

Food Waste & Compost Lesson Vocabulary

- **Carbon Dioxide** is a greenhouse gas that is created when organic materials such as leaves or food break down over time in a natural environment.
- **Compost** is a natural fertilizer that adds nutrients to plants and soil when added to your lawn or garden.
- **Composting** (verb: “to compost”) is the process of turning organic material into compost over time with the help of bugs and heat.
- **Decomposition** (verb: “to decompose”) is the process of organic materials, such as leaves, grass, plants, and food, breaking down naturally over time.
- **Energy** is power, such as electricity that lights your home, or heating and air conditioning that controls the temperature of your home. Energy needs a source such as coal, natural gas, oil, wind, water, or the sun.
- **Environment** is the outside, natural world that includes plants, animals, water, and land.
- **Fertilizer** is a substance that provides nutrients to plants to help them grow. It can be natural, like compost, or chemical-based.
- **Food Waste** is food that was not eaten and instead was thrown away in the trash or compost bin.
- **Greenhouse Gas** is a gas that traps heat in the planet’s atmosphere. There are several greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane.
- **Landfill** is the place where trash goes to be securely buried in the ground.
- **Methane** is a greenhouse gas that is much stronger than carbon dioxide in its ability to trap heat in the atmosphere.
- **Non-edible Food Waste** are the parts of food that we don’t usually eat, such as banana peels, coffee grounds, egg shells, and meat bones. We will always have this type of food waste, and composting this waste is better for the environment than throwing it away in the trash can.
- **Organic Material** is natural matter that makes up plants and living things. The organic material examples discussed in this lesson include items like leaves, grass, branches, plants, and food.
- **Preventative Food Waste** is food that should have been eaten and instead was wasted, such as moldy bread, expired milk, or uneaten leftovers from dinner.
- **Reduction** (verb: “to reduce”) is about “making less”, and in this case, it is about making less trash. For example, you can make less food waste, or reduce food waste, by only buying food that you know you will eat.
- **Resources** are all the things needed to make something happen. For example, you need water to grow food, equipment and fuel to harvest food, and a vehicle and fuel to transport food. These are all resources that are needed to grow the food and get it where it needs to be for eating.
- **Ton** is a unit of measure. One ton is equal to 2,000 pounds.
- **Transportation** is the movement of items from one place to another with the help of a vehicle such as a truck or plane.

Hazardous Material Lesson Vocabulary

- **Appliances** are items that help us perform tasks, and they are battery-powered, gas-powered, or plug into an outlet to operate. Examples include refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, washing machines, coffee makers, and alarm clocks. Some appliances are required to be recycled.
- **Corrosive** means that a substance can hurt or burn skin.
- **Electronics** are items that are made of electrical parts, and they are battery-powered or plug into an outlet to operate. Examples include cell phones, televisions, and computers.
- **Environment** is the outside, natural world that includes plants, animals, water, and land.
- **Explosive** means that a substance is unstable and can blow up.
- **Flammable** means that a substance can cause fire.
- **Hazardous, Danger, Caution, or Warning** are words that may be on the label of a product to let the user know to be careful and responsible when using the product.
- **Hazardous Material** is any item that is made of substances that may be harmful to people or the environment.
- **Landfill** is the place where trash goes to be securely buried in the ground.
- **Lead** (symbol: “Pb”) is a metal that is used in many common household items such as light bulbs and electronics, but can be toxic to humans if eaten or breathed in.
- **Mercury** (symbol: “Hg”) is a metal that is used in many common household items such as thermometers and light bulbs, but can be poisonous to humans if eaten or breathed in.
- **Oxidizer** means that a substance is harmful when mixed with oxygen.
- **Poisonous** means that a substance can cause severe sickness or death if not used correctly. A similar word to this is “toxic.”
- **Radioactive** means that a substance can release radiation.
- **Recycling** (verb: “to recycle”) is the process of breaking down a used material and making it into something new that can be used again. For example, a glass bottle can be melted down and made into a new glass container.
- **Toxic** means that a substance can cause severe sickness or death if not used correctly. A similar word to this is “poisonous.”

