

# Lesson 4.1: It Will Take Time to Perfect Recycling

## Overview

Read the material on this page as background for the case study to follow.

## Article: "It Will Take Time to Perfect Recycling"

The case study in this lesson concerns recycling. To prepare, read this very short article by Donella Meadows concerning the state of recycling in America today.

 Read ["It Will Take Time to Perfect Recycling."](#)

## Key Points

- The effort to recycle waste materials in America can be seen as a system.
- To date, some progress has been made, but it is not possible to term recycling an unqualified success. However, the periodic gluts and shortfalls in the system are simply characteristic of any system that seeks a balance between supply and demand.
- Ideally, recycling has as its goal to close loops so as to reuse major materials (newsprint, plastic, glass, aluminum) as new (recycled newspapers, recycled plastic products, recycled glass containers, recycled aluminum cans).
- It is important not to give up on recycling. Rather, these "fits and starts" (Meadows, 2018) are simply a natural part of any large system that is seeking balance.

## Attributions and References

### Reference

Meadows, D. (2018). *It will take time to perfect recycling*. The Systems Thinker. <https://thesystemsthinker.com/it-will-take-time-to-perfect-recycling/>