

# LESSON 5: Sounds from Reused Materials and Songs About Reusing and Recycling

## LESSON'S CONCEPT

Some discarded products could be reused to make new products and, thus, lessen the amount of material that goes to landfills.

### PURPOSE

Through writing and singing songs, students reinforce what they have learned about reusing and recycling various items. They also reuse items to make musical instruments.

### OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will:

- Sing “On Top of the Landfill” and talk about what the lyrics mean.
- Use familiar tunes to write lyrics about reusing and recycling materials.
- Learn and sing songs composed by other students.
- Make musical instruments out of discarded items and use them in the performance of their songs.

### CORRELATIONS TO CALIFORNIA'S CONTENT STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS AND TO BENCHMARKS FOR SCIENCE LITERACY

- Students write songs to communicate to others the importance of reusing and recycling the Earth's natural resources.
  - Students (in grade one should) “write brief expository descriptions of a real object, person, place, or event, using sensory details.” (*English–Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, page 8)
- Students design musical instruments out of discarded items and use them in presenting their songs.

- “Discarded products contribute to the problem of waste disposal. Sometimes it is possible to use the materials in them to make new products . . .” (*Benchmarks for Science Literacy*, page 189)
- “By the end of the second grade, students should know that: Some kinds of materials are better than others for making any particular thing.” (*Benchmarks for Science Literacy*, page 188)
- “Earth is made of materials that have distinct properties and provide resources for human activities.” (*Science Content Standards, Grades K–12; Grade 2; Earth Sciences, Standard 3*)
- “Students sing or perform on instruments a varied repertoire of music.” (*Visual and Performing Arts Framework; Music: Creative Expression Component*, Goal 3, page 64)

### SCIENTIFIC THINKING PROCESSES

observing, communicating, comparing

### TIME

20–30 minutes to prepare for the lesson; 60 minutes or more (depending on the students' involvement) to implement the lesson

### VOCABULARY

Select some words from various songs.

## PREPARATION

- \_\_\_ 1. Read the “Background Information for the Teacher” at the end of this lesson.
- \_\_\_ 2. Consider inviting several students from older grade levels to help groups of younger students with lyrics.
- \_\_\_ 3. Make a transparency of “On Top of the Landfill” and other songs (at the end of this lesson).
- \_\_\_ 4. Optional: Locate and copy noncopyrighted original lyrics to songs, which students can rewrite the lyrics to (most would be campfire-type songs).

## MATERIALS

### For “Pre-Activity Questions”

- \_\_\_ A piece of butcher paper on which to write a list

### For “Part I, Writing and Singing Songs About Reusing, Recycling, and Landfills”

- \_\_\_ Optional: Obtain one or more tapes listed under “Resources.”

### For “Part II, Making Musical Instruments”

Ask students to bring in the following materials for the musical instruments listed below:

- \_\_\_ Drum: soup can, oatmeal container or coffee can; balloon; string or rubber band
- \_\_\_ Drumsticks: sticks wrapped in cloth and taped with masking tape
- \_\_\_ Tambourine: flip tops off soft drink cans or plastic bottle caps, coat hanger wire, tool to poke holes in bottle caps
- \_\_\_ Percussion instrument: wood blocks, sandpaper, glue
- \_\_\_ Rattle: soft drink cans; rocks, seeds, or beads; tape
- \_\_\_ Shaker: plastic containers with lids; dried beans, other seeds, or small stones; or two paper plates, beans, tape
- \_\_\_ Clay pot chimes: clothesline rope, small clay pots
- \_\_\_ Kazoo: cardboard roll from toilet paper, piece of wax paper to close off one end, rubber band
- \_\_\_ Harp: rubber bands or fishing line, tacks, shoe box
- \_\_\_ One-string bass: 5 to 6 feet of heavy string or clothesline rope; a large can, bucket, or washtub; a broom handle or dowel rod about 5 feet long

## PRE-ACTIVITY QUESTIONS

Ask students what they have learned thus far in this unit about reusing and recycling materials, such as unwanted objects. List their responses on the chalkboard or on a piece of butcher paper and save the list for discussion later. Some of the responses could be used as part of the lyrics for songs. You might also want to generate a list of words that have to do with reusing and recycling that could be incorporated into the songs.

