

# Too Much Trash!

## Less Mess

### More people are recycling.

What do bottles, cans, paper, and tires have in common? They all end up as garbage. In the late 2000s and early 2010s, each American threw away about 4½ pounds of trash every day. That adds up to more than 1,600 pounds per person in one year!



Erlanson/Getty Images

Most of our trash ends up in **landfills**. Those are places where people dump trash. The rest of the trash gets **recycled**. When something is recycled, it is made into something new.

Many people have been working to solve the trash problem. One plan is known as “zero waste.” Its goal is to teach people to make less trash. The plan is being used in schools, companies, national parks, and restaurants. Here are some ways that the plan is being put into action.



*Jupiter Unlimited*

Put items to be recycled in a recycling bin.

## Recycling Trash

Some people sort their trash to see what can be recycled. Those items often include paper, glass, and certain plastics. Some towns also recycle tires and batteries. Taking items to recycling centers reduces the trash in landfills.



*Carrin Ackerman/Weekly Reader*

This fleece, by Patagonia, was made from recycled plastic bottles.

## Buying Recycled Products

Many products are made from recycled materials. Clothes and bags can be made from recycled plastic bottles. Recycled plastic can also be made into lumber. Lumber is used for building things.



*SuperStock; Trash: iStockphoto*

Plant and food scraps can be put into compost piles.

## Making Compost Piles

Food scraps usually end up in the trash. But some people put the scraps into **compost piles**. Those are mixtures of plant and food scraps. Worms and bugs help break down the scraps. That turns into soil, which helps plants grow.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Where does most of our trash end up?

- A in landfills
- B in recycling bins
- C in compost piles
- D in the ocean

2. The article describes the problem of too much trash. What is one way people are trying to solve this problem?

- A by taking trash to landfills
- B by throwing away 4½ pounds of trash a day
- C by buying recycled products
- D by raising worms and bugs

3. Based on the information in the article, what is an example of something that could go into a compost pile?

- A a piece of paper
- B an apple core
- C a battery
- D a plastic bottle

4. Read the following sentence from the article: "Many products are made from recycled materials."

Based on this sentence, what does the word **product** probably mean?

- A something that is made
- B something that is thrown away
- C something that is put in a compost pile
- D something that is put in a landfill

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A In the late 2000s and early 2010s, each American threw away about 4½ pounds of trash every day.
- B Some people sort their trash to see what can be recycled.
- C Food scraps usually end up in the trash, but some people put the scraps into compost piles.
- D People are trying to solve the trash problem in several ways.

6. How much trash did Americans throw away in the late 2000s and early 2010s?

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7. Why might a town want to start a recycling program?

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8. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The "zero waste" plan is being used in places \_\_\_\_\_ schools and restaurants.

- A such as
- B instead of
- C never
- D after

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

A lot of our trash ends up in landfills because it is not recycled.

What? a lot of our trash

(does) What? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10 and 11.

**Vocabulary Word:** lumber (lum · ber): wood that has been cut so it can be used to build things.

**10.** Read the sentences below and underline the word **lumber**.

1. The loggers cut down the trees to make lumber for building houses.
2. The lumber from the factory is sent all over the country to build furniture and homes.
3. My uncle works for a lumber company, helping to saw wood into boards for building.
4. Lumber can come from trees or from recycled plastic.
5. We needed a lot of lumber to build the new playground.

**11.** Use the following vocabulary word in a sentence: **lumber**.

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