



Lesson 6:

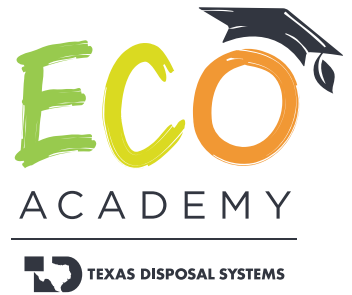
Step It Up

Successful recycling takes practice and support.

OBJECTIVE: Students investigate the challenges with recycling in their community and design solutions.

This lesson is designed to be used as a short project for students to work on in collaborative teams. The class can be divided into groups of 4 or 5, and each group works together to design solutions for each member's home recycling. This project can be done over several days in 45 minute to 1 hour segments, with the last day for presenting results.

Grades 3rd - 6th



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Ask Students

We have learned that recycling is the way of nature, but it is not always so easy to remember this as humans in the world we live in. Learning to recycle at school, also means we need to help our communities recycle better.

Why do you think many households have trouble with recycling and composting?

Ask students to come up with different reasons and write these on the board. Group student ideas into categories of reasons that people have trouble recycling:

- **VALUES** *(e.g., people don't want to be told what to do, people don't think it is worth doing)*
- **CONVENIENCE** *(e.g., no curbside recycling, not enough bins at school)*
- **KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE** *(e.g., not knowing what can be recycled or composted, habits are hard to change)*

Notice how these reasons are all interconnected and all influence each other.

In the U.S. in 2014, we recycled 34.3% of our waste, and the good news is that it has been steadily increasing. The bad news is that we are WAY behind many other countries including Italy (36%), United Kingdom (39%), South Korea (49%) and Germany (62%).

Emphasize with the students they will be working on a real project to help the school and community recycle better.



ACTIVITY - Finding the Challenges in Home Recycling

Students interview their families to determine the strengths and weaknesses of recycling at home. Using this information, they design solutions for their families, building on their strengths to address their challenges.

Discussion:

Recycling can be challenging in different ways for different families based on Values, Convenience and Knowledge/Practice. Clarify with the students on what recycling/composting options are offered at their homes and then have them think of friends and family with different recycling options.

Ask them what they might imagine to be challenges that interfere with recycling?

Materials:

- Sample Questions – Home Recycling
- For presentations: students can present using PowerPoint and incorporating any sketches of designs as needed.
(see included house diagram as example)

Project:

1. The group identifies the group goal – to determine challenges in home recycling and proposing solutions based on that information.
2. Each student will interview one of their family members on recycling and report back.
3. Each student will also identify one or more items they recycle well at home and one or more items they do not recycle. They can take pictures of these items, or find pictures of similar items to print.
4. In class, they will be interviewed by another group member on their household recycling.
(utilizing the information they gathered as well as their own knowledge)
5. Students present solutions to each person's household recycling challenges based on what they discover. Because not every family has the same issues with Values, Convenience and Knowledge/Practice, there will likely be several solutions. Examples may include placing small bins in bathroom, creating a bin in the kitchen, assigning different family members to "recycle duty" each week to take it out to larger container, reminding family members about rinsing containers, or simply educating family members on the importance of recycling.

Ask students to reflect on the different needs of different households. What makes it most difficult for many people? Who do they think has the most success with recycling and why? Go back to the Values, Convenience, and Knowledge/Practice to expand on this.

Adaptation: Students can also choose not to focus on their own household recycling and ask a friend or relative to share with them on their own home recycling.

Home Recycling Sample Questions

Ask someone who lives in your household about these issues.

1. Do you recycle? Do you feel your family recycles?
2. What are you really good at recycling?
3. What are you not very good at recycling?
4. Why do you recycle?
5. What do you think is the biggest challenge in recycling at home?
6. Are there some items that aren't recycled that maybe could be?
7. Where do you go when you have questions about recycling?
8. What would help you (and the family) recycle better?