

## Activity: Resource Recovery Hierarchy

(10 - 15 minutes)

### Topics:

- Waste
- Recycling
- Strategic Waste Management

### Teacher's Guide:

#### Activity Overview:

Students will examine the life cycle of everyday items and create a recovery hierarchy to identify alternatives to sending them to landfills when they become “waste”. They will also design efficient waste management systems that maximize the value recovered from our food and other waste.

#### Instructions

1. *Introduction:*
  - a. Display the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) food recovery hierarchy graphic, (Available in *Materials List*)
  - b. *Suggestion:* Review the EPA's [Sustainable Management of Food](#) page to prepare talking points for this activity.
2. *Class Discussion:*
  - a. Review the graphic with your students.
  - b. Allow them to brainstorm ideas about what the pyramid represents (Refer to *Guiding Questions* to facilitate discussion)
    - i. *Note:* The pyramid is an organizational tool for organizing waste management strategies to maximize the value of resources and minimize waste.
3. *Activity Instructions:*
  - a. Have students identify an item they use daily.
  - b. Example items with visuals are available in the slideshow.
    - i. Refer to *Materials List*
  - c. Have students build a resource recovery hierarchy using the worksheet linked below.

## Materials List

- [Student Work Sheet](#)
- [Instructor Slideshow](#)

## Supplemental Materials:

### Guiding Questions

- Where does your “waste” go after you throw it in a garbage can?
- Notice that composting is on the “least preferred” end of the pyramid instead of the “most preferred” side. Why do you think that is?
  
- What do you do with clothes that do not fit you anymore?
- What do you do with food left over on your plate after a meal?
- What do you do with your homework at the end of the school year?