

Save Organic Scraps Program Overview

The recent research conducted by the State Education and Environment Roundtable substantiates the extraordinary importance of using the environment as a context for learning. The Roundtable's report, Closing the Achievement Gap, provides convincing evidence that learning in the environment has a profound effect on academic achievement as measured by standardized tests. Math, science, reading, and social studies scores are all advanced when students learn under these conditions.

This same study convincingly showed that the context of the environment engages the broadest range of student learning styles. Working together, the students who apply their learning to a local project strengthen their collaborative and communication skills. More focused on task, they quite frankly find learning to be more exciting and purposeful and stay in school to be a part of it.

Furthermore, teachers are reinvigorated and their commitment to instruction is strengthened when participating in real-world instruction.¹

The **Save Organic Scraps (S.O.S.)** elementary curriculum tackles the core themes of environmental education through a variety of engaging lessons. Each lesson is aligned with specific Essential Academic Learning Requirements, with a contextual focus on science and social studies. Additionally, The Save Organic Scraps Program support both the Foss and Science and Technology for Children (STC) curriculums to provide teachers with ready to use enrichment activities. The curriculum is presented in two parts: **“Connections from the Cafeteria to the Classroom”** and **“The 4 R’s Everyday.”**

In **“Connections from the Cafeteria to the Classroom”** students will learn how to define solid waste and use properties to identify, describe and categorize materials. Students will also learn the 4 ways that waste has been handled through history and how to recognize the components, structures and organizations of the systems that have developed. Student will then identify why solid waste is important as an issue in society (describe the patterns that humans make on places and regions), and learned how their interaction in the Save Organic Scraps Program directly impacts the environment.

“The 4 R’s Everyday” lessons focus on placing our physical world in social context through exploration of solid waste management and culture. These lesson plans are designed to challenge students to find patterns, think cognitively, ask questions, and describe systems in the natural world. Ideally students will begin to identify specific problems and apply their knowledge of the 4 R’s in each of the environmental themes.

In **“The 4 R’s Everyday”** students will investigate cause and effect in systems over time; and learn that the investigative process leads to new questions about a system. Students

¹ *Environmental Education Guidelines for Washington Schools, July 2000, pg. iv*



will understand that systems underlay and drive issues. Students will describe systems and their interrelated themes. Students will use investigations to solve real problems in the community.

The concepts in the curricula sets are directly connected to the **Save Organic Scraps Program**, which students participate in every school day in the cafeteria.

The **Save Organic Scraps** lesson plans provide educators with the tools for environmental and recycling education. This program will teach students how the choices they make at school regarding recycling and composting have both global and local effects on *'their backyard.'* The program as a whole will emphasize solving problems of human adaptation to the environment.² Teaching students the importance of keeping our environment healthy will stay with them for generations and translate to sustainable future.

This information and the related activities are intended to provide all students and teachers with a basic understanding and vocabulary of waste management and the role the 4 R's (reduce, reuse, recycle and rot) play in the environment and sustainability. The information may be adapted to suit your individual classroom.

Each lesson is approximately 30-45 minutes. The lessons cover the following concepts:

- 1) Identify solid waste as an environmental, economic and social issue.
 - a) Define solid waste
 - b) Learn the 4 ways waste has been handled in history
 - c) Understand role of solid waste is in the ecosystem and why proper waste management is important
- 2) Understand the *current* impact of waste management on the environment.
 - a) Understand basic landfill archeology
 - b) Learn about biodegradation

² There have been a series of legal decisions made by the Washington State Legislature and the Washington State Board of Education that have influenced the teaching of environmental education in Washington. Inasmuch as some of these laws have replaced others, the following, found in the *Common School Manual 2000*, provides the current status of legal authority.

RCW 28A.230.020 Common school curriculum-Fundamentals in conduct. All common schools shall give instruction in... science with special reference to the environment All teachers shall stress... the worth of kindness to all living creatures and the land.

WAC 180-50-115 Mandatory areas of study in the common school. (6) Pursuant to RCW 28A.230.020 instruction about conservation, natural resources, and the environment shall be provided at all grade levels in an interdisciplinary manner through science, the social studies, the humanities, and other appropriate areas with an emphasis on solving the problems of human adaptation to the environment.



- c) Make a direct connection to student involvement in the Save Organic Scraps (S.O.S.) Program (role/ responsibility/ impact or “footprint”)

Using these lessons alone or grouped into units will ensure that all students have a fundamental understanding of solid waste, their role in the Save Organic Scraps program, and the vocabulary and concepts to explore environmental issues further. Students will understand how systems affect issues and that the environment, economy and social systems are interrelated.³ Students will understand how systems affect issues, comprehend the interdependency of environmental, economic and social systems, and grasp fully their role in the system by exploring various related issues. A summary of the Environmental Education Guidelines for Washington⁴ and the Essential Academic Learning Requirements aligned with this program are included at the end of each lesson.

Before beginning the Save Organics Scraps (S.O.S.) curriculum please watch the CVTV clip about the S.O.S. Program. To link to the CVTV close-up on the S.O.S. program, go to [Food Recycling Program in Local Schools](#). If you are unfamiliar with the program please call Clark County Solid Waste (360) 397-6118 ext 4830 for more information.

Once you are ready to begin the education program **contact Clark County Solid Waste (360) 397-6118 ext 4830** for further information, available resources for check out (books, videos, models, etc.), and guest speakers and presentations. Clark County Solid Waste is your partner in education.

³ K-10 Grade Level Expectations for Science, Washington State’s Essential Academic Learning Requirements

⁴ Environmental Education Guidelines for Washington, July 2000; Dr. Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; Rosemary Fitton, Assistant Superintendent, Assessment, Research, and Curriculum; David Kennedy, Director Science/Title II; Tony Angell, Program Supervisor Environmental Education;

