

# KITCHEN LANDFILL

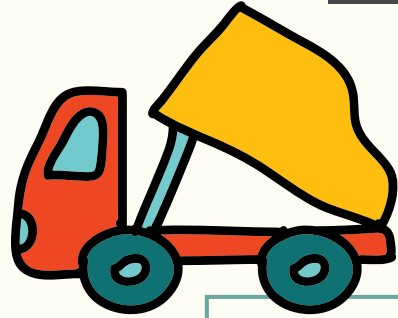


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\*\*adapted from David Suzuki Foundation's "Connecting with Nature"

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Even though a garbage truck takes your family's household garbage *away*, it never really goes away. A landfill needs lots of space, and most of the items sit there for many years without breaking down.



WHAT EFFECT DOES  
ALL THE WASTE WE  
CREATE HAVE ON  
NATURE?

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencil/marker/pencil crayons

Instructions:

- 1.Read Appendix E1, and look at the pictures in Appendix E2.
- 2.Make a mind map diagram with the word "pollution" in the middle.  
Brainstorm as many words as you can that describe pollution, and that describe pollution's impact on human life and nature.
- 3.Create a sign that says "Landfill" and tape it to the main garbage can in your house.
- 4.Fill out the chart on the next page for a day or week (you can extend the time frame for as long as you wish). You can continue the chart on a new page, if needed. Record every item that goes into the trash.
- 5.Write down some ways you can reduce waste on a personal, household, and community level.
- 6.Repeat Step 4 (on a new chart) after you have made some changes.  
What do you notice about the list now?



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## Reflection Questions:

- Are there any items on your list that could have been recycled instead of being put in the garbage? What about items that could have been composted?
- Are there any items that could have been reused or repurposed?
- How long do you think these items will take to break down? Research the average lifespan of these materials in a landfill.
- How do landfills affect the air? The water?
- Imagine your kitchen garbage can on a much larger scale - do you think the Earth can handle all this waste?

Share some of your best ideas to reduce waste in our Facebook group!



## Rethinking our approach to nature

The world is a complex interaction of air, water, land and living things that are all interconnected and interdependent. When we pollute the air, water, and land, we are polluting ourselves.

### Too much stuff

One of the most important functions of nature is to take organic waste and break it down to create fertile soil for new plants to grow. Bacteria, fungi, and worms break down or “biodegrade” organic material like dead plants and animals, to create healthy new soil.

But humans are producing too much garbage. Much of the waste we produce now is not organic and does not easily break down. Materials that are not found in nature, such as plastics and glass, will never biodegrade. A pop can tossed on the ground will take 300 years to be crushed and worn away by rocks; a glass bottle will take a million years. The waste produced is polluting our planet by leaching into our soil and water through the release of methane gas, a major contributor to climate change.

*Adapted from Eco-Fun by David Suzuki and Kathy Vanderlinden (Greystone Books, 2001)*

### We need to do more than recycle

Most urban Canadians dutifully put their paper, plastic, bottles, and cans into recycling bins. And that’s great — good recycling programs reduce our need for landfills. But ultimately, we want to cut down on all our waste, even the kind that can be recycled.



Recycling helps to reduce waste that usually ends up in landfill.



## Rethinking our approach to garbage

**Landfills make greenhouse gases**

Beyond the waste problem itself, landfills produce about one-fifth of Canada's methane emissions — and methane is a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide. Landfills are a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. They also create odours that can affect the quality of the air we breathe.



Eat local fruit to help reduce transport emissions.

Some cities are now capturing methane to burn for energy rather than allowing it to escape into the atmosphere. This process can also help reduce the amount of energy we have to find from non-renewable sources.

**Reduce! It's the best thing to do**

The most important thing we can do to help nature is reduce the amount of garbage and pollution we produce in the first place. Not only does that mean sending less waste to the landfill, it also means using fewer resources and less energy, because it takes energy to produce and transport packaging and disposable items.

Every day, more people, stores, companies, and cities are finding ways to cut down on disposable plastic bags, but we still create a lot of unnecessary packaging and products. Planned obsolescence — producing goods that won't last so that people have to buy more — is still reality. We can all avoid buying products that are over-packaged or "disposable," and encourage producers to be more responsible. When something breaks, we can also take greater responsibility by fixing it rather than simply throwing it out and buying a new one. When we take the time to let stores, businesses, and governments know that we want less packaging and goods that last, we will make a difference. Our changing attitude about plastic bags is a perfect example.

## Images of waste and pollution

