

# RESOURCES & TIPS FOR REMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

THE GREEN TEAM | May 6, 2020



# WHAT IS THE GREEN TEAM?

The GREEN TEAM is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and administered by the Center for EcoTechnology.



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Resources on [www.thegreenteam.org](http://www.thegreenteam.org) website
- Educational materials and activities
- Free recycling equipment
- Free idling reduction signs and materials
- Recognition and prizes



# THE GREEN TEAM WEBSITE



The screenshot shows the homepage of the The Green Team website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, FAQs, THE GREEN TEAM Kit, Library & Curricula, Request Equipment, Recycling Facts », GT Links, GT Spotlight », and News ». There are also links to "Register Now" and "Subscribe to Our Newsletter" with an email icon. The main content area features a large illustration of a smiling blue recycling bin character holding a broom and a dustpan. To the right of the illustration, the text reads: "THE GREEN TEAM" followed by a paragraph: "THE GREEN TEAM is an interactive educational program that empowers students and teachers to help the environment through waste reduction, recycling, composting, energy conservation and pollution prevention. Participating classes receive certificates of recognition and are eligible to win awards." Below this, there are two purple boxes. The first box is titled "Register Now" and contains the text: "Teachers, Sign Up for THE GREEN TEAM TODAY!". The second box is titled "View Participating Schools" and contains the text: "2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR" followed by a table of statistics.

2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR	
Number of Participating Teachers:	314
Number of Participating Schools:	272
Number of Participating Students:	97,948

At the bottom of the website, there is a row of four small images showing students and teachers participating in the program, followed by a green button that says "Visit our Photo Gallery!".



[www.thegreenteam.org/](http://www.thegreenteam.org/)



# EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES



**THE GREEN TEAM** Slash Trash Lesson

THE GREEN TEAM  
A program of the Massachusetts  
Department of Environmental  
Protection

E-mail: [recycle@thegreenteam.org](mailto:recycle@thegreenteam.org) [www.thegreenteam.org](http://www.thegreenteam.org)

**SLASH TRASH! Reducing, Reusing and Recycling Our Way to Zero Waste**

**OBJECTIVES**

Raise awareness about the problems associated with waste disposal and help students discover how to reduce, reuse and recycle instead. Help students track and measure the results of their actions and see the difference they can make.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**What is the problem with trash?**  
Traditional waste disposal methods, landfilling and incineration, can cause environmental problems such as air and water pollution. As waste decomposes in a landfill, methane gas is released, contributing to the greenhouse effect and global warming. If the amount of trash generated by our society continues to rise, future generations will be faced with greater environmental problems as a result.

**How can we solve the trash problem?**

- Reduce** - The best way to cut down on the amount of trash requiring disposal is to not create it in the first place. Ways to reduce waste include avoiding disposable and over-packaged products, buying reusable products, and getting off "junk mail" lists. Home composting can keep nearly half of our household waste out of the traditional disposal system. Items that can be composted include fruit and vegetable scraps, leaves, grass clippings, weeds, garden debris, and nonrecyclable paper products (paper towels, napkins, plates, coffee filters, tea bags, tissue, and waxed paper).
- Reuse** - We can cut down on the amount of trash requiring disposal by reusing items instead of throwing them away. Examples of reuse include donating unneeded clothing or household items to charities or swap shops, repairing broken items, and reusing items like shopping bags, boxes, containers and aluminum foil. We can choose reusable straws, bags or water bottles instead of disposable ones.
- Recycle** - Many items that cannot be reduced or reused can be recycled, a process that converts them into new products. Newspaper, white paper and cardboard can be recycled into new paper products. Glass, metal and plastic items can be recycled into new containers or raw materials to build a variety of other products, like steel bridges and cars. Organic waste from restaurants, grocery stores and food processing plants can be recycled into compost. The list of materials being recycled continues to grow as new businesses are developed to use waste materials in place of virgin materials in the manufacturing process. It is important to close the recycling loop by buying products made with recycled materials.

 It is important to recycle correctly. If the recycling bin contains incorrect items, food, or liquids, the recycling workers and machinery can be harmed and the entire container will be trashed instead. Visit [www.recyclesmartma.org](http://www.recyclesmartma.org) to learn what can be recycled in Massachusetts and how to recycle correctly.

