

JOURNAL TOPICS

RETHINK GARBAGE



These journal topics could be used during “bell work” or as topics for an independent writing assignment. The following topics are meant to expand the students’ thinking about the 4 Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rethink). They are appropriate for Grades 4 to 8.

You may use the following topics by

- Putting a journal topic on the board for all the students to respond to in their journal.
- Allowing students the freedom to pick any topic in a given category.

RETHINK

1. Why do you think the 3 Rs are listed in that order, with Reduce first, and Recycle last?
2. Can one person make a difference within the whole City of Ottawa, in terms of “Rethinking Garbage”?
3. Create a catchy phrase to help others remember to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rethink.
4. How can your school “Rethink” garbage?
5. How can your home “Rethink” garbage?
6. What is one unique thing that you can do to “Rethink” garbage?
7. Create your own RETHINK GARBAGE poster.
8. Create an acrostic for Rethink, for example:

Right away
Easy as 123
Think about everything you do
H...
I...
N...
K...

9. How will reducing, reusing, and recycling help us in the future?
10. Imagine you are a bird flying over a landfill site. Write about what you see.
11. If you could create two laws about garbage that every Canadian had to follow, what would they be? Why are these laws important?

12. Should large cities be able to ship their garbage to other places to dump it? Why? Why not?
13. What are some ways we can monitor the things that people throw out?
14. What do manufacturers think about when deciding how to design a package? Design a package for your favourite food. Draw a diagram. What would the package be made of? Why?
15. What will landfill sites look like in 40 years?
16. What would we do if there were no landfill sites?
17. What will we do with our garbage when we run out of space for dumping it?
18. Should businesses be charged for garbage disposal? Should there be a limit?
19. Why can't we burn our garbage?
20. Should companies be responsible for how much garbage they create?
21. Should we have rules about the amount of packaging companies use?
22. If you could talk to everyone in Canada about the 4 Rs, what would you say to them?
23. Which R do you follow best? Explain.
24. If you could ask a politician any of your questions about our waste disposal/landfill sites/recycling plants, what would you ask her/him?
25. Why do we learn about the 4 Rs in school? Why is it important?
26. Write a limerick about something you might find at the landfill that doesn't belong there.
27. Look at your lunch. Sketch it in your journal and label any things you can reuse, recycle, or even reduce. Rethink your lunch!
28. Draw a sketch of a poster you think would be effective in convincing your friends and/or family to "Rethink" the garbage they create. Why do you think your poster would make a difference?
29. The City of Ottawa now has a composting program/green bin program. Explain where you think composting should fit under the 4 Rs and why.

REDUCE

1. Why is Reduce perhaps the most important of the 3 Rs?
2. Why do you think we use so many plastic bags? What can we do to use fewer plastic grocery bags? What can we use instead?
3. Why do you think we create so much garbage?
4. How can I reduce garbage that I create?
5. Do you think it is necessary to reduce the amount of garbage you create? Why? Why not?
6. What can companies do to create less garbage?

REUSE

1. Design a craft to re-use a soup can.
 - i. Sketch a drawing of the craft.
 - ii. List directions for someone to follow to make the craft.
2. Design a craft from an empty toilet paper roll.
 - i. Sketch a drawing of the craft.
 - ii. List directions for someone to follow to make the craft.
3. Select an item you might discard and design a craft or project using it.
 - i. State the item to be re-used.
 - ii. Sketch a drawing of the craft/project.
 - iii. List directions for someone to follow to make the craft or complete the project.
4. Write about the benefits of a reusable water bottle.
5. Write about the benefits of a reusable plastic or glass container.
6. Think of 5 ways to reuse each of the following: a tin can, a Popsicle stick, milk cartons.
7. Write a poem about something you might find at the landfill that could be reused.
8. How is the organic material that goes into your composter or green bin reused? Why is compost valuable?

RECYCLE

1. Should we bother recycling and composting? Why or why not?
2. Why don't all people recycle and compost?
3. What would you do to convince people who don't recycle or compost to start?
4. What should happen if people throw out things they should be recycling?
5. What should happen if people throw out things that should be put in their green bin?
6. Should everything that is manufactured have to be recyclable or compostable? Would this work? Why? Why not?
7. Should everyone be forced to recycle and compost? How would this work?
8. What would you say to someone who says 'Recycling doesn't make a difference'?
9. Write instructions for someone who has never heard of recycling before on how to follow the recycling system in the City of Ottawa.
10. Write instructions for someone who has never heard of Ottawa's Green Bin program on how Ottawa's composting program works.