

# Recycle Relay

Themes		
Three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), Litter, Landfill, Compost/Green bin		
Group Size	Age Level	Preparation Time
10+	6+	10 minutes
Activity Time	Activity Type	Activity Location
15-25 minutes	Active Game	Inside/outside (large space required)
Objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To give children/youth/adults an opportunity to practice their knowledge for sorting waste and recycling.</li></ul>		
Things to Consider		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Set up your buckets to represent what you want the group to learn. For example, buckets can represent the three R's (reduce, reuse, recycle), or they can represent the three waste streams at home e.g. recycling, litter, green bin/compost.</li><li>Make sure students understand what each bin means, especially take time to talk about what goes in the compost bin and what happens to it. Do this before playing!</li></ul>		
Materials		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>About 2 dozen 3R items e.g. aluminum cans, plastic bottles, newspaper, tissue, glass bottle, Styrofoam, fabric, egg carton, etc.</li><li>4 buckets, boxes or reusable bags</li><li>Labels for each container</li><li>Tarp or plastic sheet (optional)</li></ul>		
Directions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>This activity is a relay race that can be played with 2 teams. The best way we found to run this was to take the students outside, or have a large open space (multipurpose room, etc.) to use. In a classroom setting with all the desks this was less effective. Taking the students outside didn't take as long as we thought, but you will need to ask the teacher beforehand if that is okay, and rely on them to help get the students out as quickly as possible.</li><li>In the middle of the space, set up a large pile of items on a tarp or the floor/ground.</li><li>At one end of the space place the labeled containers, side by side.</li><li>Have the participants form two equal straight lines with one line on one side of the space and one line on the other side, with the pile between them.</li><li>Number off the students in each line (so each line will have a #1, a #2, etc.) and tell them to remember their numbers.</li><li>Instruct the participants that when the presenter calls their number (ie. #4) the students with that number (one from each team) will race to the pile of 'waste', pick up 1 piece, carry it to the containers, place it in the appropriate category (We found the most effective was four containers – Garbage, Compost, Recycle and Reuse) and run back to their place in their line.</li><li>It is useful for the presenter to have a piece of paper or some way of recording what numbers they have called to make sure everyone gets a turn.</li><li>Keep calling numbers until all/most of the items are sorted.</li><li>Once both teams have finished, take the students back inside/have them sit down quietly.</li><li>Take up each bucket with them to see what items they placed in the correct buckets. Pick a few tricky or easy items to discuss with the groups. Ask them: Why does it fit into that category? Where else could it go? How can we further reduce the waste in the litter? Can anything be reused? How? Introduce a 4<sup>th</sup> R – REFUSE and explain.</li></ol>		

## Reuse Costume Contest

- Any random materials can be used for this fun activity

Themes		
Reuse, Three R's		
Group Size	Age Level	Preparation Time
12+	8+	10 minutes
Activity Time	Activity Type	Activity Location
20 minutes	Group work/ Team exercise	Indoor/Outdoor (small space required)
Objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To teach the children/youth about reducing waste and reusing items.</li></ul>		
Materials		
Equal amounts of various reusable materials e.g.:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Newspaper</li><li>• Plastic containers or tubs</li><li>• Scrap fabric</li><li>• Scrap paper</li><li>• Bottle caps</li><li>• CD's</li><li>• String</li><li>• Tape</li></ul>		
Directions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. This activity can be played as a contest or team exercise.</li><li>2. Have the youth/children divided into teams of about 4-6. Each team is given recyclable/reusable items such as string, plastic bags, toilet rolls, cardboard, paper, etc. and instructed to design a costume for one of their team members to wear.</li><li>3. Give a set amount of time for all teams to design and complete their costumes. In addition, have each team also come up with an eco poem or eco rap associated with the costume and reducing waste, e.g. describing what they are wearing, what character they have become and any superhuman skills they have developed.</li><li>4. The costumes can be marked on creativity, originality and use of materials etc.</li></ol>		
<p>This activity was used very successfully with grades 3/4. The teams not only had to create a costume for one group member, but come up with a waste reduction themed superhero name, and a super power for that group member. Each team then took a turn at the front, describing the materials they had reused to make the costume and presenting their superhero. The trick here is to reinforce the connection with waste reduction week – maybe talking about which materials could be recycled when they are not needed for costumes, or encouraging students to create Hallowe'en costumes from reused materials.</p>		

## Pass the Packaging

- This needs to be premade so the package has a surprise inside and has facts or waste reduction tips on each layer.