**ACTIVITY**

**Discussion**  
Discuss the problem of trash with your students. Explain the concepts of reducing, reusing and recycling. Ask them for examples of items that commonly get thrown in the trash that could be reduced, reused, recycled or composted instead. Show them such examples. Discuss the impacts of contamination in the recycling stream. Ask them for examples of incorrect recycling and how to make recycling successful at home and at school.

Slash Trash Lesson – Suggested Grades: Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade

# SLASH TRASH LESSON PLAN

[www.thegreenteam.org/library-curricula/](http://www.thegreenteam.org/library-curricula/)



### SLASH TRASH! Reducing, Reusing and Recycling Our Way to Zero Waste

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## Slash Trash Report

By participating in this activity, your students will have an opportunity to see the results of their waste reduction efforts at home.

- Use the template on the reverse to make a copy of the Slash Trash Report for each student. Ask them to use the report to keep track of the number of bags of trash disposed and the waste reduction methods used in their homes each week for a month. Encourage students to help their families reduce the amount of trash thrown away. Provide an opportunity for students to share waste reduction ideas and activities with each other.
- At the end of the month, collect the cards and review the results with the students. Help them calculate how much waste they reduced individually and as a class. Empower them with the knowledge that their actions achieved measurable results and that they can make a difference. Encourage them to continue the waste reduction activities they started during the month and to develop new ones as well.

### "Slash Trash Report" Step by Step Instructions



1. **Before starting** to track their trash, students begin by writing down the number of bags their family usually disposes each week on the first line of the form (before Week 1). This provides a "baseline" number that will be used to measure differences seen after new recycling and composting activities are used.
2. **Week 1:** Students encourage their families to reduce, reuse, compost and recycle. They circle each activity used in their home that week. At the end of the week, they record the number of bags disposed in the blank "trash bag" in the left column.
3. **Weeks 2 through 4:** Students try to reduce the amount of trash disposed by adding new recycling, composting or other waste reduction activities. If an activity is not listed, students may write the activity in the "other" category. They continue to record the number of bags disposed for each week.
4. **At the end of the 4th week,** students who used new waste reduction activities during the month should be able to observe a reduction in the amount of trash disposed. The number of bags at Week 4 should be smaller than the baseline number filled in on the first line. Some students' forms may show a decrease in the amount of trash disposed on Weeks 1, 2, 3 and 4. Some students may already actively recycle and compost at home and may see little change in their disposal rate. As a measure of their current success, a typical family of four that recycles and composts can keep their trash down to one bag per week. To reduce more, other waste reduction activities such as purchasing in bulk can be added.
5. **To figure the amount of trash reduced on a weekly basis,** subtract the number of bags disposed in a given week from the baseline number. This is how much trash the students and their families eliminated that week by reducing, reusing and recycling. Encourage your students to continue the waste reduction activities they used during the month so that the environmental benefits of their actions will continue.

**To tally the total amount of trash slashed by each student** during the month, subtract the number of bags reported at Week 1 from the baseline number of bags. Enter this number in the "Bags Eliminated" column. Repeat this process for Weeks 2, 3 and 4. Add up the number of bags eliminated each week to determine the total number of bags of trash eliminated that month. This is the impact the student and their family made during the month by recycling, composting and using waste reduction activities.

**To tally the amount of trash slashed by the class** as a group, add up the number of bags slashed by each student. This is how much trash your class eliminated by reducing, reusing and recycling!





## THE GREEN TEAM Let's Talk Trash/How You Can Help

### "Let's Talk Trash"

In Massachusetts each person creates over 4 pounds of trash each day. Below is information about various categories of waste and recyclables, followed by suggestions for reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting.

#### Aluminum

- Recycling a single aluminum can saves enough energy to run a television or computer for three hours.
- Using recycled aluminum instead of virgin materials decreases water and air pollution and energy use by 95%.
- You can make 20 cans out of recycled material with the same amount of energy it takes to make one new one.



#### Glass

- Recycling 1 glass bottle saves enough energy to light a 100-watt light bulb for 4 hours.
- Americans throw away over 11 million tons of glass bottles and jars each year.
- Recycling saves 25-30% of the energy used to make glass from virgin materials.



#### Plastics

- Americans throw away enough plastic bottles each year to circle the earth four times.
- Five recycled plastic bottles make enough fiberfill to stuff a ski jacket.
- Every hour, we throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles (22 billion plastic bottles per year).



