

Rethink · Reduce · Reuse  
Recycle · Compost



## Set Up Your Classroom to Encourage Reuse

**Grade level** – K-6

**Focus** – Reusing materials that otherwise would go into the garbage

**Skills** – Creative thinking, problem-solving, applying lessons learned

**Materials** – Reusable things and imagination

**Some of these ideas and projects may be new and some may be familiar. Either way, have fun and be creative with them!**

- Set up a scrap box for single-sided school paper. Students can put in old homework, scratch paper, completed handouts, and other papers. The paper can be reused for in-class work or for making scrap tablets. Set up a separate scrap box for construction or craft paper to reuse in art projects. Have the students decorate the boxes with reused paper and crayons or markers. Make them fun and flashy to encourage their use!
- When purchasing classroom party supplies, choose reusable cups, plates, and utensils. If this is too costly, encourage your students to bring in their own. Provide snacks that don't require utensils.
- Reuse your party decorations from year to year or have students make the decorations from reused scrap paper.
- Use the cardboard toilet roll for a hamster or gerbil tunnel.
- Reuse empty milk cartons or drink bottles for planting seeds.
- Use pop tops and bottle caps for counting activities.
- Reuse glass jars or soda bottles for terrariums, bugs, or rooting plants.
- Reuse paper bags for book covers. Leftover gift wrap works well too.
- Reuse plastic tubs for odds-and-ends containers.
- Have students bring in water bottles for use at school.
- Reuse newsprint for protection underneath a messy art project.
- Have a book swap with another classroom.
- If the district is in charge of ordering all supplies, have the class send a letter to encourage the purchase of recycled paper and other supplies.



**King County**

Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks  
Solid Waste Division

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[www.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste](http://www.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste)

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