

LAUNCH for Long Beach Toolkit: Classroom Recycling

Love trees? Set up paper recycling in your classroom!

Have you ever looked in your classroom trash can? What do you see? Chances are it's made up of mostly paper, which can be easily recycled into new paper products! Recycling in your classroom is one of the easiest things you can do at school to reduce your campus waste.

Within this toolkit, you'll find various downloadable resources. For your convenience, you can access them all in one place by scanning the Toolkit Resources QR code on the last page to view them in a Google Drive folder.

This toolkit was created in partnership with the City of Long Beach Utilities.



Have you registered?



Toolkit Details

NGSS

This toolkit address the following Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs) within the Performance Expectations of NGSS for Grades K-2 and 3-5:

- Asking Questions and Defining a Problem
- Planning and Carrying out Investigations
- Analyzing and Interpreting Data
- Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking
- Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions
- Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information

The card is green with white text and icons. At the top left is the 'GRADES of green' logo and 'LAUNCH Eco-Toolkit'. Below that is the title 'Classroom Recycling' and a subtitle 'Take action to reduce to reduce the amount of waste in landfills through Classroom Recycling!'. To the right is an illustration of three children (two girls and one boy) holding recycling bins. Below the title are four columns, each with an icon and text: 1. 'Skill Level' with a puzzle piece icon, 'Grades K-5, led by a teacher, parent or school administrator'. 2. 'Climate Crisis Topic' with a globe icon, 'Waste' and a trash can icon. 3. 'Project Time' with a calendar and clock icon, '2 weeks, up to a full school year'. 4. 'What You'll Need' with a toolbox icon, 'Writing utensil, gloves, waste audit tracker, waste sorting receptacles and tarp (optional)'.

Why It's Important

Our landfills are quickly filling up with materials such as paper and cardboard that can actually be recycled to be used again. In order to reduce the amount of waste in landfills, by sorting out recyclables. This reduces the amount of trash in the environment and allows us to reuse valuable resources.

What You Will Accomplish

Students will take action by sorting through and recycling their classroom waste.

How Will Recycling Paper in My Classroom Benefit the City of Long Beach?

Long Beach Recycles is a sector of the City of Long Beach that is dedicated to help all residents of Long Beach recycle often and correctly. Classrooms use a lot of paper! You can help your city and school by making sure that paper gets recycled correctly so it can get made into new things such as... you guessed it – paper! Check out this activity booklet for kids and families called Long Beach Recycles Right to help your recycling efforts at home and school.

Educator Project Plan

Follow the steps below to set up successful Classroom Recycling at your school! Need help? Email us at info@gradesofgreen.org!

Track your metrics and submit your impact after implementing this toolkit. Your feedback helps keep our programs free for all across the globe.

Determine Participants

Use the Classroom Recycling Sign-Up Sheet to gather participants:

- A Student Group such as a club, before/after school program, non-school organization
- A whole class
- The whole school

Learning Objectives

Analysis

- Students will analyze their classroom waste to determine which items can be recycled

Project Management

- Students will set goals to determine how much waste they will divert from landfills
- Students will identify routines to accomplish their goals
- Students will practice leadership by educating each other on correct recycling

Evaluation and Assessment

- Students will track and evaluate the impact of their project

Long Beach Recycles Right:



Classroom Recycling Sign-Up Sheet:



Why Should You Set Up Classroom Recycling?

The resources provided can be shown as a slideshow or printed out as individual worksheets for students to learn.



Trees Are Healthy for the Environment!

Trees provide many benefits to the health of both people and the planet. They provide shade, cool neighborhoods by reducing the urban heat island effect, they create habitats for birds/wildlife, and prevent soil erosion. As trees grow, they help slow down climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the air, storing carbon, and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere. [1]

Paper Cuts Down Trees

Paper making has an impact on the environment because it destroys trees in the process. According to data from the Global Forest Resource Assessment, roughly 80,000 to 160,000 trees are cut down each day around the world with a large portion of that being used to make paper. This contributes to global deforestation which in turn is a big cause of global warming and climate change. Although so many trees are cut down each day, the City of Long Beach takes every effort to increase its urban forest canopy and even offers free flowering and fruit trees to all city residents wanting to plant one on their property or on the parkway next to the curb. [2] Find your perfect tree in Long Beach by learning about the “TreeYourself” program!