Themes		
Packaging, Reduce, Waste Diversion		
Group Size	Age Level	Preparation Time
5+	8+	5-10 minutes
Activity Time	Activity Type	Activity Location
10 minutes	Stationary	Indoor/Outdoor
Objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To demonstrate the amount of unnecessary packaging in products and to educate on the impacts of packaging, the importance of reusing and how to be a 'greener' consumer.</li> </ul>		
Things to Consider		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many items we purchase have layers of unnecessary packaging, most of which are not reusable or recyclable and can be very harmful for our environment when discarded.</li> </ul>		
Materials		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packaging layers: cardboard box, paper wrap, Styrofoam balls, plastic bags, foam wrapping, bubble wrap, clam shells</li> <li>• Eco Prize: reusable mug, reusable water bottle, cloth bag – we used an apple for the teacher</li> <li>• Radio or CD player (optional, or have the kids sing, or just pass until the presenter says stop)</li> </ul>		
Directions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wrap a prize, such as a reusable mug, water bottle, or cloth bag in many layers of packaging (apple). Include a dramatic fact on each layer of packaging about that type of packaging, e.g. facts about plastic bags, Styrofoam, paper wrap.</li> <li>2. Ask the participants to sit or stand in a circle and pass the packaging around the circle until the music stops (or the presenter says stop).</li> <li>3. Whoever is holding the packaging when the music stops will unwrap a layer and read the fact on that layer out loud.</li> <li>4. As the package is unwrapped, pile the packaging in the center of the circle so it becomes really obvious how unnecessary the amount of packaging is.</li> <li>5. Ask some of the following questions while the package is being passed around the circle or as a wrap up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are any of these forms of packaging recyclable?</li> <li>• With what products would you typically find some of this packaging?</li> <li>• Once the product is opened, where would the packaging end up? Garbage? Landfill? Recycling Bin?</li> <li>• What can be done with the extra packaging? (<i>reused for crafts, bring back to manufacturer</i>)</li> <li>• How can you prevent excess packaging in the future? (<i>buy in bulk, look for items with less or recyclable packaging, call the manufacturer to express your concerns, reuse plastic bags, bring a cloth bag or backpack for shopping</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>This is a great time to introduce the 4<sup>th</sup> R – REFUSE to buy anything that doesn't have recyclable or reusable packaging, or refuse to buy anything that has too much packaging.</p>		

## What am I?

- A less wild way to get across recycling relay concepts - good for small spaces or shorter time frames.

Themes		
Three R's, Waste Diversion		
Group Size	Age Level	Preparation Time
5+	8+	15 minutes
Activity Time	Activity Type	Activity Location
10 minutes +	Active, Trivia	Indoor/Outdoor
Objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To teach children/youth to identify compostable, recyclable, hazardous waste, reusable and garbage items.</li></ul>		
Things to Consider		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Before beginning this activity you may want to first discuss with the children/youth what composting, recycling, hazardous waste, reusing and garbage each mean. Provide examples of each.</li></ul>		
Materials		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cards with pictures of three R items</li><li>• Clothes pins</li><li>• Laminating paper (optional)</li></ul>		
Directions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The leader uses a clothes pin to place a picture of a compostable, recyclable, hazardous waste, reusable, or a garbage item on the back of each child.</li><li>2. The children have to figure out what item is on their back by walking around and asking other children yes or no questions to gain clues about their item. It will be necessary to first model some examples of good questions, eg. "Am I recyclable? Am I made out of plastic? Am I larger than my hand? Do I hold water?"</li><li>3. You can either play that they can only ask 20 questions or keep asking until they think they know what they are.</li><li>4. Once they have figured out what they are, have the students go and stand by what category they think they are in. We found it was very successful to use Garbage, Compost, Recycling, and Reuse as the categories and to designate a corner of the room for each (make sure Reuse is in the biggest space!)</li><li>5. Start with the Compost category and have each student say what they are and determine if compost is the right spot for them.</li><li>6. Head to Garbage. Hopefully here you will get to send many students over to the Reuse area when you discuss what they are. This is also the spot to talk about batteries and other hazardous waste.</li><li>7. Next Recycling. Confirm any materials that truly can be recycled, but ask if any can be reused first. If yes, send them to "Reuse Town"!</li><li>8. Lastly, head to the Reuse area and have any students who have not yet had a chance to share their item say what they are. Have students look at the relative distribution of their classmates and connect to the importance of order in Reduce, REUSE, recycle.</li></ol>		