## PROCEDURE

### Part I, Writing and Singing Songs About Reusing, Recycling, and Landfills

- A. Project the transparency, “On Top of the Landfill,” which is sung to the tune of “On Top of Old Smoky” and lead students in singing the song. Encourage them to share their thoughts about what the lyrics mean. *“On Top of the Landfill” focuses on telling a story about recycling and reducing the waste sent to landfills.*

**Note:** Another song, written by a class that field-tested this lesson, is provided on page 99.

- B. As a class, select a tune and sing the original song. Then write new lyrics to it, emphasizing reusing and recycling. An example is provided below:  
*“This Land Is Your Land”*—Have students sing the original song; then add verses about keeping our land litter-free and conserving natural resources. For example:

So keep your scene clean,  
Clean up your trash,  
Then recycle  
And get the cash,  
And never, never be a litterbug,  
‘Cause this land was made for us to love.

*Lyrics by Olga Clymire*

- C. Make a list of other songs suggested by the class. When possible, obtain the original lyrics to the songs for students. Assign students to work in pairs or triads and have them write or dictate lyrics to a tune with which they are familiar. Students from higher grade levels can come into the class to help the younger students write the lyrics. Some familiar tunes and ideas for lyrics are suggested below:

1. "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"  
Twinkle, twinkle, little can,  
You don't belong in a garbage can.  
It is better if you're reused,  
Or melted down and corners fused.  
Then a new can you become,  
Providing food and drink for some.

*Lyrics by Olga Clymire*

2. "Itsy Bitsy Spider"  
(Have students develop hand motions to go with this song.)  
Reduce, reuse, recycle  
Everything you can,  
And you will give the Earth  
A nice helping hand.

*Lyrics by Cara Morgan*

3. "I'm a Little Teapot"  
I'm a little blue bin  
Short and square  
Put me at the curb  
To show you care.

*Lyrics by Natasha Stillman*

4. "Old McDonald Had a Farm" might begin with "Old McDonald had a worm farm . . ." and then carry on with the idea that he used worms for composting.

5. "I've Been Working on the Railroad" might begin with "I've been working in a landfill . . ." and continue about having too much trash to deal with until people started to recycle.

- D. Perform the songs in class, for other classes and, if possible, at school events, such as the kickoff for the recycling program or a parents' visitation night.

Sung to "Are You Sleeping?"  
We recycle, We recycle  
Paper and, cans and glass.  
We won't fill the landfills  
or take the homes from animals  
With our trash,  
With our trash.

Submitted by Ted Schut, first-grade teacher, Ripon Elementary School, Ripon Unified School District.

### Tune to "Itsy Bitsy Spider"

The big fat garbage can  
is full to the top.  
The dump truck comes  
and takes it away.  
We could recycle the  
stuff inside.  
So it wouldn't be so  
full and our landfill  
won't fill up.

Submitted by Lana Best, kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade teacher, Pacific School, Lincoln Unified School District.

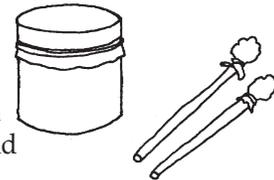
**Homework Assignment:** Ask students to make up their own songs and share them with the class the following day. They can also illustrate their songs.

## Part II, Making Musical Instruments

Help students make musical instruments out of trash and other materials, and have students use these as they sing their songs. They can also sell these at Christmas time or donate them to preschool children to play with.

### Drum

Tape sharp edges of a soup or coffee can.  
Stretch a balloon over the open end of the can.



Secure the balloon in place by wrapping string or rubber bands around the edge of the can. Drumsticks can be made from sticks wrapped with scraps of cloth.

### Tambourine

Use flip tops from soft drink cans or poke holes through plastic bottle caps and string them with wire from a coat hanger. Curve the wire into a circle. Shake the tambourine for sound.



### Percussion Instrument

Use discarded wood blocks and cover these with pieces of sand paper. Rub against each other for sound.