#### Paper

- The average household throws away 13,000 separate pieces of paper each year – mostly packaging and junk mail.
- Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees.
- One tree can filter up to 60 pounds of pollutants from the air each year.

#### Steel

- Every ton of steel recycled saves 2,500 pounds of iron ore, 1,400 pounds of coal, and 120 pounds of limestone.
- Enough energy is saved each year by recycling steel to supply Los Angeles with electricity for almost 10 years.
- The steel industry recycles nearly 19 billion steel cans into new products each year – about 600 cans recycled every second!



#### Organic Materials

- Almost one third of the waste stream by weight is organic material like food leaves, grass, and compostable paper.
- Each person in Massachusetts creates about 530 pounds of food and yard waste each year. If all that material was piled onto a football field, the pile would be 2,067 feet high, higher than Mt. Wachusett.
- If wasted food was a country, it would be the third largest producer of carbon dioxide in the world, after the US and China.



### "How You Can Help"

- Help your family and school recycle correctly. To find out what can be recycled in your community, visit [www.recyclesmartma.org](http://www.recyclesmartma.org) or your town website.
- If there is no recycling program at your school, work with your teacher to help start one.
- Help your family and school compost fruit and vegetable scraps, leaves, and grass clippings.
- Reduce junk mail at your house. To learn how, visit [www.mass.gov/guides/consumer-guide-to-stopping-junk-mail](http://www.mass.gov/guides/consumer-guide-to-stopping-junk-mail).
- At the store, choose products with less packaging and those made with recycled materials.
- Save paper. Use both sides of paper at school and at home.

**DON'T EVER THINK YOU CAN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE, YOU CAN!**



# Slash Trash Report



\*This is your baseline number\*



Before we started tracking our trash, we usually had \_\_\_\_\_ bags of trash each week. For four weeks, I kept track of how we slashed our trash by recycling, composting, reducing and reusing. Here are my results:

			BAGS ELIMINATED
WEEK 1	 WHAT DID YOU DO? We Recycled (circle): paper • glass • aluminum • metal cans • plastic • other: _____ We Composted (circle): leaves and grass • food scraps • other: _____		_____
WEEK 2	 WHAT DID YOU DO? We Recycled (circle): paper • glass • aluminum • metal cans • plastic • other: _____ We Composted (circle): leaves and grass • food scraps • other: _____	+	_____
WEEK 3	 WHAT DID YOU DO? We Recycled (circle): paper • glass • aluminum • metal cans • plastic • other: _____ We Composted (circle): leaves and grass • food scraps • other: _____	+	_____
WEEK 4	 WHAT DID YOU DO? We Recycled (circle): paper • glass • aluminum • metal cans • plastic • other: _____ We Composted (circle): leaves and grass • food scraps • other: _____	+	_____

To find out how many bags of trash your family slashed, subtract the number of bags reported each week from the baseline number on line 1. Write this number in the "Bags Eliminated" column. Add up the number of trash bags eliminated each week. This is the impact you and your family made during the month.

Compare your results each week. How low did you go?

Total Bags Eliminated

=

\_\_\_\_\_ This Month!

# REDUCE

- Avoid buying single-use products and disposable goods
- [Stop unwanted junk mail](#) and [opt-out of catalogs](#)
- Purchase products made from recycled materials
- When possible, buy in bulk!
- Go digital for books, cards, and more, and print double sided



William L. Foster Elementary School, Hingham





# REUSE

- Find creative ways to reuse households goods, such as turning a t-shirt into a reusable bag
- Try repairing durable items or mending torn clothing instead of buying a replacement
- Purchase secondhand to extend the life out of anything, from clothes to books to home building supplies
- Borrow before buying through a [“Tool Library” or “Library of Things”](#)



Lt. Job Lane Elementary School, Bedford





# RECYCLE

- Recycling a single aluminum can saves enough energy to run a television or computer for three hours
- Five recycled plastic bottles make enough fiberfill to stuff a ski jacket
- Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees
- The steel industry recycles nearly 19 billion steel cans into new products each year – about 600 cans recycled every second!



