



Lesson Plan: Reuse, Grade 5 The Arts

Activity

Making a reusable bag from an old t-shirt.

Introduction

The production of many of the items we use every day depends on the use of energy and the extraction of natural resources. Natural resources are materials that are made by nature and can be used by humans. Some examples of natural resources include trees, water, soil, and oil. Over-extraction of natural resources places stress on the environment. Reuse practices (such as repurposing, selling, and donating items) prolongs the lifespan of an item, diverts waste from the garbage, minimizes the need to purchase new items, and conserves the harvesting of raw materials. In this lesson, students will be challenged to make a reusable bag from an old t-shirt while using elements of design to communicate the importance of protecting earth.

Curriculum Connections

The Arts, 2099 (revised)

Grade 5

- Strand D: Visual Arts

Learning Objectives

1. Explain natural resources and their connection to textiles
2. Investigate different ways to reuse and define and differentiate between various methods of reuse (e.g., repurposing, upcycling, repairing, refurbishing)
3. Understand and justify where reuse sits in the Region's Waste Management Hierarchy
4. Construct a reusable tote bag by reusing an old t-shirt
5. Use elements of design to communicate the importance of protecting earth

Resources Provided (located in the resource folder)

- Waste Management Hierarchy

Materials Required

- One t-shirt for each student
- Scissors, preferably fabric scissors
- Fabric markers/paint
- Fabric glue
- Fabric scraps

The Regional Municipality of Durham - Waste Management Services

If this document is required in an accessible format, please contact schoolprograms@durham.ca

Activity

Prior to Activity

1. Have students bring in one t-shirt that they no longer use. This can be a shirt that no longer fits them or one that is stained.

Day of Activity

1. Introduce the class to the assignment.
 - Today we are going to make a reusable bag from an old t-shirt while using elements of design to communicate the importance of protecting earth's natural resources.
 - The production of many of the items we use every day depends on the use of energy and the extraction of natural resources.
 - **Natural resources** are resources that are made by nature and can be used by humans. These resources include rocks, minerals, soil, animals, plants, and trees to name a few.
 - Our clothing comes from natural resources such as plants (cotton, rayon), animals (leather, wool, down, silk) and petroleum (polyesters, acrylics).
2. Ask the students to examine their t-shirts and make observations. What natural resources have been used to make their t-shirts? Where was their t-shirt made?
3. Explain that it takes a lot of resources and energy to make the clothing we wear.

The extraction, processing, distribution, consumption, and final disposal of textiles places stress on the natural environment. Once we have an item, it is important that we use it for as long as possible and do our best to keep it out the garbage.

4. Explain that the students will be focusing on the third R, **reuse**, when making their reusable tote bag.

Following Rethink and Reduce, Reuse is the third R in the Region's Waste Management Hierarchy. Reuse means to use an item repeatedly to get the most possible use out of it, either for its original purpose or for something new! Reuse practices (such as repurposing, selling, and donating items) prolongs the lifespan of an item, diverts waste from the garbage, minimizes the need to purchase new items, and conserves the harvesting of raw materials.

5. Introduce the idea of **repurposing** to the class.

Repurposing is using an item for a different purpose than its intended one. This can include using your creativity to reimagine an item and use its parts to create something new. Repurposing an item can turn into a fun art project and can be used to convey important messages.

6. Students will now begin to make their reusable bag.

Instructions

1. Ensure each student has enough working space to lay out their shirt.

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2. Students will begin by flipping their shirt inside out.
3. Students will then cut off the sleeves of the shirt by cutting along the sleeve seam. To achieve a symmetrical cut, fold the shirt over in half and cut both sleeves off at once.
4. Using a marker, students will draw a deep semi-circle dipping below the current collar of the shirt and then cut the shirt along this line.
5. Students will cut even strips (about 3-inches-long and ½ an inch wide) along the bottom of the shirt. Make sure to cut the back and front layers together. These strips must match up for the next step.
6. Once the students are done cutting the strips on the bottom of their shirts, they match up each strip from the front to one in the back and tie a knot. When you are done knotting, you will notice that there are small gaps between each knotted strip.
7. Complete a second round of knots, this time tying together each strip with the one beside it.
8. Once each strip has undergone a second round of knots, turn the bag back inside out and the bag is ready! Students now have a compact reusable bag perfect to take to the store.
9. Students will use a variety of materials (such as markers, paint, and scrap fabrics) to create a design on their bags to communicate the importance of protecting earth. This could include a written message, recognizable symbol, or a drawing of their choice. Note: students may require additional time to complete this portion of the activity.



End of Activity

1. Place a textile collection bin in your classroom to gather t-shirt scraps. Both Diabetes Canada and the Salvation Army offer textile recycling programs. Visit their websites for additional pickup/drop-off information.

Summary

Considering the possibility of reuse at all stages of consumption is important. Before purchasing an item, consider if you already have something else that you can reuse or repurpose to suit your need. If you don't, select a durable item that will last you a long time. When the item no longer serves its intended purpose, consider completing a fun activity by repurposing or upcycling it, or, handing it off to a friend. Consuming consciously is an important step in managing our household waste.

Expanded Curriculum Connections

Grade 5, The Arts, 2009 (revised)

D. Visual Arts

D1. Creating and Presenting

- D1.3 use elements of design in art works to communicate ideas, messages, and understandings
- D1.4 use a variety of materials, tools, and techniques to determine solutions to design challenges