

Composting

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do you collect kitchen scraps for composting?
2. Do you enjoy gardening?
3. Are you afraid of mice or rats?
4. Does your city have a good garbage program?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. scrap | a) a bothersome or annoying thing |
| ___ 2. give up | b) an extra part that has been cut off (such as grass) |
| ___ 3. pest | c) a person or animal that bothers you, usually an insect or rodent |
| ___ 4. nuisance | d) to increase the quality |
| ___ 5. rodent | e) wet |
| ___ 6. bury | f) a small piece of something that is not used or needed |
| ___ 7. moist | g) to have a good understanding of how to garden effectively |
| ___ 8. clipping | h) to stop trying, to quit |
| ___ 9. have a green thumb | i) to place deep underneath something, often soil, so that you cannot see easily |
| ___ 10. enrich | j) a type of mammal with special teeth for gnawing (mouse, rat, squirrel) |



Reading

COMPOSTING

Not just for gardeners

1. Did you know that composting reduces garbage by about one-third? You can reuse your kitchen **scraps** and your yard waste by having a compost pile. Many gardeners understand the importance of composting. They know that rich soil helps plants grow. But what if you don't **have a green thumb**?
2. Some people try composting but then **give up**. The compost pile either doesn't work or it attracts **pests**. Rats are a particular **nuisance**. These **rodents** look for food and shelter and love compost piles. There are a few tricks for keeping rats out and worms in. First, **bury** your food scraps in the middle of the pile. Second, never add meat or bones. Finally, make sure your compost is always **moist**. If your compost is smelly, make sure that it isn't too wet. Leaves and grass **clippings** will help you find the perfect balance.
3. Can you compost if you live in an apartment? In some cities, compost bins are part of the regular garbage pickup. Residents put out garbage, recycling, and a compost bin. The compost is used to **enrich** the soil that city workers use. If your city doesn't have this service, what can you do?

“The success of my garden is built on the compost of my failures.”

—Jimmy Turner, gardener

Comprehension

Read the statements below. If the statement is true based on the reading, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F and correct the information in your notebook.

- _____ 1. Half of a person's garbage can be composted.
- _____ 2. Soil that is enriched by compost is better for gardening.
- _____ 3. Rats and mice love compost piles.
- _____ 4. It is important to keep worms out of a compost pile.
- _____ 5. Leaves can make a compost pile too moist.

Vocabulary Review

Imagine these statements are answers to questions. Write the questions in your notebook, or practice them out loud with a partner.

1. I **gave up** on composting because I had too many rodents.
2. The **pests** in my compost bin are rats and raccoons.
3. **Bury** your food scraps in the middle of the compost pile.
4. Use grass **clippings** to create a balance of wet and dry materials in your compost.
5. The residential compost is used to **enrich** the soil in city gardens.

Research

Work with a small group or a partner. Complete this chart about composting. Choose one item from “Things I Want to Know” and do a little research. Consult the Internet, a mobile device, a blog expert, a library, or any other reference source. Share your findings with your class.

Things I Know	Things I Want to Know

Discussion

1. Should it be the law that you have to compost?
2. Will you begin composting after having this discussion? If you already compost, how can you help a friend learn to compost too?
3. Besides composting, what other ways can you cut down on trash in your home?
4. Is the environment currently one of your top ten priorities in life? Why or why not? Should it be?

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

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2. Some people try composting but then _____. The compost pile either doesn't work or it attracts _____. Rats are a particular nuisance. These rodents look for food and shelter and love compost piles. There are a few tricks for keeping rats out and worms in. First, _____ your food scraps in the middle of the pile. Second, never add meat or bones. Finally, make sure your compost is always moist. If your compost is smelly, make sure that it isn't too wet. Leaves and grass _____ will help you find the perfect balance.
3. Can you compost if you live in an apartment? In some cities, compost _____ are part of the regular garbage pickup. Residents put out garbage, recycling, and a compost bin. The compost is used to _____ the soil that city workers use. If your city doesn't have this service, what can you do?

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about and discuss composting and how and why to do it.

TEACHING TIPS:

See *Discussion Starters Teaching Guide* (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, compost, composting, environment, earth, gardening, environmentally friendly

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. f | 3. c | 5. j | 7. e | 9. g |
| 2. h | 4. a | 6. i | 8. b | 10. d |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 4. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. F – The reading says about one-third of a person’s garbage can be composted.
2. T
3. T
4. F – Worms are needed for compost piles. It is important to keep pests out and worms in.
5. F – Leaves are an example of a dry material that can balance out a compost pile.

Vocabulary Review

Answers will vary.

1. Why did you give up on composting?
2. What types of pests are invading your compost pile?
3. Where should I put the food scraps?
4. What can I do to get the perfect moisture balance in my compost bin?
5. What does the city do with the residential compost that is collected?

Research

Answers will vary.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Listening

1. composting, scraps
2. give up, pests, bury, clippings
3. bins, enrich

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Practise* (when used as a verb, *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.