Paper Can Be Recycled Multiple Times

Recycling paper is very important in reducing the environmental impact of paper manufacturing. Paper can be recycled about 5 to 7 times before the fibers become too short to be reused and using one ton of recycled paper can prevent 17 trees from being cut down. [2]

Slideshow:



TreeYourself Program:



Why Waste is an Environmental Justice Issue

Waste is an environmental justice issue due to the inequities that exist between different communities. Wealthier neighborhoods are often given more resources to manage waste, such as street sweeping, more trash/recycle bins throughout the community that are picked up regularly, while disadvantaged communities are frequently not offered the same services which results in more waste left behind. A report by the U.S. EPA states that paper mills are among the worst polluters of any industry in the U.S. This is why recycling paper is best because it creates 35% less water pollution and 74% less air pollution compared to making new paper from untouched sources that often requires bleaching paper pulp and release of harmful chemicals like formaldehyde and methanol. [3] Communities located near paper mills are being impacted by this pollution much more than their more affluent neighbors.

Citations

[1] - The Power of Trees



[2] - How Many Trees Does it Take to Make 1 Ton of Paper?



[3] - Is Recycling Paper Bad for the Environment?



Watch these two short videos to learn why it's important to recycle in your classroom!



'Sesame Street: Where Does Paper Come From?'



'Improving Paper Recycling'

Think About It!

Pre-Activity Questions:

1. *Attention educators, please keep track of this metric:* Do you keep a clean recycling box at home? If so, what do you normally put in there?
2. What are the most common types of waste you see in your classroom trash bin?
3. What types of products do you think paper waste can be recycled into?
4. What are some ways to conserve paper other than recycling?
5. Why is sorting and recycling waste important for the environment?

Take Action: How to LAUNCH Classroom Recycling

Lead students through the Classroom Recycling activity with guided instructions. Check out “Pro Tips” with each step for useful help:

1. Get Organized

- Choose 1-3 students to empty the bin weekly (or as needed) into a larger recycling dumpster or bin on campus.
- Use the Classroom Recycling Sign Up Sheet to invite class members to participate.

2. Conduct a Pre-Audit

To understand how waste is managed at your school, it is important to conduct a pre-audit; this can be completed using the Classroom Recycling Audit Worksheet. Keep note of what you analyze and compare them with your final results at the end of the campaign.

3. Identify a Location

Talk with your campus custodial team to determine where campus recycle containers are kept on campus. This may be a large dumpster or rolling recycle carts. Work with the custodial team to determine the best way for students to empty classroom recycling into these containers.

4. Prepare Your Materials

First, you’ll need a small recycling bin in your classroom. Repurposing a large cardboard box or small trash can are great options!

5. Educate Students

Educate and let people know about your sorting project! You can do this by choosing a few student leaders who will present the provided Classroom Recycling Walking Assembly Script to their classmates.

6. Sort it Out

Now it’s time to put all your hard work into practice! Set your classroom recycling bin next to the trash can and start your classroom sorting. Students responsible for emptying the recycle bin weekly should track their progress with a second Classroom Recycling Audit Worksheet. Collect sheets weekly to keep track of your impact.

Classroom Recycling Sign Up Sheet:



Pro Tip:

If your classroom has rotating classroom jobs, add this to the list of responsibilities.

Classroom Recycling Audit Worksheet:



Pro Tip:

Printing paper usually comes in cardboard boxes that are easily remade into classroom recycling bins. Have your class decorate the bin to make it uniquely your own.

Classroom Recycling Walking Assembly Script:



Pro Tip:

Once your classroom has learned what and how to sort waste, pick student leaders to educate other classrooms on campus.

Classroom representatives should empty the boxes into the purple recycle carts on campus. Don't have any purple Recycle Carts? Getting one is easy – request a cart by scanning the QR code to the right!

Request a Recycling Cart:



Pro Tip:

Check with your school's waste hauler to see what can go in your classroom recycling bin. Soiled paper or paper with crayon/paint on it cannot typically be recycled.

Reflection Questions

How'd It Go?

- What was successful about your project?
- What could you do to improve your project next time?
- *Attention educators, please keep track of this metric:* What other ways could you keep trash away from landfills at home?
- How often does your recycling bin fill up?

Report Students' Impact

Congratulations!! You've implemented Classroom Recycling! Don't let all that hard work go unnoticed. ***Submit your results by scanning the QR code below.***



Project ongoing? No problem! Let us know what you've done so far.

By reporting your impact, Grades of Green can:

- CELEBRATE and elevate your students' hard work and success.
- Offer our programs FREE for all students across the globe.
- AWARD stipends and certificates to hard-working educators and students.

Please take a few minutes to submit your results. Thank you!

Provided Resources

Classroom Recycling Sign-Up Sheet:



Classroom Recycling Walking Assembly Script:



Classroom Recycling Audit Sheet:



Classroom Recycling Slides:



Classroom Recycling Wrap-Up Form:



Toolkit Resources – Google Drive Folder:



Congrats on completing the Classroom Recycling Eco-Toolkit!

Did you enjoy this toolkit? Find your next project below!



Notes:

This toolkit and its resources were inspired by the LBUSD Think Green Program.