Landfill Lesson Vocabulary

- **Appliances** are items that help us perform tasks, and they are battery-powered, gas-powered, or plug into an outlet to operate. Examples include refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, washing machines, coffee makers, and alarm clocks. Some appliances are required to be recycled.
- **Compost** is a natural fertilizer that adds nutrients to plants and soil when added to your lawn or garden.
- **Electronics** are items that are made of electrical parts, and they are battery-powered or plug into an outlet to operate. Examples include cell phones, televisions, and computers.
- **Environment** is the outside, natural world that includes plants, animals, water, and land.
- **Fertilizer** is a substance that provides nutrients to plants to help them grow. It can be natural, like compost, or chemical-based.
- **Garbage** is another word for “trash.”
- **Greenhouse Gas** is a gas that traps heat in the planet’s atmosphere. There are several greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane.
- **Hazardous Material** is any item that is made of substances that may be harmful to people or the environment.
- **Incineration** (verb: “to incinerate”) is when garbage is burned.
- **Landfill** is the place where trash goes to be securely buried in the ground.
- **Landfill Cell** is a well-engineered hole in the ground where trash is buried. A landfill can have multiple cells over the lifespan of the landfill.
- **Landfill Gas** is gas created in the landfill cells filled with trash.
- **Leachate** is any liquid that touches trash. Another name is “garbage juice.”
- **Lead-acid Battery** is a battery used to power car engines and other products.
- **Methane** is a greenhouse gas that is much stronger than carbon dioxide in its ability to trap heat in the atmosphere.
- **Recyclable** means that an item can be recycled.
- **Recycling** (verb: “to recycle”) is the process of breaking down a used material and making it into something new that can be used again. For example, a glass bottle can be melted down and made into a new glass container.
- **Reuse** (verb: “to reuse”) is the act of using an item again and again. For example, a cloth towel can be used, washed, and used again.
- **Trash** is any item that you place in the trash can. The trash can is meant for items that cannot be recycled or reused. If there is no other way to get rid of it and no other way to use it, then it is thrown away. Examples of trash items are chip bags, candy wrappers, toothpaste tubes, and Styrofoam. Trash is another word for “waste” or “garbage.”
- **Waste** is another word for “trash.”
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant** is a place where water that is flushed down the drain or toilet goes to be cleaned before it is released back into the environment.

Materials Lesson Vocabulary

- **Aluminum** is a metal commonly used to make soda/pop cans and other products.
- **Appliances** are items that help us perform tasks, and they are battery-powered, gas-powered, or plug into an outlet to operate. Examples include refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, washing machines, coffee makers, and alarm clocks. Some appliances are required to be recycled.
- **Curbside Recycling** is a program in which residents can place certain recycling materials in a cart at the curb to be picked up. Iowa City also offers curbside trash and compost pickup.
- **Drop-off Location** is a place where certain items can be brought to be recycled or disposed of.
- **Electronics** are items that are made of electrical parts, and they are battery-powered or plug into an outlet to operate. Examples include cell phones, televisions, and computers.
- **Environment** is the outside, natural world that includes plants, animals, water, and land.
- **Hazardous Material** is any item that is made of substances that may be harmful to people or the environment.
- **Insulation** is a material placed in the walls and attics of homes and buildings to better control the inside temperature. Insulation helps to keep a home warm in winter and cool in summer.
- **Landfill** is the place where trash goes to be securely buried in the ground.
- **Lead** (symbol: “Pb”) is a metal that is used in many common household items such as light bulbs and electronics, but can be toxic to humans if eaten or breathed in.
- **Mercury** (symbol: “Hg”) is a metal that is used in many common household items such as thermometers and light bulbs, but can be poisonous to humans if eaten or breathed in.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** is gear worn to protect people from harmful chemicals or germs they do not want to be exposed to. Examples include goggles, masks, and gloves.
- **Recycling** (verb: “to recycle”) is the process of breaking down a used material and making it into something new that can be used again. For example, a glass bottle can be melted down and made into a new glass container.
- **Single Stream Recycling** is a program in which a mix of different materials can be collected together and do not need to be sorted separately. An example of a single stream program is one that collects plastic bottles, metal cans, cardboard, and paper all in one cart.
- **Sorting Facility** is a place where the single stream, mixed recycling materials go to be sorted into different categories. Metal is sorted with metal, paper is sorted with paper, and so on to then send the materials to recycling plants where materials are made into new things.
- **Styrofoam** is a plastic foam material used in a variety of different products including food to-go containers. Styrofoam cannot be recycled locally.
- **Trash** is any item that you place in the trash can. The trash can is meant for items that cannot be recycled or reused. If there is no other way to get rid of it and no other way to use it, then it is thrown away. Examples of trash items are chip bags, candy wrappers, toothpaste tubes, and Styrofoam. Trash is another word for “waste” or “garbage.”
- **Waste** is another word for “trash.”

