



**Lesson 3:**

# This old thing?

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The next best thing to using less is using again.

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will explore the benefits of reuse before recycling, where the life of items are extended.



## Ask Students

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How many of you have shopped at a thrift store, garage sale or flea market?"

"Did anyone find anything really interesting?"

"Has anyone ever made anything from something old that you might have recycled or thrown away?"  
*(e.g. a wind chime from old buttons and tin cans, a collection container for paper from a cardboard box)*

### **Reuse and recycle are very different, but they are often thought of as the same process.**

Recycling is the process of taking apart a product and using those same materials to make a new product. Resources and energy are conserved early in this process, but manufacturing still occurs, so energy and resources are not conserved throughout the entire process.

Reuse is when a product is used in its current form for the same or a different purpose without taking it apart and changing the original form. This process conserves more nonrenewable resources and reduces emissions like carbon dioxide released during the manufacturing process.

On the board, write the first part of this table – and then have the students help you fill in the other side.

Manufacturing Process	Manufacturing a plastic bottle
Getting raw materials	Drilling for oil
Cleaning (refining) them	Refining the oil
Manufacturing the item	Making oil into bottles and filling them
Packing	Packing bottles into boxes
Transporting to store	Transporting to store by boat, train, truck

While reducing our consumption is the most effective way to reduce our waste, reusing items is the next best thing. Ask students to think of ways they reuse items at home and school and list these on the board.

### **Examples:**

- Using ceramic plates instead of paper/styrofoam
- Using reusable silverware
- Using reusable containers instead of throw-away baggies
- Resusing paper
- Using old wrapping paper for crafts and cards
- Resusing glass jars for storing items



## ACTIVITY - Choose to Reuse

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In pairs, students will be given a “Choose to Reuse” card with a given scenario. They must choose two options and provide reasoning to support each.

### Discussion:

We make choices daily on whether or not to choose to reuse. Throwing something in the trash that will end up in the landfill should be our last option. These choices take practice.

### Materials:

- Choice Cards with 5 different scenarios, one per pair of students (*provided*)

### Activity:

- Distribute the choice cards, one per pair of students.
- Instruct students to consider their scenario and then consider two different options. They must provide their reasoning for each choice and rank one over the other.
- Ask students to present their choices.

**Adaptation:** To emphasize this message further, bring in items that represent each of these. As the teacher, you can bring these in, or you can ask students to bring these items.

- Pair of jeans
- A few old toys
- Large plastic shopping bags (e.g., from a department store or shoe store)
- A clean empty glass jar of olives
- Options for packing a lunch (reusable lunch bag, paper bag or plastic sack, reusable containers, baggies,
- plastic water bottle, reusable water bottle, paper napkin, cloth napkin)



## Words to Know

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**Reuse** – when a product is used in its current form for the same or a different purpose without deconstructing and changing the original form.

**Consumption** – to make something

# Choose to Reuse Activity Cards

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A pair of jeans no longer fits you.  
You are cleaning out your closet.  
What do you do with them?

Provide two solutions and support  
your choices.

You are cleaning the refrigerator  
and find an old jar of olives. What do  
you do with it?

Provide two solutions and support  
your choices.

You went clothes shopping with a friend  
and came home with 3 plastic bags.  
What do you do with them?

Provide two solutions and support  
your choices.

You are helping a friend clean out his  
closet and find a basket of old toys.  
What do you do with it?

Provide two solutions and support  
your choices.

You need to pack a lunch for school.  
How do you do this?. What do you do with  
them? List 4 items, whether they need  
packaging and what kind.

Support your choices.