

Too Much Trash!

Less Mess

More people are recycling.

What do bottles, cans, paper, and tires have in common? They all end up as garbage. In the late 2000s and early 2010s, each American threw away about 4½ pounds of trash every day. That adds up to more than 1,600 pounds per person in one year!



Erlanson/Getty Images

Most of our trash ends up in **landfills**. Those are places where people dump trash. The rest of the trash gets **recycled**. When something is recycled, it is made into something new.

Many people have been working to solve the trash problem. One plan is known as “zero waste.” Its goal is to teach people to make less trash. The plan is being used in schools, companies, national parks, and restaurants. Here are some ways that the plan is being put into action.



Jupiter Unlimited

Put items to be recycled in a recycling bin.

Recycling Trash

Some people sort their trash to see what can be recycled. Those items often include paper, glass, and certain plastics. Some towns also recycle tires and batteries. Taking items to recycling centers reduces the trash in landfills.



Carrin Ackerman/Weekly Reader

This fleece, by Patagonia, was made from recycled plastic bottles.

Buying Recycled Products

Many products are made from recycled materials. Clothes and bags can be made from recycled plastic bottles. Recycled plastic can also be made into lumber. Lumber is used for building things.



SuperStock; Trash: iStockphoto

Plant and food scraps can be put into compost piles.

Making Compost Piles

Food scraps usually end up in the trash. But some people put the scraps into **compost piles**. Those are mixtures of plant and food scraps. Worms and bugs help break down the scraps. That turns into soil, which helps plants grow.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the passage, which of the following CANNOT be recycled?

- A fleece jackets
- B paper
- C tires
- D batteries

2. The passage describes the problem of too much trash. Which of the following is one solution that is described in this text?

- A taking trash to landfills
- B throwing away 4½ pounds of trash a day
- C buying recycled products
- D raising worms and bugs

3. It can be inferred from the passage that

- A most people recycle their bottles and cans
- B some people do not try to make less trash
- C everyone knows how to make a compost pile
- D no one likes to buy recycled products

4. Read the following sentence: "Many products are made from recycled materials."

In this sentence, the word **product** most nearly means

- A something that is made
- B something that is thrown away
- C something that is recycled
- D something that is used

5. What is another good title for this passage?

- A What to Recycle
- B Visiting a Landfill
- C How to Make a Compost Pile
- D Solutions to Our Trash Problem

6. How much trash did Americans throw away in the late 2000s and early 2010s?

7. Why might a town want to start a recycling program?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

More people are recycling, _____ there will be less trash.

- A so
- B however
- C although
- D but

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Our trash ends up in landfills because it is not recycled.

What? our trash

(does) What? _____

Where? _____

Why? _____

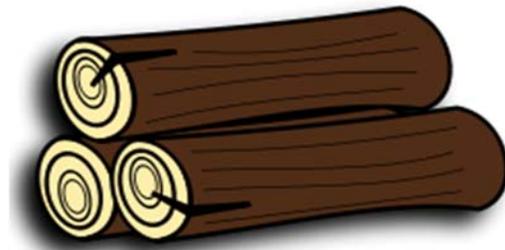
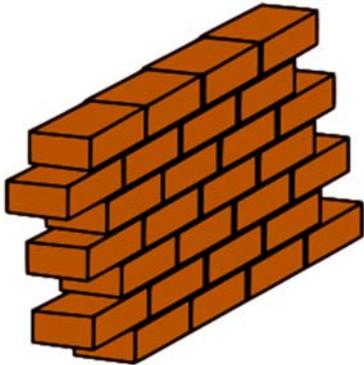
10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

Vocabulary Word: lumber (lum · ber): wood that has been cut so it can be used to build things.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **lumber**.

1. The loggers cut down the trees to make lumber for people to build houses.
2. The lumber from the factory is sent all over the country to build furniture and homes.
3. My uncle works for a lumber company, helping to saw wood into boards for building.
4. Lumber can be made from trees or from recycled plastic.
5. We needed a lot of lumber to build the new playground.

