

Reduce or reuse?

What to do before we recycle

Grades: (K-2)

Time: 40 minutes

Overview

Students learn the terms Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. They explore the effects of these concepts on the environment

Materials Example of excessively packaged item such as prepackaged lunches or meals;
Example of appropriately packaged item such as fruit/vegetable pieces in a reusable container

Colored pencils, markers and/or crayons (for students)

Poster paper (for students)

Teachers Note: Check your class dictionary to see if the words **REDUCE** and **REUSE** are there. If not, write your own definitions.

Procedure

Warm-up: Remind students what they learned about recycling and the types of items that should be recycled. Explain that the class will explore things we can do even before we recycle that can reduce the amount of waste we create.

Write the word **REDUCE** on a piece of chart paper. Ask students, "What does **REDUCE** mean?" Write their responses on the chart paper. When the class has finished responding, ask one of the students to get the class and look up the word **REDUCE** for the class. Write the definition or paraphrase it so that the students understand.

Ask the students, "How can this definition of **REDUCE** apply to what we have learned about waste?" Elicit responses from the class. Remind them that we can help eliminate waste by avoiding inappropriate packaging. Use the example that you have selected and explore with them how it could have been packaged more appropriately.

Repeat Step 3 with the word **REUSE**.

Once you define **REUSE**, ask the students, "How can this definition of **REUSE** apply to what we have learned about waste?" Again, get responses from the class and ask them to think about what materials are reusable. Use the plastic container as an example.

Ask the students, "What are some ways to encourage people to reduce and reuse their stuff?" Listen to their responses and encourage students to act on their ideas. For example, if a student says that the best way is for people to start using plastic containers for their lunches, ask, "How can we let people know that?" The students can write and/or draw their ideas on poster paper.

Wrap-up: Have the students share their work with the entire class.

Homework

Have students take home their ideas for reducing and reusing. They can use them to discuss with their families ways they can reduce and reuse at home. Students can write or draw these additional ideas to share with the class.