# Shrinking Forest Game

Themes		
Habitat Loss, Pollution, Development, Waste		
Group Size	Age Level	Preparation Time
5+	6+	2 minutes
Activity Time	Activity Type	Activity Location
10 minutes+	Active, Team work	Indoor/Outdoor
Objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To illustrate the impacts that humans have on the natural environment and other living organisms.</li><li>To promote stewardship, pollution prevention and habitat rehabilitation.</li></ul>		
Things to Consider		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Every day natural habitats around the world are shrinking, forcing many organisms to flee or worse, causing their endangerment or extinction. As consumers we have a hand in this destruction, but also options to slow or reserve these shrinking habitats.</li></ul>		
Materials		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tarp</li></ul>		
Directions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Get children to stand beside the tarp and tell them to each pick a forest animal. Let them know that the tarp is their forest home.</li><li>Tell them that their home is quiet, clean, healthy and litterless.</li><li>Invite children to stand on tarp and see if they all can fit in the forest.</li><li>Introduce humans to the same environment. Think of some things that humans might do to the forest.</li><li>Each time something negative happens to the forest, fold the tarp smaller and smaller, square by square (start by folding it in half first, then in quarters, etc.). Some examples of negative impacts could include: building homes, building roads, building shopping centers, building landfills, littering in streams, spilling toxic waste, etc.</li><li>Keep folding the tarp until one of the animals or all of the animals fall off or can't fit on it. This helps to demonstrate the impacts that humans have on animal habitats.</li><li>Ask the animals, how did you feel when the humans' behaviours and wastes started affecting you? How did you feel when your forest became too small for you to fit into?</li><li>Once the tarp is too small to hold any animals, ask the participants what they can do now to prevent this from happening or how they can regenerate their habitat, e.g. plant more trees, don't litter, reduce waste, reuse and recycle, etc.</li><li>With each environmentally sound suggestion, unfold the tarp square by square until it is whole again and invite the animals back in their habitat to celebrate.</li></ol>		

# Garbage Story

Themes		
Waste Diversion, Environment, Landfills, Garbage, Lifecycle		
Group Size	Age Level	Preparation Time
Any size group	6+	No time required
Activity Time	Activity Type	Activity Location
15 minutes	Storytelling, Listening, discussing	Indoors/ Outdoors
Objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To give children an opportunity to learn</li></ul>		
Things to Consider		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This activity helps students connect their waste to what actually happens to it</li><li>Consider complementing this activity with a storybook e.g. <i>Where Does Our Garbage Go?</i> or a film e.g. <i>Garbage Tale: An Environmental Adventure</i></li></ul>		
Materials		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Colour photos of waste, garbage bin, garbage truck, transfer station, 18 wheeler truck, landfill</li><li>Laminating paper (optional)</li><li>Tape (optional)</li></ul>		
Directions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Find appropriate photos on the internet to depict your story about waste (SEE IF LOCAL PICTURES ARE AVAILABLE)</li><li>Draw the children into a circle and begin to tell them the story of waste through showing photos and asking questions: What is garbage? Where does it go? Who collects it? Where does it go next? What happens to it? Make sure all the children can see the photos, walk them around the class if necessary.</li><li>Alternative: Scramble the photo story line and tape it onto a wall or board, have the students discuss and instruct you to put it in the correct order</li><li>Alternative: Involve the children by having the child that gives a close or correct answer stand at the front holding the photo card in the correct order</li><li>Follow up with a discussion about landfills and garbage<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Why are landfills bad?</li><li>Instead of throwing things in the garbage what can I do with it?</li><li>What are the Three R's?</li><li>How can we practice Three R's</li></ul></li></ol>		

