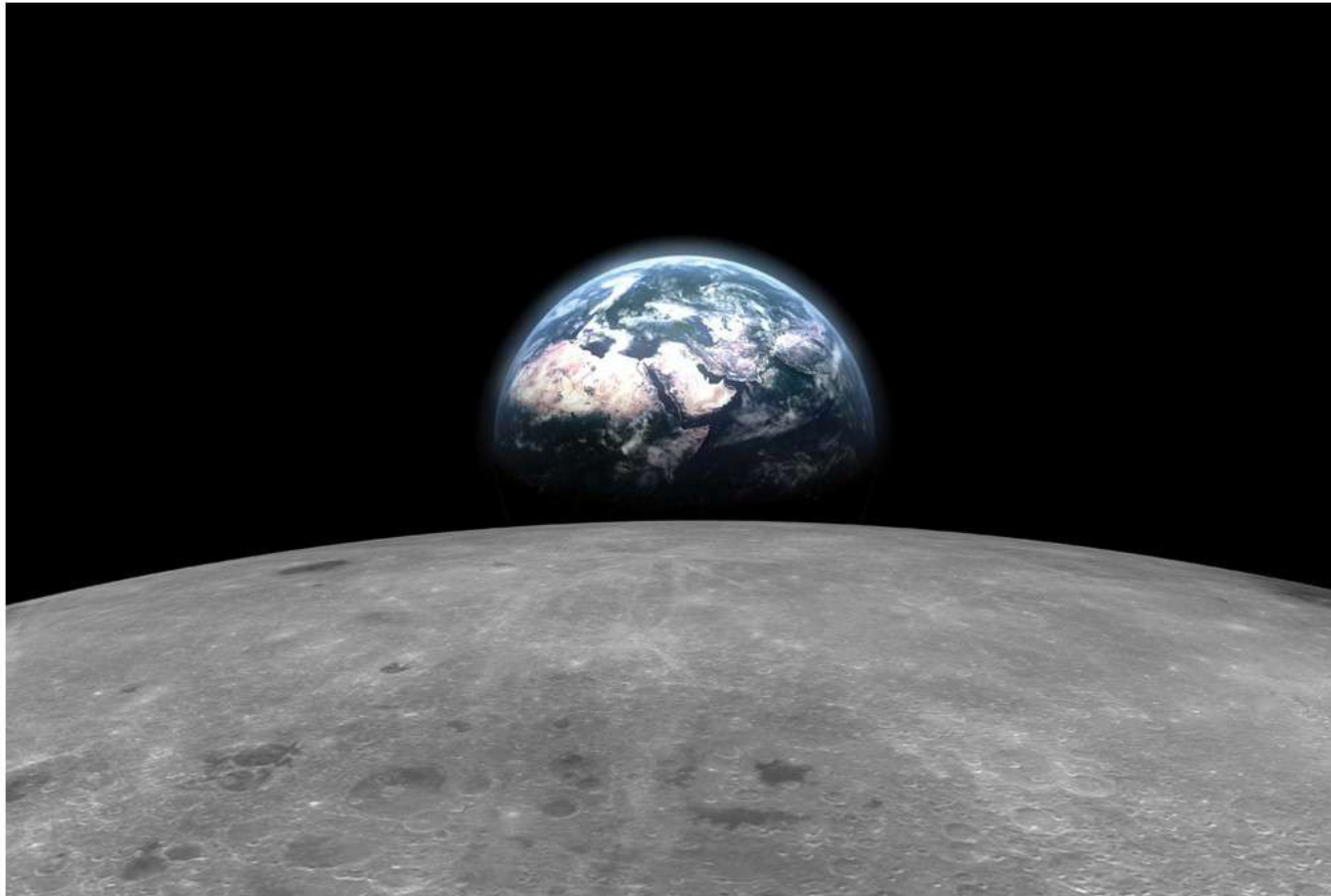


LESSON 2 - GARBAGE

GARBAGE

Hi, Good Old Earth here again. I thought I'd start by showing you a different view of me. This is what I look like from the moon. Pretty amazing, huh? I look really small from way up there. It's hard to believe that all of you people—along with your cities, farms, schools, stores, cars, and houses—fit on Earth. But you do!



GARBAGE

Today, I'm going to talk to you about something very important: garbage. That's right, stinky, ugly garbage. Some people also call it trash, waste, junk, or rubbish. Whatever you call it, it's all the same: stuff you've used and don't need anymore. Trash is probably not something you think about a lot, but you deal with it every day, and so do I. There's an awful lot of trash on me, and—not to make you feel bad or anything—all of that trash comes from people.



GARBAGE

Imagine that you go to a birthday party, and they give you some cake and ice cream. And let's say they serve it all on little paper plates, and they give you a paper napkin and a plastic spoon to eat with. You gobble up all the food, and then what do you do with the plate, napkin, and spoon? Do you push them under the sofa and forget about them? Do you open up the window and throw them in the backyard? I hope not!