## Rattle

Fill soft drink cans with rocks, seeds, or beads to make them rattle.

## Shaker

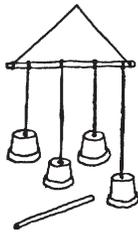
Place dried beans, other seeds, or small stones in plastic containers. Screw on the top and shake. A shaker can also be made with two paper plates taped or stapled together with dry beans inside.



Students in Betsy Weiss's kindergarten and first-grade class at Paden Elementary School decorate their shakers.

## Clay Pot Chimes

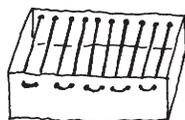
Place rope through several small clay pots. Tie a knot at the end of several pieces of rope. String each rope through a small clay pot. Tie on a wooden dowel or coat hanger in such a way that they could clang against each other. Or hang them up at different levels and use a stick to tap them.



Students in Betsy Weiss's kindergarten and first-grade class at Paden Elementary School paint clay pots before making them into clay pot chimes.

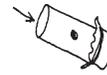
## Harp

Attach different sizes of rubber bands or fishing line to a shoe box. Pluck the strings to make sounds.



## Kazoo

Use a cardboard roll from toilet paper. Poke a hole on one side. Cover one end of the tube with wax paper and keep in place with a rubber band. Blow through the open end.



## One-string Bass

- Make a small hole in the center of a bucket and put one end of the string through the hole toward the inside of the bucket.
- Tie a knot on the end of the string inside the bucket so it won't slip back through the hole.
- Attach the other end of the string to one end of a broom handle.
- Place the other end of the broom handle on the edge of the upside down bucket.
- Twist the broom handle until the string is taut.
- To play: Place one foot on the edge of the bucket opposite the broom handle. Pluck the string. Move the broom handle to change the tension on the string and pluck it again.



## APPLICATION

- By analyzing the lyrics that students develop, the teacher can determine whether his or her students understood the concepts presented in this unit. Students can also make a big book of songs they wrote about reusing and recycling and illustrate these. In subsequent years, students in each class can sing songs written by students in previous classes and can add their own pages to the book.
- Ask students to show the instruments to other classes and to explain how they made the instruments and why they made them.

**Project Idea:** To let others know the importance of reusing and recycling unwanted objects, have students perform the songs written in this lesson for other classes.

- Discuss with students: Why are some kinds of materials better than others for making a particular thing. Have students relate this discussion to the instruments they made.
- Ask students to review the list that they developed at the beginning of the lesson on

what they have learned regarding the reuse and recycling of materials, such as unwanted objects. Are there any statements they want to change, add, or delete?

## EXTENSION

If you were able to acquire one or more tapes listed under “Resources,” have students learn a song by listening and then singing along with the tape. Select easy tunes and lyrics. You might need to write down the lyrics and project them on an overhead or provide a copy to each pair of students.

## RESOURCES

### Videos

*Dancing with the Earth.* The Banana Slugs Video. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Banana Slug String Band, 1992 (40 minutes).

The Banana Slug String Band performs songs, such as “Dirt Made My Lunch” and “Ecology.”

*Sing Along Earth Songs.* Sesame Songs Home Video. Children’s Television Workshop, 1993.

Songs sung by Sesame Street characters and includes “Box City Recycling Rap.”

### Books

Hunter, Ilene, and Marilyn Judson. *Simple Folk Instruments to Make and Play.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977.

Describes how to make musical instruments.

Mandell, Muriel, and Robert E. Wood. *Make Your Own Musical Instruments.* New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1978.

Describes how to make musical instruments.

### Magazine

Cline, Dallas. “Making Simple Folk Instruments for Children,” *Music Educator’s Journal*, Vol. 66, No. 6 (Feb., 1980) 50–53.

### Audiotapes\*

*The Great Garbage Concert* by Glenn McClure. Includes the songs “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” and “Old McDonald Had Some Trash.”