# Recycling Story

Themes		
Waste Diversion, Environment		
Group Size	Age Level	Preparation Time
Any size group	6+	No time required
Activity Time	Activity Type	Activity Location
15 minutes	Storytelling, Listening, discussing	Indoors/ Outdoors
Objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To give children an opportunity to learn</li> </ul>		
Things to Consider		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This activity helps students connect their waste to what actually happens to it</li> <li>Consider complementing this activity with a storybook e.g. <i>What Happens At A Recycling Centre?</i> or a film e.g. <i>Respect yo' mama: here comes Mr. Recycle Man!</i></li> </ul>		
Materials		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colour photos of recyclables, recycling bin, recycling truck, transfer station, conveyor belts, bales of flattened recyclables, truck to factory, melting of metal, new product</li> <li>Laminating paper (optional)</li> <li>Tape (optional)</li> </ul>		
Directions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find appropriate photos (LOCAL) on the internet to depict your story about recycling</li> <li>Draw the children into a circle and begin to tell them the story of waste through showing photos and asking questions: What are recyclables? Where do they go? Who collects it? Where does it go next? What happens to it? Is it turned into something new? Make sure all students can see the pictures.</li> <li>Alternative: Scramble the photo story line and tape it onto a wall or board, have the students discuss and instruct you to put it in the correct order</li> <li>Alternative: Involve the children by having the child that gives a close or correct answer stand at the front holding the photo card in the correct order</li> <li>Follow up with a discussion about why recycling is better than throwing things in the garbage           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are you saving when you recycle?</li> <li>Is recycling better for the environment?</li> <li>Besides recycling what other things can we do to help the environment?</li> </ul> </li> <li>Discuss recyclable materials and what they are turned into e.g. newspaper can be recycled into cardboard</li> <li>Ask the students “Does it take more energy to reuse an item (like a water bottle) or to send it all the way to a factory and then make it into a new item?” Use the energy savings idea as a reason why students should reuse first, then recycle when they can’t reuse it anymore.</li> </ol>		

## Memory Game

- This takes a bit of set up time. It also works best to tape cards upside down (so just flip up to see picture) and to tape to a black board, NOT a white board so students can't see through cards.

Themes		
Waste Diversion, Environment, Litterless Lunches, Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle		
Group Size	Age Level	Preparation Time
6+	8+	15 minutes
Activity Time	Activity Type	Activity Location
20 minutes	Memory, sitting, Group work, discussing	Indoors
Objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To give children an opportunity to learn common reduction, reuse and recycling tools</li></ul>		
Materials		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Colour Photos of example rethink, reduction, reuse, recycling, litterless lunches tools</li><li>• Titles: rethink, reduce, reuse, recycle</li><li>• Laminating paper (optional)</li><li>• Tape</li><li>• Props e.g. reusable water bottle, cloth bag, Tupperware, unwrapped snacks</li></ul>		
Directions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Print and laminate 2 copies of the same images (representing Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), creating 8 sets or 16 cards total (8.5 x 11)</li><li>2. Shuffle the cards and tape them face down on a wall</li><li>3. Tape the titles Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle on the wall beside the cards</li><li>4. Divide the students into two teams. Have the students choose a team name if they wish (eg. Composting Cougars, Waste Reducing Wolves)</li><li>5. Choose a quiet person from one team to come to the cards and flip any two</li><li>6. Ask the students what was depicted on the card, so everyone hears</li><li>7. If the student does not make a match, they go back to their seats and a quiet student from the second team can come to the front and flip two cards</li><li>8. If a match is made, the students of that group must first tell the instructor what is on the cards and whether it is an example of rethink, reduce, reuse or recycle (team can help)</li><li>9. The instructor can take the cards off of the wall tape it under the appropriate title and then explain the item in more detail to promote its use.</li><li>10. The student with the correct match can go back to their seats and the game resumes with the next group</li><li>11. Repeat process until all cards are matched and announce a winning team</li></ol>		

