



## **JUNK MAIL**

### **OVERVIEW**

In this lesson students will consider the impact of junk mail on our natural resources and landfills. The class will collect their families' junk mail for a week and learn about ways to reduce junk mail. Students will write a book that explains the importance of trees in our daily lives. They will create the illustrations for the book using the junk mail they collected.

### **GRADE LEVEL**

Third Grade

### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will do the following:

- Actively listen to audio information using Internet resources
- Analyze how much junk mail is delivered to their homes
- Investigate ways to reduce junk mail
- Write a book that explains the importance of trees

### **SUBJECT AREAS**

Science, Math, Language Arts

### **INTERNET LINKS**

Bookmark the following Web sites:

- [EekoWorld](http://pbskids.org/eekoworld) <http://pbskids.org/eekoworld>
- [Junk Mail Facts](http://www.newdream.org/junkmail/facts.php) <http://www.newdream.org/junkmail/facts.php>
- [Stop the Junk Mail Monster!](http://www.ecocycle.org/junkmail/index.cfm) <http://www.ecocycle.org/junkmail/index.cfm>
- [Do-it-yourself: Stop junk mail, email and phone calls](http://www.obviously.com/junkmail/) <http://www.obviously.com/junkmail/>
- [Junk Busters](http://www.junkbusters.com/junkmail.html) <http://www.junkbusters.com/junkmail.html>
- [New American Dream](http://www.newdream.org/junkmail/form.php) <http://www.newdream.org/junkmail/form.php>
- [Make Your Own Paper](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/cool/paper.htm) <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/cool/paper.htm>
- [Making Paper From Paper](http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/TrashGoesToSchool/MakingPaper.html) <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/TrashGoesToSchool/MakingPaper.html>
- [How to Plant a Tree](http://www.americanforests.org/resources/howtoplanttrees/) <http://www.americanforests.org/resources/howtoplanttrees/>

### **MATERIALS**

- Glue
- Colored pencils
- Paper
- Ezra Jack Keats' book that uses recycled paper for illustrations



## **BUILDING BACKGROUND**

This activity may be completed in the days leading up to the main activity.

### **Activity One: Exploring EekoHouse**

Visit the Forest section of the EekoWorld Web site with your students, and discuss forests and trees are important.

## **STEPS**

### **Activity One: Junk Mail**

#### **Step 1**

Share these junk mail facts with your class and discuss how junk mail impacts trees and landfills.

- Weight of paper in U.S. municipal solid waste in 1999: 87.5 million tons
- Typical weight of 4 elephants: 17.8 tons
- Number of trees it takes to make a ton of paper: 24
- Pieces of bulk mail sent by U.S. non-profits in one year: 12 billion
- Amount of time the average American spends opening bulk mail over the course of his or her life: 8 months

Sources: U.S. Postal Service, E Magazine, Advertising Mail Marketing Association, Direct Marketing Association, Consumer Research Institute, Conservatree, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

#### **Step 2**

Ask students to bring their families' junk mail to school for one week. At the end of the week, have students count and weigh the junk mail. Ask students to think about how much junk mail is being delivered in their town or city every week.

*Teacher Note: You may wish to offer students the challenge of estimating the total weight or number of pieces of junk mail delivered in their town or city in a given week.*

#### **Step 3**

These Web sites offer suggestions for ways to reduce junk mail. Have students follow some of these suggestions to reduce junk mail. You may need parents' permission to complete this activity, or you could copy the information into a newsletter to send home to your students' parents to be completed as a home activity.

- Stop the Junk Mail Monster!
- Do-it-yourself: Stop junk mail, email and phone calls
- Junk Busters
- New American Dream

#### **Step 4**

Brainstorm a list of other items made from paper that we use in our daily lives, i.e., newspapers, paper plates, cups, napkins, etc. Discuss ways to reduce consumption of these items, i.e., read online newspapers, use cloth napkins.

#### **Step 5**

Discuss how you, as a class, can reduce paper consumption in your classroom. Write the class guidelines for paper use on a poster and display it in the classroom.

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### **Activity Two: Junk Mail Illustrations**

#### **Step 1**

As a class, brainstorm a list of reasons why trees are important. Responses might include the following: trees filter pollution from the air, prevent erosion, create shade, help recycle water, provide homes for animals, provide food for animals and humans,



provide materials for houses and furniture, provide materials for making paper, provide a heat source, provide a sense of wonderment and food for the imagination, etc. Record the responses on the board or a piece of chart paper.

**Step 2**

Show students one of Ezra Jack Keats' books in which he uses newspaper and other scraps of paper to illustrate the story. Tell students that they are going to write a book that explains the reasons why trees are important. Explain to students that they are going to use the junk mail that they collected to create the illustrations for their book.

**Step 3**

Provide time for students to share their books with their classmates. Display the books in the school library.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES****Art Project**

Save trees; make your own recycled paper. These sites provide instructions for making recycled paper.

- Make Your Own Paper
- Making Paper From Paper

**Plant a Tree**

Raise money and plant a class tree. Visit the How to Plant a Tree Web site for instructions.

**STANDARDS**

**McRel Standards** <http://www.mcrel.com>

**Mathematics**

**Standard 6.** Understands and applies basic and advanced concepts of statistics and data analysis

**Level II [Grade: 3-5]**

1. Understands that data represent specific pieces of information about real-world objects or activities

**Science**

**Standard 6.** Understands relationships among organisms and their physical environment

**Level II [Grade: 3-5]**

5. Knows that all organisms (including humans) cause changes in their environments, and these changes can be beneficial or detrimental

**Standard 12.** Understands the nature of scientific inquiry

**Level II [Grade: 3-5]**

2. Knows that scientists use different kinds of investigations (e.g., naturalistic observation of things or events, data collection, controlled experiments), depending on the questions they are trying to answer

**Language Arts**

**Standard 1.** Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

6. Uses strategies (e.g., adapts focus, point of view, organization, form) to write for a variety of purposes (e.g., to inform, entertain, explain, describe, record ideas)
7. Writes expository compositions (e.g., identifies and stays on the topic; develops the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations; excludes extraneous and inappropriate information; uses structures such as cause-and-effect, chronology, similarities and differences; uses several sources of information; provides a concluding statement)



## LESSON PLAN

**Standard 4.** Gathers and uses information for research purposes

7. Uses strategies to gather and record information for research topics (e.g., uses notes, maps, charts, graphs, tables, and other graphic organizers; paraphrases and summarizes information; gathers direct quotes; provides narrative descriptions)