



CLEAN THE STREAM AT THE TRIPLE R RANCH: REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

CONCEPT: Litter prevention

OBJECTIVES: Students will:

- 1) Become aware of the different types of items in Texas' waste stream;
- 2) Learn how much trash the average Texan generates in one day;
- 3) Learn that a portion of the waste stream can be reduced, reused, and recycled;
- 4) Learn what throwing waste "away" means;
- 5) Discuss the potential effects of the solid waste stream on Texas' environment and the effect on Texas' landfills.

METHOD: Students will think of all the things that they know about that go into the municipal solid waste stream, identify which items could be reduced from the stream, or reused or recycled, and discuss what happens to the Texas environment and to Texas landfills when those items are not reduced, reused, or recycled.

VOCABULARY: municipal solid waste stream, trash, reduce, reuse, recycle, "throw away" liter, proper disposal

BACKGROUND: Almost 28 million tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) were received by Texas landfills in 2001.

PROCEDURE:

1. Students list things they normally throw away in the trashcan. Teacher can list them on chart paper or chalkboard at the same time.
2. Discuss with students the following questions: Why do we throw things in the trash? Where is "away" (throw away)? Where does the trash go after it's put in the trashcan? You have just produced a "solid waste stream" or waste stream.
3. Draw a chart on the board and list the items that could be reduced from the waste stream, and how. List the items that could be reused, and how. List the items that could be recycled, and how.

4. Talk about which of the items children have seen on the sides of roads and streets, vacant lots, in parks, and even on the school playground, how they feel about it, and what would be proper disposal of the items.

EXTENSIONS:

1. Have children exercise one concept of reduce, reuse, or recycle at home each week and share it with the class at the end of each week. Week one, "show and tell" how they reduced their waste stream at home by, for example, not accepting a bag for few items purchased at a store. Week two, "show and tell" how they reused something they would ordinarily throw away at home, for example, using a jelly jar as a drinking glass. Week three, "show and tell" how they recycled something they would ordinarily throw away at home, for example, taking items to the recycling center, or setting items out for curbside pick-up, if applicable, or by bringing an item to school to collect with the class to recycle.
2. Make the school's waste stream a project. Ask the janitor to report on the amount and types of trash the school generates daily/weekly/yearly. Upper levels may want to institute a Reduce-Reuse-Recycle campaign at the school, and measure the changes in the waste stream. This can be scaled down to involve only the waste stream of the classroom.
3. Have the children pick up litter on the school grounds and talk about what types of litter they find and how they think the litter should be properly disposed of.

EVALUATION:

Let children draw or list items in their waste stream at home. Measure changes in the waste stream in the classroom. Encourage children to share the changes in the waste stream at home.