

WASTE, THEN AND NOW

RATIONALE:	Americans are often pictured as very wasteful in the consumption of goods and materials. According to the EPA, the average American produces 4.6 pounds of trash per day. The complexity of our way of life contributes greatly to the amount of trash we produce. If we compare our way of life to a simpler one, such as that of the early Native American, we may be able to get some ideas on how to reduce both our consumption and our waste.
SUBJECT:	Social Studies, Home Economics
GRADES:	4-12
LEARNING OUTCOME:	Students will identify reasons why some Americans' way of living contributes to our country's massive trash problem. Students will also identify ways to revise their way of life so as to reduce the amount of waste they produce.
LEARNING PROCEDURE:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Food packaging contributes greatly to America's trash problem. (See Link to EPA resource site in "Source" area.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. List the trash produced through the consumption of foods (cans, boxes, plastic and glass bottles, paper products, plastic bags, and organic garbage.) b. Discuss: How did Native Americans obtain food? (Hunting, gathering, fishing, farming, animal husbandry.) c. Discuss: Did the Native Americans have a disposal problem? What did they do about it? d. Why were trash problems different from those now? e. Discuss: In what ways could we incorporate or modify Indian methods in order to produce smaller amounts of trash (grow our own food and animals, use biodegradable packaging, buy more unprocessed food.) 2. In our society, we use tools of all kinds from disposable razors to electric can openers. Once broken or worn, we often discard them items as trash. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What tools or appliances have you used and thrown away in your household? b. What is planned obsolescence? c. What tools did Native Americans use? (bones, bows and arrows, spears, knives, scrapers, bone awls or needles) d. What might we do the next time a tool or appliance is broken? (try to repair it, compare cost of repair or replacement cost) 3. When we outgrow clothing, it goes out of style, or it gets worn, we often throw it into the trash. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Why would Native Americans been unlikely to throw away old clothing? (Hard to obtain, was re sewn into something else, didn't have excess clothing) b. What might you do to reduce clothing waste? (Give outgrown clothing away, don't buy too much, repair worn clothing, buy durable clothing that is less susceptible to changes in style) 4. Can you think of items that Native Americans did not have which contribute to our trash problems? (Cars, tires, newspapers, paper of all kinds, electronics, plastic, etc.) Can you think of ways to reduce these kinds of trash?

	<p>5. Conclusion:</p> <p>a. Why do we produce more trash than the Native Americans did? (Complexity of our culture --- We don't make our own tools and clothing or directly obtain our own food. We use more manufactured and nonbiodegradable materials.)</p> <p>b. What reasons can you think of for reducing waste? (Reduce disposal costs, conserve energy and resources, improve the health of the environment)</p> <p>c. List some things you will do to reduce waste in your home.</p>
PRE & POST TEST QUESTIONS:	<p>What is the relationship between a standard of living and the generation of solid waste?</p> <p>What is planned obsolescence?</p>
SOURCE:	<p>https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-11/documents/2014_smmfactsheet_508.pdf</p>