

# Garbage Overflow

**OBJECTIVE:** To illustrate what garbage is and how it can be handled. Children will learn the 3 R's of waste management; reduce, reuse, recycle. Printing, counting and vocabulary skills will also be enhanced.

**MATERIALS:** a week's worth of classroom garbage, easel, chalkboard, empty cardboard box, Blue Box (recycling container), empty garbage can, HANDOUT: The 3 R's (A23)

**VOCABULARY:** garbage, reduce, reuse, recycle

## BACKGROUND:

On average, each year in Canada 30 million tonnes of waste is produced. Canadians generate more garbage per capita than any other country. Waste diminishes our natural resources and energy supplies. Improper treatment of waste can cause pollution and other environmental problems. Landfill space to hold the waste we throw away is difficult to find, costly to operate and takes productive land out of service for years. Reducing, reusing and recycling waste conserves resources and energy while diminishing environmental damage. Reducing means to simply make less waste. Avoiding excess packaging is one way to reduce. Reusing involves using an item for a purpose other than originally intended. Collecting egg cartons, styrofoam trays and catalogues for use in crafts is an example of reuse. Recycling is the collection and separation of waste for use as a raw material in re-manufacturing processes. Paper along with metals, plastics and glass containers can be recycled. Reduce, reuse, recycle are called "the 3 R's".

## PROCEDURE:

While the procedure has been laid out over two days there is no reason why this activity could not be completed in one day; the time table given is merely a suggestion.

1. Ask the custodial staff to not empty the trash cans in the classroom for about a week before you start this activity. Let the garbage accumulate until it is overflowing (you may want to remove any food or potential hazardous materials from the garbage).
2. **Day 1** Ignore the garbage until one of the students mentions it, then draw everyone's attention to the garbage. Ask them what is in the can. Ask them what is garbage. Write their comments down on an easel or the chalkboard. Ask if they know any other names for garbage. Write these down also.
3. **Day 2** After the first day re-arrange the room so it is disorganized and messy. You may want to spread the garbage over the desks and around the room. Place a container marked "reuse", a separate container marked "recycle" (if the classroom has a Blue Box it will do) and an empty garbage can labelled "waste" in the room. When the children arrive ask them to describe how the room looks (messy, dirty, untidy). Mention how difficult it is to move around or find items in such a mess. Ask them what could be done to the items instead of throwing them away. Introduce the ideas of reduce, reuse and recycle. Ask the