



Electronic Waste

Age: Grades 5-10

Lesson Plan One: Toxic Technology

Objective: To understand that just because we place items in a recycling bin doesn't mean they are being disposed of ethically and safely and that we have a responsibility to keep technology out of landfills.

Background: My friend Ruth Foster first introduced me to the subject of electronic waste or e-waste when I was 10. I watched a documentary on the subject and was surprised to discover not only that so much of our electronic waste is transported to other parts of the world but that dismantling it and recovering some of the metals and components of once useable technology was so dangerous, both to the people taking it apart and the environment where it ends up.

Activity: Watch the Story of Electronics(<http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-electronics/>). It's an animated video that's highly watchable and explains e-waste really well. Next, research what your community's options are for disposing of electronic waste. Now research whether or not those organizations are disposing of waste safely. Go on-line and see what you can find out about those businesses. Find a way to advertise or share information with others about ethical recyclers in your area. How can you dispose of other things that can't go into landfills like paint, styrofoam, batteries, car tires or even nail polish.

Challenge: Start an e-waste collection drive that could take place on Earth Day or during some other environmental event or activity in your neighbourhood or at your school. Advertise your collection drive and decide where you'll take what is donated to have it safely recycled. Keep a tally of what you collect and how much of each item you accumulate. Contact a local newspaper to have your e-waste drive shared with more people in your community and ask them to follow-up with your results.