

## **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle**

Large amounts of garbage resulting from a consumption-driven and densely populated society have led waste managers to adopt and promote an approach to the waste problem summarized by the phrase "reduce, reuse and recycle" -- the waste hierarchy. This slogan reminds consumers of the actions they can take to minimize the burdens that their waste creates: reducing waste, reusing waste when possible and recycling waste into goods for tomorrow.



### **Reduce**

The first and most effective component of the waste hierarchy is reducing the waste created. Consumers are encouraged to reduce their waste by purchasing in bulk, buying items with less packaging and switching to reusable instead of single-use items. Businesses can adopt manufacturing methods that require fewer resources and generate less waste. In addition to benefiting the environment, these efforts often offer consumers and businesses the financial incentive of lower expenses in purchases.

### **Reuse**

Despite efforts to reduce the amount of waste generated, consumers and businesses still create substantial waste. Much of this waste can immediately be reused to minimize the strain on the environment and municipal waste management. For example, consumers can refill a purchased bottle of water with water from home to minimize the number of plastic bottles being discarded. Consumers have a financial incentive here as well, as municipal water is far cheaper than bottled water.

### **Recycle**

When waste is eventually discarded, segregating items for recycling from other waste is important. Recyclables include glass, newspaper, aluminum, cardboard and a surprising array of other materials. Lead, for example, has one of the highest recycling rates because of laws requiring the recycling of lead-acid batteries.

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*Reuse*

*Reduce*

*Recycle*

## Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle Writing Activity

1. What does this slogan “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” signify?

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2. Give four examples of recycle-able materials?

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3. Why is it so important for us to re-use items?

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