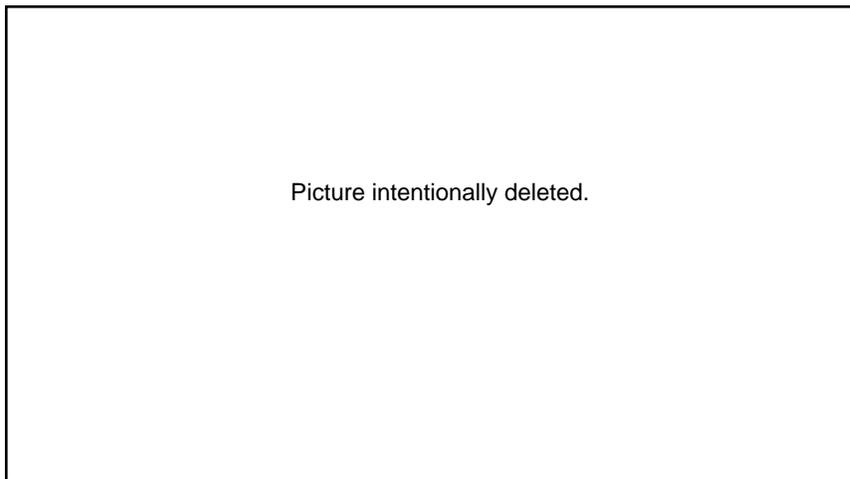
*A Kid’s Eyeview of the Environment*, by Michael Mish. Includes the songs called “Trash in the River” and “Recycle It!”

*Recycled Songs* by Don Cooper. Uses familiar tunes with lyrics about recycling and other similar topics. Includes the songs called “Don’t Throw It Away,” “Clean Up the Earth,” “Recycle,” and “Eco-band.”

*Songs for the Earth* by the Banana Slug String Band. Includes the song “Where Is Away?”

*We Recycle* by The Van Manens. Includes the song “We Recycle.”

\*Special thanks to the San Francisco Recycling Program for providing the list of audiotapes. For more information contact the San Francisco Recycling Program at (415) 554-3422.



Students make musical instruments and perform with them in Betsy Weiss’s kindergarten and first-grade class at Paden Elementary School.

## ON TOP OF THE LANDFILL

On top of the landfill  
All covered with trash,  
I stacked all my bottles  
They fell with a crash.  
If I had recycled  
Or even reused,  
This world that we live in  
Would not be abused.

I picked up my bottles,  
I picked up my cans,  
I looked all around me  
And came up with a plan.  
Now when I go shopping  
For something to drink,  
I'll check the containers;  
Now what do you think?

And when I need cookies,  
Or popcorn for treats,  
I'll look for less wrappings;  
Now isn't that neat!  
So now I'll recycle,  
Reduce, and reuse;  
My world will be brighter,  
Since wisely I choose.

Lyrics by Bonnie Styles's third-grade class, Las Palmas Elementary School,  
National School District.



**IN ROOM 10  
(SUNG TO THE TUNE OF "THIS OLD MAN")**

In Room 10,  
We reduce,  
We won't fill landfills too soon.  
If you want to be happy, save your trash today,  
In Room 10, we've found the way.

In Room 10,  
We reuse,  
We don't toss what others might use.  
If you think it's trash, then really think again  
Before you put it in the bin.

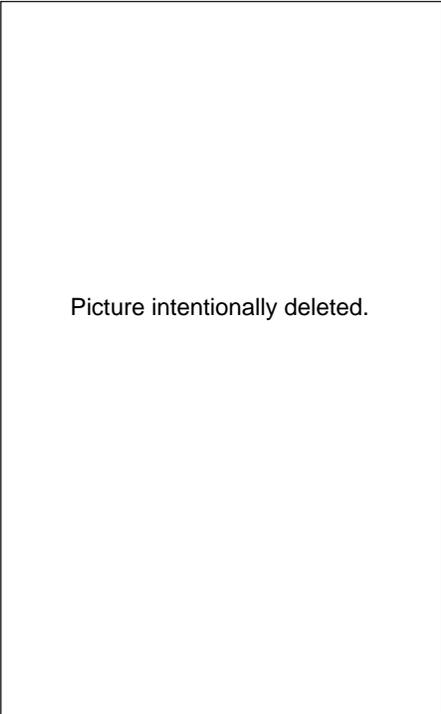
In Room 10,  
We recycle,  
We recycle all we can.  
Paper, plastic, aluminum, and glass,  
We will make our resources last.

