

WALK THE TALK



Contact Information

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Grades

5-12

Objectives

Students will be able to: 1) understand the attitudes that predominate people's thinking about handling litter; and 2) identify the seven sources of litter

Method

Students will look for and document places in their community where littering has occurred and attempt to determine its source.

Materials

Maps of the community for each pair of students (graph paper may be used), seven different colored markers or crayons per student or group, litter bags

Vocabulary

Biodegrade, litter

Procedure

1. Background: The Keep America Beautiful, Inc. System, developed as a result of three years of research, is a behavioral based systematic approach to changing attitudes and practices related to proper solid waste handling. This research identified three attitudes that predominate our thinking about litter.
2. Students should brainstorm and list reasons why they think people litter. Have a student recorder list them in front of the class. This can be done in small cooperative groups.
3. Ask the students to look at their lists and see if they can group any of their reasons into major categories.

4. The three main reasons why people feel it is ok to litter are:
 - Where they feel no sense of ownership.
 - Where someone else will clean up after them
 - Where trash has already accumulated.
5. The seven sources of litter that Keep America Beautiful research identified are:
 - Household refuse
 - Commercial refuse
 - Construction/demolition sites
 - Uncovered vehicles
 - Loading docks
 - Motorists
 - Pedestrians
6. Provide maps of your community or school grounds for each student or group of students. The students may also use graph paper to draw their own maps. Tell them that the class is going to take a "litter walk" around the school. Remember to focus on the behavior of littering, not the littered items. Noting what is littered helps to identify the source (who is littering).

Have the class assign each of the seven sources of litter (see above) a different color-code (i.e.: household refuse = green). Before going outside, ask the students to make color keys on the backs of their maps. The students are to color code on their maps where they found the litter. The colors will help them identify the possible sources.

IMPORTANT: Remember to take litterbags and clean up the litter along the way. (Consider giving a prize to the team that collected the most litter.)
7. For two more days at varying times, have the students take the walk. After a three-day period, have the students plot their findings on a master classroom map.

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(continued)

8. Lead a discussion with the class using the following questions as a springboard:
- Can you notice any trends or patterns? How do you know
 - What places did the class identify as major locations for littering?
 - Why do you think it happens there so much?
 - Where are some of the places that are not littered? Why or why not?
 - Will cleaning up litter after it's been thrown on the ground really solve the littering problem? Why or why not?
 - How could you use KAB's reasons why people litter and educate others about litter prevention?
 - What are some things we could do as a class to prevent littering from occurring in our community?