



## WASTE AUDIT

## STUDENT READING 2

No matter who we are or where we live, we create waste. It is a normal consequence of day-to-day life, and it has been that way since people populated the planet. From medieval Europeans, tossing their rubbish out a window to modern waste-to-energy plants, people have treated their waste differently depending on their lifestyle and the technology available.

Waste is continually created and thrown away; this is known as the “waste stream.” The waste stream begins with the creation of a product and continues through the separation and collection of the waste to the final disposal. The waste stream begins with each and every one of us.



Many people feel they can have no effect on the amount of waste generated by society. Environmental problems such as global warming, hazardous waste, and the municipal waste crisis can seem out of our control. But each of us can make a difference. It's easy if we remember the 'three Rs' – reduce, reuse and recycle.

### You can make a difference!

Your challenge is to conduct a waste audit to find out what kind of waste and how much of it is being disposed of at your school. When we know more about the waste we generate, we can take action to reduce the waste. Reducing wastes has many benefits including reducing costs for new materials and promoting better use of limited natural resources.

### Did you know?

- When we recycle large amounts of newsprint, office paper, and mixed paper, we can save millions of trees!
- Recycling paper also cuts energy usage in half.
- Every pound of steel recycled saves enough energy to light a 60-watt bulb for over 26 hours.
- Recycling a ton of glass saves the equivalent of nine gallons of fuel oil. Recycling used aluminum cans requires only about five percent of the energy needed to produce aluminum from bauxite.
- Recycling just one aluminum can saves enough electricity to light a 100-watt bulb for 3.5 hours.

Waste audits are carefully planned and the safety of people conducting the audit is very important. When conducting your waste audit remember...

- Sort wastes using tongs or gloves, not your bare hands.
- Sort the wastes in ventilated areas with fresh air circulating.
- Protect the confidentiality and privacy of documents or personal information you find. No documents or school papers can be read or removed from the sorting area.

