

WASTE WORDS

A glossary of words connected to waste and waste management.

3Rs

The short way of saying 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle', perhaps the three most important words in waste management. In the booklet we have extended the concept with Refuse and Rethink!

Biodegradable waste

Waste that can break down or rot naturally when attacked by small insects, fungi and bacteria. Examples include food and garden waste. Other kinds of waste are called non-biodegradable.

Hazardous waste

Waste that is potentially harmful to humans, other living things and the environment. It needs to be carefully disposed of. Examples of hazardous waste are batteries and fridges and freezers

Landfill

Most waste is buried in large holes in the ground called landfill sites. Many of our current landfill sites are nearly full and we are rapidly running out of suitable land to create more.

Leachate

Liquid consisting of a mixture of rainwater and rotten organic materials which drains from a landfill site.

Litter

Waste (usually paper, plastics and glass) thrown around in the environment, rather than being placed in a proper bin or other waste facility. Not all waste is litter but all litter is waste.

Natural resources

Substances of use to humans that come either from our planet e.g. water, oil, ore.

Organic waste

Waste derived from plants and animals. A lot of the organic waste created consists of food but other sources are garden waste

Pollution

Putting poisonous or other harmful substances into the environment.

Raw materials

The basic resources used to make materials and products. For example, the raw material for plastic is oil

Recycling

Recycling means using things that have already been used to make new things. This can involve turning the old material into a new version of the same thing. Alternatively, materials can be recycled into something completely different.

Reduce

Reduce means avoiding creating waste in the first place and is an even better thing to do than reusing or recycling. Examples of waste reduction include buying items with less packaging and not replacing items until really necessary.

Resources

A general word for the things and materials that we obtain from the Earth. Resources can be classified in two ways. Renewable resources are those that can replace themselves over a short time scale for example water or sun energy. Non-renewable resources can either never be replaced or take a very long time to replace, for example coal and oil.

Reuse

Reusing means using something again, either for the same purpose or for something completely different. Examples include returning soda bottles for refilling and repairing electrical goods when they go wrong instead of throwing them away.

Rubbish = Trash = Waste

Anything that we think we no longer have a use for and so throw away. The three words in English have the same meaning.

Sustainable

This means finding ways to meet the needs of the present generation without damaging the environment or preventing future generations from being able to have enough resources

Toxic waste

Waste that is poisonous to humans or other living things.