

# CHARTING THE COURSE



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## Contact Information

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## Grades

K-5

## Objectives

Students will be able to: 1) identify opportunities to reduce waste in the classroom; and 2) evaluate their waste prevention solutions.

## Method

Students will brainstorm ways to reduce waste in the classroom and evaluate these ideas using a critical thinking chart.

## Materials

Writing materials, copies of "Charting the Course" critical thinking chart (provided)

## Vocabulary

Reduce, source reduction

## Procedure

1. Lead a discussion with the students on how the class might reduce waste in the classroom. Use the following questions to assist:
  - What are some ways we might reduce waste or trash in our classroom?
  - Would it be easy or hard to do these things?
  - What behaviors would be used to change some attitudes or habits? Would this be easy or hard?
  - Would we be able to do these things for free? If we needed money to reduce waste how would we get it?
2. Divide students into groups of 4. Assign the following roles to each group:
  - Checker:** checks on the group to be sure all members agree on a group answer and can fully explain it;
  - Recorder:** fills out the chart as members dictate;
  - Coach:** makes sure that everyone agrees with the instructions and that everyone participates;

Encourager: gives praise to each person.

3. Have the groups first brainstorm as many different ways as possible to reduce waste in the classroom. The recorder should write down a list. Explain to the class that when you are brainstorming, every answer is considered. This is not the time to evaluate each answer; that will come later.
4. After about 15 minutes of brainstorming, ask the groups to now select five answers on which they all agree.
5. Using the Critical Thinking Charts they have been given, students are to rate each of their solutions with the given questions and ratings scale. (See "Charting the Course," Critical Thinking Chart, included in session). After rating each solution, students total their results for each solution.
6. Lead a class discussion on the best solution with the highest rating from each small group. Create a master chart using the solutions that received the highest total from each group. List these in order, from highest rank to lowest. If any solutions have the same total, take a class vote to break the tie.
7. Ask the class if they agree or disagree with any of these solutions. Then ask:
  - Could we actually implement these five solutions? Why or why not?
  - As a class, are we prepared to do all five solutions, or should we begin with one or two?
  - Do we need approval and/or cooperation from others in this building to make these strategies work?
8. Select one or more of the waste reduction solutions to begin implementing immediately.