Lyrics by Lynda Mooney's first-grade class, Las Palmas Elementary School, National School District.

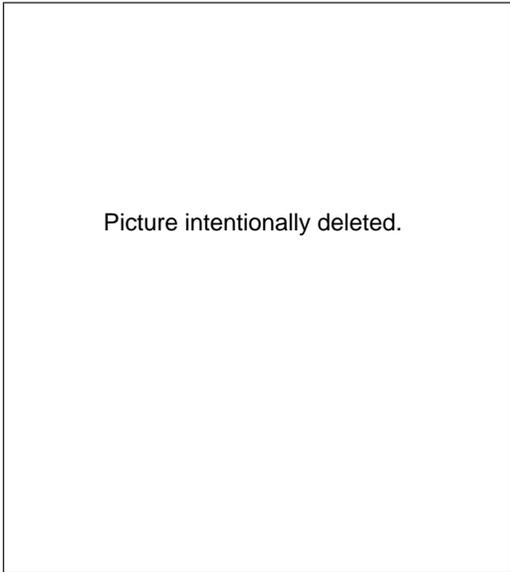


# BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER

Students might have already taken a familiar tune and rewritten the lyrics on their own or with brothers and sisters or friends just for the fun of it. Assigning them to produce a set of lyrics with a specific subject focus and message can be an engaging assignment in learning about audience, rhythm, vocabulary, understatement and overstatement, and the use of art forms to make informed social statements.



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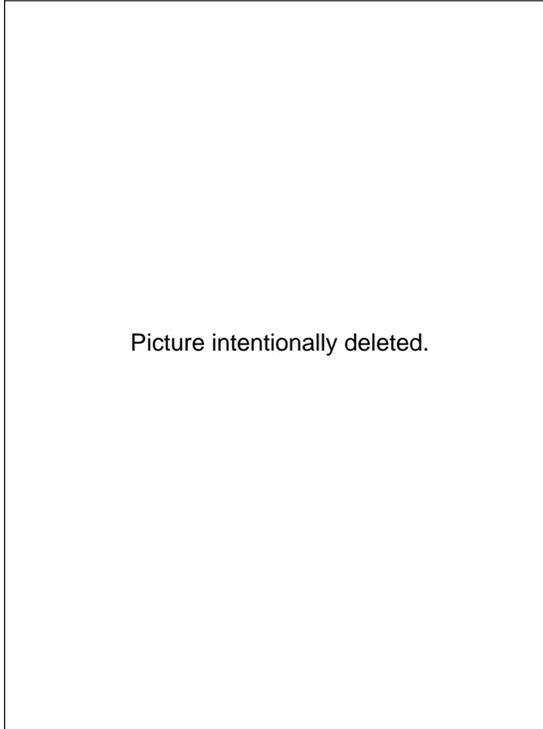


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Having students write and perform songs can open a range of opportunities to involve students who might not otherwise be engaged by a school assignment. It will give students who are interested in music (but who may not participate in the school's music programs) a chance to show their talents. It is an opportunity for students to relate to other students as fellow writers and musicians who might not otherwise work together and therefore find common ground for students who believe they have little or nothing in common. Through collaboration and cooperation, students may gain new respect for each other and for the demands of creating a finished piece of art.

The music that students develop can be of any type and in any tradition: rock, rap, waltz, blues, bebop, jazz, folk, classical. The words may be serious or comic. The performance can be accompanied by homemade musical instruments. These choices can be made by the teacher to suit the needs of the class and the school, working within what is logistically practical.

The teacher may assign existing tunes or have the students suggest some that would be fun to adapt. Whatever the choices, students should be encouraged to explore the content of their lyrics.



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At the Solar Community Housing Association, Homestead CO-OP, children play the drums that they designed from reusable materials.