James Otis Elementary School, East Boston



[www.thegreenteam.org/recycling-facts/](http://www.thegreenteam.org/recycling-facts/)

# REDUCE FOOD WASTE

- Home compost using an outdoor bin or vermicompost
- Extend the life of fresh food through [proper storage](#) and maximizing the use of your freezer
- Turn food scraps into cleaning products, broth, or propagate them into new plants
- Practice meal prepping
- Try a pantry or freezer challenge to use up ingredients before they spoil



Dryden Veterans Memorial School, Springfield



# **RESOURCES FOR RECYCLING & FOOD WASTE REDUCTION**

## Recyclopedia: Can I recycle it?

Enter name of item (ex. bottle)

Search

Join our mailing list

# RECYCLING OR TRASH?



[www.recyclesmartma.org](http://www.recyclesmartma.org)





# Smart Recycling Guide

Your go-to reference for recycling in Massachusetts



**Food and Beverage Cans**

empty and rinse



**Bottles, Jars, Jugs and Tubs**

empty and replace cap



**Bottles and Jars**

empty and rinse



**Mixed Paper, Newspaper, Magazines, Boxes**

empty and flatten

## NO!



**Do Not Bag Recyclables  
No Garbage**



**No Plastic Bags  
or Plastic Wrap**  
(return to retail)



**No Food or Liquid**  
(empty all containers)



**No Clothing or Linens**  
(use donation programs)



**No Tanglers**  
(no hoses, wires,  
chains or electronics)

Recyclopedia: Can I recycle it?

Enter name of item (ex. bottle)

Search

Use our online search tool at: [RecycleSmartMA.org](https://RecycleSmartMA.org)



[RecycleSmartMA.org](https://RecycleSmartMA.org)

*All recycling programs in Massachusetts  
accept the items pictured above.*

Printed on Recycled Paper



# TOP TIPS FOR RECYCLING

- Plastic bags do not belong in your household bin! Many grocery and large retailers have [collection programs](#).
- Lids and caps should be placed back on empty bottles, jars, jugs or tubs before recycling.
- Very small items can't be recycled
- The number in the triangle does not mean it's recyclable. A better indicator is the size, color, and shape of the item. If it's a bottle, jar, jug or tub, put it in your household recycling bin.
- Bottles and containers don't need to be spotless, but they do need to be empty and free of most food residue. A quick wipe or rinse does the trick.
- Recyclables are sorted both by hand and machines, so by recycling smart you help keep the workers at the sorting facility safe!
- For items that can't go in your household bin – like batteries or electronics – check out the [Beyond the Bin](#) directory.

# RECYCLE SMART MA RECYCLOPEDIA

Recyclopedia

English

Share

Recyclopedia

Need help?

Back

Paper

Recycling

Put this item in your recycling bin.

Instructions

Staples and paper clips are okay.

Back

Privacy | Terms of Service | Cookie Policy

List of Materials

Powered by ReCollect and Recycle Smart

Recyclopedia

English

Share

Recyclopedia

Need help?

Back

Black plastic (i.e. take out trays)

Trash

Put this item in your trash bin.

Instructions

Rinse and recycle clear plastic lids.

Why are the lids okay but not the black plastic?

The reason we say no to black plastic is that the optical sorters at the sorting facilities cannot see it on the black conveyor belts, so black-colored plastics don't get captured for recycling.

Back



# WHAT DO I DO WITH....?





# WHAT DO I DO WITH....?

## Reuse



AND MANY OTHERS!

## Recycle

EMPTY ME FIRST!  
NO FOOD OR LIQUID



## Compost



## Trash



# OTHER GREEN TEAM RESOURCES

- [THE GREEN TEAM Food Waste Reduction webpage](#)
- [Compost Lesson Plan](#)
- [Food Waste Diversion Guide for Schools](#)





# RESOURCES FOR FOOD WASTE REDUCTION & COMPOSTING

- [MassDEP Turn Garbage Into Gold: Composting at Home Webinar Recording](#)
- [MassDEP Home Composting & Green Landscaping](#)
- [MassDEP Vermicomposting Resources](#)
- [US Composting Council FAQ for Home Composting During COVID and other resources](#)
- [CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Home Composting Video: Turning Your Spoils to Soil](#)



# **OPEN DISCUSSION**



# THANK YOU!

## THE GREEN TEAM

[recycle@thegreenteam.org](mailto:recycle@thegreenteam.org)  
413-586-7350 x225

[www.thegreenteam.org](http://www.thegreenteam.org)

Ann McGovern  
Consumer Waste Reduction Coordinator  
[ann.mcGovern@state.ma.us](mailto:ann.mcGovern@state.ma.us)

