



Lesson: Make Art with Trash to send the message of keeping the environment clean to everyone who sees the art.

Consider starting this lesson plan with an acknowledgement that we are all living and working on what are traditional land and territories of native tribes. Around Lake Tahoe, we are living and working on the traditional lands of the Washoe Tribe. If you want to find out which tribes you should acknowledge in your area you can check it out here. <https://native-land.ca/>

Overview & Purpose

This lesson is designed for students to have hands-on time with the trash that has been removed from the environment. They can each work on individual art pieces, or they can collaborate and make a trash art collage that gets the message out in a collective manner.

This work will help them see the kinds of things that are filling our freshwater lakes, streams, parks, etc. and how important it is to take care of all your stuff when you go have fun at the beach or on the lake. This lesson is also designed to get the message of keeping the environment clean to a broader audience. It would be ideal if the resulting art piece could be displayed in a public area in the school, like the cafeteria or a hallway, or in a local community building that is well traveled.

Objectives:

Get kids hands on with trash issue.

Help them share the lessons they have learned with a broader audience.

Help them understand there is something they can do about trash and litter issues in their community.

Time Needed:

At least 1.5 hours. Half an hour for the CUTL introduction presentation and an hour for the art making.

Materials needed:

Trash, that is reasonably clean and safe (no sharp objects) from a community cleanup. Ideally things that are small enough to be glued to paper and will stay on the paper if hung on the wall.

Heavy stock paper to glue the trash too.

Markers or paint to add messages of choice to the art.

Hot glue guns and glue sticks for the hot glue guns. Ideally hot glue guns are set up at a “station” with a workspace and access to power. Power strips and extension cords may be very helpful as well.

Activity:

Have trash displayed in a central location.

Decide if the individual students are going to make their own anti-trash message or if there is going to be a singular group message for the final art piece.

Each student takes a piece of paper. The paper can be any size or color, but make sure that anything the student writes or draws on the paper can be seen.

Each student can take turns picking out at least 10 pieces of trash. (Depending on how much trash is available they can choose more pieces but be sure not to overwhelm them with choice.)

The student can then take the trash back to their desk and decide what their ideal trash layout is and what message they want to share. We recommend writing or drawing on the paper before gluing any trash down. Makes it much easier to write.

The students can then proceed to the hot glue gun station with their trash and attach the trash to the paper.

After all the art is assembled, the same day or at another time, have the students reflect on their lessons and brainstorm what can be done to solve the problem:

Verification:

Can the students tell you:

What can they do to keep their environment clean?

- Great time to introduce the idea of, “Pack it in, Pack it out” and “Leave it better than you found it.”
- Talk about using reusable items vs single use items.
- Talk about setting an example for others.

What is the harm of trash in the environment, for humans and ecosystems.