GARBAGE

Instead, you put the napkin, plate, and spoon in the trash can. A trash can is sometimes called a garbage can or a wastebasket. Whatever you call it, it's the place where you throw away your trash.



GARBAGE

What is this man doing? He's taking out the trash. I'm guessing this trash can is in his kitchen. Where else do you have trash cans in your house? Some people have one in every room. Lots of people keep one in the bathroom. Is there one in your classroom? How about your school's cafeteria? Which one is bigger?

So, why is this man taking out the trash? Because the trash bag is full. But then what does he do with it? *Where do you think the trash goes next?*



GARBAGE

He'll probably take it outside to a bigger trash can, or maybe to a **dumpster**. *A dumpster is a large trash container that may be next to large buildings. Do you have a dumpster near where you live, or do you just have a large trash can outdoors?*

Once people have thrown their trash bags into a dumpster or an outdoor trash can, they might think, "Out of sight is out of mind." That means they stop thinking about the trash because they can't see it anymore. But I don't stop thinking about it, and I hope you won't either.



GARBAGE

About once a week, garbage collectors come along in a big garbage truck, pick up the trash can or dumpster, and dump its contents into the back of the truck. And then what do they do? Do they park the truck on the edge of town and leave it there? Do they launch the truck into outer space? Do they call up a magician and ask him to come and make the trash disappear? *Where do you think the garbage truck takes the trash?*



GARBAGE

In many places, they take it to the nearest landfill. Some people call the landfill a dump, because that's what you do: you dump your trash there. However, I—Good Old Earth—prefer to call it the landfill to remind people that all they're doing is burying their trash inside me. *A landfill is a place where garbage is dumped and buried.*

This might look like a lot of trash, but trust me when I say that what you see in this picture is just a teeny, tiny bit of all the trash people around the world make every single day!



GARBAGE

Once the piles of trash in the landfill are big enough, bulldozers move in and push dirt on top of the trash.

Why bury the trash? It goes back to that idea of “out of sight is out of mind.” If the trash is underground, people don’t have to see it, think about it, or smell it. Your town or neighborhood is a much safer, healthier place to live in because all that garbage is buried underground away from where you live and play. Trust me, though, just because the garbage is buried doesn’t mean it’s gone—at least not for a long, long time.



GARBAGE

After it's buried, some of the garbage starts to rot, or decompose. That means the trash breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces and becomes part of the soil underground.

Trash that was food usually decomposes pretty quickly. The paper plate from the birthday party will decompose, too, but it will take longer than food. It may take several years for the paper plate to decompose. What about the plastic spoon? Unfortunately, plastic doesn't rot like food and paper. So, that spoon may lie around for hundreds or even thousands of years before it ever breaks down and becomes part of the earth again.



GARBAGE

Every landfill gets filled up eventually and a new landfill is needed so people can dump their trash. This picture shows an old landfill that has been closed. Most of the garbage is buried and slowly decomposing underground.



GARBAGE

As you can see, plants can start to grow on the land again, and some animals may even move back in and make their homes there. But landfills can be dangerous. So much garbage underground means that there could be hazardous gases and chemicals in the area. *Hazardous means dangerous. Gases are in the air; we can't see them.* The bad gases and chemicals go back into the soil and air, and can even get into the water supply underground.

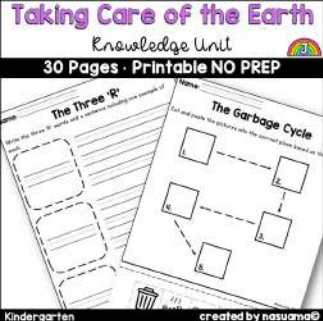


GARBAGE

This hurts the living things that live on Earth, breathe the air, and drink the water. Using this land again costs a lot of money and requires a lot of hard work and time. In most cases, land like this will remain a dangerous place for many, many years to come. The garbage you drop in the trash can today is out of sight, but it shouldn't be out of mind. *[Remind students about their original predictions about trash.]*

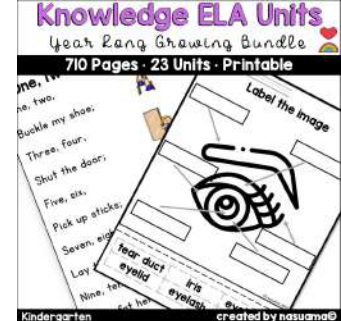
So, where does the garbage go? What does the amount of garbage that we throw away have to do with taking care of the earth?





TAKING CARE OF THE EARTH

BUNDLE



Name: _____

The Garbage Cycle

Cut and paste the pictures into the correct place based on the cycle.

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graph TD; 1[1.] --> 2[2.]; 2 --> 3[3.]; 3 --> 4[4.]; 4 --> 1;
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The diagram shows a cycle of four numbered boxes. Box 1 is at the top left, box 2 is at the top right, box 3 is at the bottom right, and box 4 is at the bottom left. Arrows connect them in a clockwise direction: 1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4, and 4 back to 1.

DO YOU NEED EXTRA ACTIVITIES?