## Recyclable Plastic

- This can be incorporated into almost any of the other activities

<b>Themes</b>		
Recycling		
<b>Group Size</b>	<b>Age Level</b>	<b>Preparation Time</b>
any	8+	1 minute
<b>Activity Time</b>	<b>Activity Type</b>	<b>Activity Location</b>
5 minutes	Investigating, discussing	Indoors
<b>Objective</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To reinforce what types of plastic are recyclable in Thunder Bay and how to check.</li></ul>		
<b>Materials</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An assortment of plastic items</li><li>• Chalk/white board and writing implement</li></ul>		
<b>Directions</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ask students what types of plastic are recyclable here? (#1 &amp;2)</li><li>2. Ask how they would find out what type of plastic an item was? (look on the bottom)</li><li>3. Draw the recycling symbol on the board with the number 1 or two in it. Explain that they have to find the number <b>INSIDE THIS SYMBOL</b>, not just a random number.</li><li>4. Pass out a variety of plastic items. If students are in rows, pass one to the front person in each row and have students find the number and then pass the item back.</li><li>5. Once most students have had the chance to find a number, have all students with a plastic item hold it up. For each item have the student tell you what number it is.</li><li>6. Then ask the class “Is it recyclable here?” “So what are we going to do with it?” “But what are we going to do with it first?” (Reuse it!!!)</li></ol>		

## Classroom Garbage Audit

### Garbage Analysis activity (30 min.)

Put on your rubber gloves and ask for volunteers to hold up the edges of the tarp in case there are liquids in the garbage bag. (Ideally, feel the bag for this ahead of time and drain it if needed.) Dump the contents of a recently-collected lunchroom garbage bag (or two, if small) onto the tarp. Ask for a couple of volunteer students to put on rubber gloves.

One at a time, ask the volunteers to pick anything out of the pile and ask the class where they think it belongs to. Let each volunteer do this for two or three items and then give other students a chance to volunteer. As they're sorting (or if they're uncertain of where it goes), help them out by talking about the waste issues around that type of item. For example:

- If it's something organic like a banana peel or sandwich, explain that Ottawa is lagging behind other cities like Toronto in that it doesn't yet have a city-wide green box program. But many of those items can be composted at home.
- If it's plastic, explain that Ottawa only recycles three of the seven types of plastics right now (#1, 2, & 5) and we should press our politicians to recycle all plastics.
- If it's a tin can, point out that before throwing it in the blue box, you can tear off the paper label and put that in the black box (otherwise it just gets burned off).
- It may be something that can be reused instead of thrown out or recycled. In past presentations, we've found good books, clean hard plastic food containers, and toys, among other things.
- You can create a pile on one corner of the tarp for things that Ottawa doesn't currently recycle but it should (like the organics and some plastics).

Continue this until the students get bored, you run out of materials, or you only have 15 minutes left. You don't have to put away everything from the bag, just a good variety of different objects.

As you do this exercise, remind the students when your own city does not offer recycling services for a particular item. [Ask why. Answer: sometimes it's because there are no recycling businesses nearby that handle that material. Sometimes it's because the recycling service costs the city too much, and the city is concerned with low costs rather than pollution. Sometimes it's because planning new recycling systems isn't a priority at city hall. Ask how this can be changed. Answer: by telling the city that this is important to you, and that it's worth the expense. Your class or your parents can help you write these letters.]

At the end of the exercise, point out how much of the garbage didn't really belong there. Our landfill sites pollute more than they need to because most of us aren't reducing our waste as much as we could. Promote litterless lunches (or Trashless Tuesdays).