comics for kids, etc.

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