



## LESSON PLAN

### Sending an Environmental Message through Visual Art

#### Background

In 1987, the Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development. "**Sustainable development** meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Sustainable development takes into account the natural environment, the social environment and cultural preservation, and the economy.

The Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council (SWRC) has a tool called **Where do I recycle my...** that helps Saskatchewan residents find the best places to recycle items found at home or work. Simply select your community and select or search for your material to find the appropriate recycling location.

#### Purpose

Art creates a medium for expressing one's self in ways that differ from spoken or written language. The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to think creatively about environmental issues such as waste, biodiversity, energy, consumerism, etc. by creating a sculpture that reflects an environmental issue of their choice.

#### Time

4-5 hours

#### Materials

This activity works best if students can gather materials intended for the landfill and reuse them in their artwork. For example, consider the following:

- Broken furniture such as chairs, desks, or tables
- Carpet
- Ceramic dishes
- Children's toys that no longer function
- Coffee pods
- Contaminated food containers such as pizza boxes
- Mattresses
- Rope/string
- Styrofoam
- Wire hangers

*"I only feel angry  
when I see waste.  
When I see people  
throwing away  
things we could  
use."*

Mother Teresa



Additionally, students may find the following beneficial:

- Crayons
- Glue
- Markers
- Paint
- Scissors
- Tape

### Procedure

1. Acquire materials. If you wish, have the students conduct a **waste audit** at home or at your school to help them discover materials to use for their sculpture. In this case, usable materials are those that would otherwise be discarded in a landfill.

**Note:** Any recyclable materials found during the waste audit should be appropriately **recycled** or **reused**. If you choose to use recyclable materials, strive to assemble the art in such a way that the product can still be recycled when finished.

2. Explore examples of others' work (attached) for inspiration. Students may wish to research some of the additional resources included in this document.
3. Have the students – as individuals, pairs, or teams – construct a sculpture out of the reclaimed materials.
4. Instruct the students to come up with a title for their creation.
5. Have the students compose a short paragraph to explain the meaning behind their sculpture, and the materials used. If they wish, students may include their sources of inspiration.



## Inspiration from University of Saskatchewan Students

### Instruments of Consumption | by Adrian Golban

“My art piece, *Instruments of Consumption*, was inspired by wanting to recycle my daughter’s baby formula bottles. I added recycled wood, metal, plaster, and paint to create a series that represents the exponential consumption of our society.” -Adrian Golban



#### Did you know?

The last Canadian penny was minted in Winnipeg on May 4, 2012. The artist of *Instruments of Consumption*, Adrian Golban, intended the pennies in the baby bottle to be a further representation of North American consumerism society. Golban noted that humans purchase/design objects that become obsolete all too often.

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#### Additional Resources

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: [Food waste footprint](#)
- Chris Jordan: [Running the Numbers II: Portraits of global mass culture](#)
- [The Story of Stuff Project](#)



## Nest | by Stephanie Turtle

*"In my sculpture, Nest, I used a found parrot cage, tipped over and stuffed with synthetic materials that spill out, to signify the unnatural way we claim ownership over other species by locking them in cages and domesticating something that was once wild. Our methods and technologies are wildly out of balance and our need to dominate and control nature has a resulting negative impact. The nest is a bird's traditional home which has been disrupted and infringed upon by our destruction of the environment."* -Stephanie Turtle



### Did you know?

Wetlands are the key to life on the prairies, providing shelter, water, and food for hundreds of species of wildlife. Approximately 70% of North America's waterfowl migrate through Saskatchewan. Wetlands reduce flooding, prevent droughts, and control soil erosion. Due to urban development and the expansion of the agriculture industry, Saskatchewan's wetlands have been disappearing rapidly. Approximately 28 acres of wetlands are lost each day.

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### Additional Resource

- [Blackfish: Never Capture What You Can't Control](#)
- [Ducks Unlimited Saskatchewan](#)
- Paul Hanley: [Plan to save the swale](#)





## Remnants | by William Lee

*"I have collected a series of weatherworn slate tiles from a storage yard at the University of Saskatchewan. These tiles once sheltered the roof of a campus building, but have since been discarded. Natural processes have marked the slate while they were exposed, and they reveal documentation of the elements they endured while they were attached to the building. Growth of orange lichen have formed on the tile surfaces. I'm fascinated by lichen because it is composed of fungus living in a symbiotic relationship with algae, though appearing like a single organism. After working closely with these slate tiles on the floor for many hours, I wanted to elevate them in order to enhance their sense of importance."* -William Lee



### Did you know?

Throughout the ages, lichens have proven to have many uses. Lichens have been used to dye wool and other fabrics using a combination of water, ammonia, and even urine. This solution sits for several weeks before the dye becomes visible. The ancient Egyptians filled mummies with *pseudevernia furfuracea* (oakmoss). Its earthy, honey-like scent was also used in Elizabethan England in the 1500s to add an enduring aroma to wigs. Today, oakmoss remains a desired scent in the perfume industry.

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*"As a form of preservation, I have carefully presented and replicated these discarded objects in fear of their potential loss or breakage. I'm interested in blurring the boundaries between found objects and artistic forms. I use casting and photography processes as a method to preserve knowledge of these remnants."* -William Lee



## E-Waste | by Nic Saraceno



*"The idea for my recycled art piece is inspired by mountains of consumer waste building up on our landfills and being shipped around the world to South East Asia. Giant garbage ships transport electronic waste from the developed world to trash piles in poorer countries and non-biodegradable waste is building up in our oceans. Consumer waste is a huge problem and everybody should learn to reduce waste." -Nic Saraceno*

### Additional Resources

- Canadian Geographic: [The growing global e-waste problem and how to deal with it](#)
- Environment Canada: [Overview of E-waste Management in Canada](#)
- EPRA Saskatchewan: [Where does it go?](#)
- EPRA Saskatchewan: [Infographic on EPRA SK Electronics Recycling Process](#)
- The Story of Stuff Project: [Story of Electronics](#)
- United Nations Environmental Programme: [Illegally Traded and Dumped E-Waste Worth up to \\$19 Billion Annually Poses Risks to Health, Deprives Countries of Resources, Says UNEP Report](#)

### Did you know?

According to the United Nations Environmental Programme, about 90% of the world's electronic waste is illegally traded or disposed of each year. Moreover, 64 million people in developing nations make a living foraging electronic waste, which is often harmful to their health. In Saskatchewan, consumers take their unwanted electronics to SARCAN, where there are dismantled by Electronic Products Recycling Association Saskatchewan. Any contaminates and rare elements are managed safely and ethically within Canada. Plastics, glass, gold, and other metals are broken down and sold to manufacturers to make new products.

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## Curriculum Connections

**Arts Education 8: CP8.10** Create visual art works that express student perspectives on social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability).

**Arts Education 9: CP9.10** Create visual art works to express perspectives and raise awareness about a topic of concern to youth. **CP9.11** Select and use appropriate forms, technologies, images, and art-making processes to convey ideas about a topic of concern to youth. **CR9.2** Investigate and identify ways that today's arts expressions can inspire change.

**Health Science 20: HS20-SDS1** Create and carry out a plan to explore one or more topics of personal interest relevant to Health Science 20.