



Rethinking Recycling

At a Glance:

Learn what it means to recycle right and why making changes to what and how you recycle can benefit our community and the environment. Help make a difference!

You Will Learn:

- 1) What it means for an item to be recycled.
- 2) How recycling helps the environment and protects natural resources.
- 3) How recycling the “Big 4” helps keep curbside recycling sustainable.

Instructions:

- 1) Read the “Rethinking Recycling: Background” on Page 2.
- 2) Watch [HOW TO RECYCLE RIGHT IN LANCASTER COUNTY](#). [3.25 minutes]
- 3) Complete the “Recycle Right: Word Search” on Page 3.

To Think About:

- 1) Why is it important to recycle?
- 2) What are the “Big 4” materials?
- 3) Why do we only place the “Big 4” in the recycling bin?

Feedback:

We would love to hear your feedback! Please help us improve this activity by taking a short, one minute survey ([click here](#)).

Learn More:

Visit recyclerrightlanaster.org to learn more.

Bonus:

Complete all four Recycle Right learning activities to receive a Recycle Right Rock Star certificate. [This is activity #1]

Rethinking Recycling: Background

What is Recycling?

Recycling is the process of collecting and processing used materials, which would otherwise be thrown away as trash, and turning them into new packaging and new products.

Why Should We Recycle?

When you transform something old into something new, it benefits the environment by **conserving natural resources** such as timber, water, and minerals and **saving energy** during the manufacturing process.

The Recycling Process:

Curbside recycling is a continuous cycle that requires three key steps:

- 1) **HOUSEHOLDS:** Consumers (YOU!) buy/use products, after which people separate these items into recyclables or trash. In Lancaster County, many communities offer curbside recycling, which means residents put all their recyclables into one bin and place it at the curb for collection by their collection hauler. This is called *single stream recycling*.
- 2) **RECYCLING PROCESSORS:** Recyclables are delivered to a *materials recovery facility* (MRF) where they are sorted and sold to manufacturers.
- 3) **MANUFACTURERS:** These buyers turn recycled commodities into new products, driven by consumer demand. Which means, the more consumers buy products made from recycled materials, the greater the chance we can increase recycling.

What is Recycling Contamination? Why Does it Matter?

When people place items in their recycling bin that do not belong, it is called **contamination**. Contamination also happens when recyclables are not properly cleaned before placed in the bin. These non-recyclable items are very hard (if not impossible) to remove and they contaminate the whole bin. When recycling stream is contaminated, it lowers the value of the materials and makes it more challenging to process and sell them. To reduce contamination in Lancaster County, we recycle four categories of materials: The Big 4. To learn more about the Big 4 and how you can **RECYCLE RIGHT**, visit recyclerightlancaster.org.



Rethinking Recycling: Word Search

V U H C A R D B O A R D U E D Z D Z S
H C C V H E B K G N V V D E Z P T X Z
A S V E C K D J F R C S T E E H S G W
A B Z S O Y J B T C N X U Q O B S G V
V L D B N W A Q U V T G U E U C F O I
C D Z S T Q F R J H N W U H J P W N Y
I E K R A N B G I O N Q U M D Q Z Y B
K T E S M S C L T N E Z J R K W H U A
E A D C I L K C E N I K P O E C T B G
J G D D N Q A Z C L O E S R A J E E Q
J U E O A O U Z Y P R P E S J A V N K
H R P Q T T L G H I B S F D J W O H G
A R R C I I R K N D L C E T R A S H M
M O N B O E P S A Y O M U Q R L S G U
T C C O N S E R V E D R E L C Y C E R
I J Q E W L W G F E Q E L U C Z Y X O
L F D Y T P M E P T V U T H V S R X Q
M H N L Y X J N X M B T T U Y F W Z E
Q O B Q W O M U Z P T Z O U L Q Q M S

FLUTED
NECK
EMPTY
JUGS
TRASH
CURBSIDE
CONSERVE

SHEET
RINSE
JARS
BOTTLE
LCSWMA
CORRUGATED

FLATTEN
CONTAMINATION
NECK
ENERGY
RECYCLE
CARDBOARD