Waste Reduction Lesson Vocabulary

- **Disposable** means that an item is used once and thrown away. Some “disposable” items can be recycled, like plastic water bottles. Some “disposable” items cannot be recycled, like Styrofoam containers.
- **Energy** is power, such as electricity that lights your home, or heating and air conditioning that controls the temperature of your home. Energy needs a source such as coal, natural gas, oil, wind, water, or the sun.
- **Environment** is the outside, natural world that includes plants, animals, water, and land.
- **Landfill** is the place where trash goes to be securely buried in the ground.
- **Natural Resources** are materials we use that come from nature such as wood from trees to make paper.
- **Recycling** (verb: “to recycle”) is the process of breaking down a used material and making it into something new that can be used again. For example, a glass bottle can be melted down and made into a new glass container.
- **Reduction** (verb: “to reduce”) is about “making less”, and in this case, it is about making less trash. For example, you can make less trash, or reduce trash, by reusing items.
- **Repair** (verb: “to repair”) is when a broken item is fixed so that it can be used again.
- **Reusable** means that an item is made to be used again and again.
- **Reuse** (verb: “to reuse”) is the act of using an item again and again. For example, a cloth towel can be used, washed, and used again.
- **Single-use** is used to describe items that are meant to be used only once and then thrown away. This is another word for “disposable.”
- **Trash** is any item that you place in the trash can. The trash can is meant for items that cannot be recycled or reused. If there is no other way to get rid of it and no other way to use it, then it is thrown away. Examples of trash items are chip bags, candy wrappers, toothpaste tubes, and Styrofoam. Trash is another word for “waste” or “garbage.”
- **Upcycling** (verb: “to upcycle”) is the process of taking an item that would have otherwise ended up in the trash or recycling bin and giving it a new use or purpose.
- **Waste** is another word for “trash.”

Water Lesson Vocabulary

- **Berm** is a built ridge or raised area. The long piles of wood chips built at the landfill are berms that help to clean stormwater.
- **Conservation** (verb: “to conserve”) is the act of saving water or reducing how much water you use with behavior changes, such as shortening your shower time.
- **Environment** is the outside, natural world that includes plants, animals, water, and land.
- **Flushable** means that an item can be flushed down the toilet. This is incorrectly used on disposable wipes packaging, as these wipes do not break down like toilet paper and should not be flushed.
- **Garbage** is another word for “trash.”
- **Green Roof or Wall** is a garden planted on a building roof or wall.
- **Groundwater** is water deep underground.
- **Hazardous Material** is any item that is made of substances that may be harmful to people or the environment.
- **Landfill** is the place where trash goes to be securely buried in the ground.
- **Leachate** is any liquid that touches trash. Another name is “garbage juice.”
- **Litter** is trash that was not placed in a trash can, and instead ends up in our neighborhoods and environment. Littering is illegal because it can harm animals, rivers, and the environment.
- **Mercury** (symbol: “Hg”) is a metal that is used in many common household items such as thermometers and light bulbs, but can be poisonous to humans if eaten or breathed in.
- **Pesticides** are chemicals used on plants or crops to prevent insect damage.
- **Pollution** is any substance in the environment that is damaging or harmful to the environment.
- **Rain Garden** is a garden where water can pool and soak into the ground during rain events. The plants, roots, and soil mix help to clean the water before it enters a nearby stream.
- **Stormwater** is rain that falls on solid ground (such as dirt, grass, or street).
- **Toxic** means that a substance can cause severe sickness or death if not used correctly. A similar word to this is “poisonous.”
- **Trash** is any item that you place in the trash can. The trash can is meant for items that cannot be recycled or reused. If there is no other way to get rid of it and no other way to use it, then it is thrown away. Examples of trash items are chip bags, candy wrappers, toothpaste tubes, and Styrofoam. Trash is another word for “waste” or “garbage.”
- **Waste** is another word for “trash.”
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant** is a place where water that is flushed down the drain or toilet goes to be cleaned before it is released back into the environment.
- **Water Quality** is a measure of how clean and healthy the water is.
- **Waterway** is a flowing body of water such as a river or stream.