10b. Which image shows lumber?



11. Are soda cans made out of lumber? Why or why not?

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 720

Featured Text Structure: Problem/Solution – the writer poses a problem and suggests possible solutions

Passage Summary: This passage is about how much trash Americans throw away, and a plan to solve the problem called “zero waste.” Under the zero waste plan, people are encouraged to recycle trash, buy recycled products, and make compost piles.

1. According to the passage, which of the following CANNOT be recycled?

- A **fleece jackets**
- B paper
- C tires
- D batteries

2. The passage describes the problem of too much trash. Which of the following is one solution that is described in this text?

- A taking trash to landfills
- B throwing away 4½ pounds of trash a day
- C **buying recycled products**
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3. It can be inferred from the passage that

- A most people recycle their bottles and cans
- B **some people do not try to make less trash**
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4. Read the following sentence: “Many products are made from recycled materials.”

In this sentence, the word **product** most nearly means

- A **something that is made**
- B something that is thrown away
- C something that is recycled
- D something that is used

5. What is another good title for this passage?

- A What to Recycle
- B Visiting a Landfill
- C How to Make a Compost Pile
- D **Solutions to Our Trash Problem**

6. How much trash did Americans throw away in the late 2000s and early 2010s?

Suggested answer: Americans threw away about four and a half pounds of trash each day, which translates into more than 1,600 pounds of trash per year. [paragraph #1]

7. Why might a town want to start a recycling program?

Suggested answer: A town might want to start a recycling program to help people get rid of trash in a way that does not harm the earth. Some towns not only recycle paper, glass and plastics, but also tires and batteries. [paragraph #4]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

More people are recycling, _____ there will be less trash.

- A so
- B however
- C although
- D but

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Our trash ends up in landfills because it is not recycled.

What? our trash

(does) What? **ends up**

Where? **in landfills**

Why? **because it is not recycled**

10. ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: lumber

Step 1: Introduce the word

Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (lum · ber)

- a. Teacher says: "This word is lumber. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "lumber."]

Step 2: Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Lumber means wood that has been cut, so it can be used to build things."
- b. Teacher says: "In the text the author talks about how lumber can be made from recycled plastic so it can be used to build things. That is a little different from lumber made out of trees that have been cut down, which is how almost all lumber is made. Recycled lumber is a pretty new thing, so when you see this word in a book, it is almost certainly talking about wood that has been cut into boards or pieces that can be used for building. Lumber can also be used as a verb that means to move in a slow or awkward way, but in this passage it is used as a noun. Lumber means wood that has been cut so it can be used to build things."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "lumber."]

Step 3: Practice the word

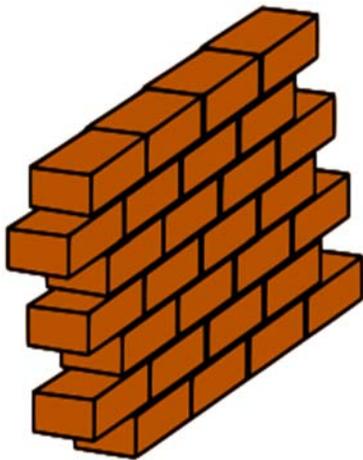
Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the first sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

- 10a.**
1. The loggers cut down the trees to make lumber for people to build houses.
 2. The lumber from the factory is sent all over the country to build furniture and homes.
 3. My uncle works for a lumber company, helping to saw wood into boards for building.
 4. Lumber can be made from trees or from recycled plastic.
 5. We needed a lot of lumber to build the new playground.

Step 4: Check for student understanding

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 10b.** Which image shows lumber?



- 11.** Are soda cans made out of lumber? Why or why not?

Suggested answer: No, they are made from metal and not from trees.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: recycle, garbage, companies,