

The Journey of Recycling

Recycling is the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away as trash and turning them into NEW products. The journey is long, but it benefits your community, the environment, and your future!

Step 1: Collection

There are several methods for collecting recyclables, including curbside collection, drop-off centers, and deposit or refund programs.

Step 2: Processing

After collection, recyclables are sent to a recovery facility to be sorted by material type. The sorted recyclables are then sent to different processing facilities where they are cleaned so they can be used to make new things. Recyclables are bought and sold just like the things you buy in the store.

Step 3: Make NEW Products out of the RECYCLED Items

Once recycled items have been processed, the company who bought the items turns them into something NEW! Some examples of this are using plastic bottles to make shirts and shoes or aluminum cans to make bikes. There are also many companies that recycle beverage containers back into beverage containers so they don't have to make new ones.

Just like any other system, success depends on many small actions and those actions all add up! Please, recycle with care and help reduce waste. It's always best to consult your local government or service provider for the best information about what is recyclable in your community.

Please use the additional resources on the next page to help students learn more about recycling or to create a lesson around it!

Talking Points for Teachers on Recycling

Did you know that recycling is different in every city, county and state. What do you know about recycling in your community?

- To learn more, you can look up recycling in your city or county to see what kind of recycling is provided and what materials are collected.
 - Do you have a drop off location or does a truck or hauler come to collect your recycling?
 - If you live in a multifamily home (apartment, condo, townhouse), do you have a recycling bin or where do you bring your recyclables?
 - What color is your recycling bin?
 - Which plastics can you recycle in your community?
 - Can you name 3 other items that you can recycle in your community?

Have you ever wondered what happens to your recyclables once the truck picks them up?

- Where do you think they go?
 - Check out what happens in Boulder County. Materials are picked up and brought to the recycling center to be processed: <https://youtu.be/5YaTl8nl7c>
- Republic Services is one type of hauler or truck company that comes to pick up your recyclables in Colorado. They make sure that your recyclables are taken to the right locations to be sorted and made into something new! Waste-Not Recycling is one of the companies that will process materials for recycling. Republic Services and Waste-Not Recycling are both sponsors of this year's competition and awesome members of our organization. We appreciate their effort towards reducing waste in Colorado! Check out some of their amazing recycling resources.
 - Learn More about Republic Services: <https://www.republicservices.com/community-sustainability>
 - Learn More about Waste-Not Recycling: <https://www.waste-not.com/about-us>
 - Recycling Simplified Pre-K: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbqjn4SMTElJmcBzdEnoPX88p5SScy004>
 - Recycling Simplified Grades 3-5: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbqjn4SMTElLD9ugvKSCdp5vhXV5vGqv>
 - Recycling Simplified Grades 6-8: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbqjn4SMTElIX0tJm_4x23VAZ7tFrXC9G
 - Recycling Simplified Grades 9-12: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbqjn4SMTElJwDxwWVd_Dt_PjwwOt9FfJ

Recycling doesn't just stop there. What other recycled items can you think of that can be made into something new? (Example cans to cans, plastic bottle to shirts, clothing, electronics)

- For example, did you know that your old paint can be recycled into new paint? PaintCare and GreenSheen Paint are two sponsors of this year's competition and are Recycle Colorado members who are committed to giving your old paint a second chance to be a new color! This is the key to a circular economy and a better future for you!
 - Learn more about PaintCare: <https://www.paintcare.org/>
 - Learn more about GreenSheen Paint: <https://greensheensheepaint.com/>
- Want to see what each thing you recycle be made into? Check out this awesome website: maine.gov/dep/waste/recycle/whatrecyclablesbecome.html#magazine
- Many companies are using recyclables to make new products. Find out who they are and how they are doing it here: <https://recyclecoach.com/blog/10-companies-creating-recycled-plastic-products/>