

# What is Waste?

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# What is Waste?

## Teacher Lesson Plan

Grades K - 5  
Time: 20 minutes



A Public Agency

### Overview

On average, Americans throw away 4.5 pounds of waste daily. Over 50% of this waste is sent to be buried forever at the landfill. Not only is this a poor use of our natural resources, but landfills also release methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, that contributes to climate change.

By taking actions like practicing the 4R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot), we can make a positive difference by decreasing and diverting the waste we generate.

### ★ Purpose & Learning Objectives

This activity allows students to reflect on the What is Waste video. Students will be able to share how they feel, better understand waste processes, and communicate what they wish to learn more about. By learning more about waste issues, students can discuss with others and encourage others to participate.

### Materials

Students will need internet access to watch the video before completing this reflection sheet. Adult facilitation is helpful for this activity.

### Driving Question

What happens to our items after we are done using them? How does the way that we discard them affect the environment?

### Optional Google Form

For students without access to a printer, we've suggested they respond to the reflection questions using this [Google Form](#). Teachers can either make a copy of the form themselves or email us at [tours@rethinkwaste.org](mailto:tours@rethinkwaste.org) to view student responses.

# What is Waste?

## Student Worksheet, K - 5



20 Minutes



### Introduction

On average, Americans throw away 4.5 pounds of waste daily. Over 50% of this waste is sent to be buried forever at the landfill. Not only is this a poor use of our natural resources, but landfills also release methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, that contributes to climate change.

By taking actions like practicing the 4R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot), we can make a positive difference by decreasing and diverting the waste we generate.

### ★ Key Terms

**WASTE:** Anything no longer needed or wanted

**RECYCLING:** To make new products products from used material. This is what happens to items in our blue recycling bin

**GARBAGE:** Items that are no longer useful, can't be recycled, composted, or fixed which are sent to a landfill



# What is Waste?

## Student Worksheet, Grades K - 2

### Instructions & Reflection Questions



Watch the "What is Waste?" video and then answer the questions below.  
Note: If you do not have access to a printer, please complete the lesson using the Google Form.

1. Did you think of another item that belongs in the garbage? Write it below:

2. Are you excited to learn more about waste this week? What are you most excited to learn more about?

3. How did it make you feel when you saw the different kinds of waste (garbage, compost, and recycling)?



4. Why is it bad when garbage items go into nature?

5. What is one thing that your family can do to make less garbage?

6. Imagine a plastic water bottle. Can you think of a new way to use it?

