

# Carton Recycling Lesson Plan

Did you know that the average primary school in Manitoba uses 39,000 milk and juice cartons every year<sup>1</sup>? These lesson plans teach students the importance of carton recycling using standard-based math, science, and language arts worksheets developed by Carton Council Canada and Multi-Material Stewardship Manitoba. The activities will allow your students to learn how they can have a positive impact on the environment.

Carton recycling, like recycling of all packaging and printed paper, is well established across Manitoba homes and schools. We encourage you to share this resource with other teachers at your school.

Make as many copies as you need for educational purposes.

## Early Years

Activity 1 – grades 1-3

## Middle Years

Activity 2 - grades 5-6

## Thinking Concepts and Skills

- Help students discover how your school can make an important environmental impact by recycling cartons.
- Empower students to learn how they can improve the environment by recycling cartons at school and at home.
- Use math skills to calculate the positive impact of recycling.

<sup>1</sup> Assumes a population of 300 students and the school's participation in the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba's School Milk Program.

## What is a carton?

Cartons are a type of packaging for food and beverage products you can purchase at the store. They are easy to recognize and are available in two types—shelf-stable (also known as an aseptic carton) and refrigerated (also known as a gable top carton). Cartons are mainly made from paper in the form of paperboard, as well as thin layers of polyethylene (plastic). The shelf stable ones have also a thin layer of aluminum. All cartons are recyclable. Big or small, recycle them all!



## Students' Tasks to Demonstrate Learning

### Activate:

1. Ask the students if they can give examples of food and beverage products that come in cartons.
2. Talk about examples of which cartons they use at school (i.e. drink boxes) and those they use at home (e.g. milk carton, soup carton). Ask them what happens to the cartons once the product is consumed (does it get tossed in the garbage or in the recycling bin?). Based on their answers, inform the students that all cartons are recyclable. Just make sure they are empty before tossing them in the recycling bin.
3. Learn about the carton recycling process. Information can be found in the Additional Resources section.
4. Understand the connection to the environment and how recycling cartons can save trees and water.

### Acquire

1. Find out how many students are in your school.
2. Find out if your school offers a milk program.
3. Print off the activity sheets.

### Apply

Distribute the activity sheets and follow along.

### Additional Resources

<https://www.recyclecartons.ca/>  
<https://www.recyclecartons.ca/carton-recycling/#recycling-process>  
<http://simplyrecycleschools.ca>

## ACTIVITY 1

LET'S ADD IT UP! • GRADES 1-3

This activity will educate students about the need for carton recycling at school and at home while also developing their math skills. Ask students to keep a 5-day pictograph diary of their own milk and juice carton use. Once complete, you can compile a class pictograph. Discuss with the class about where they think all of these cartons go and what valuable resources (like trees and water) are used to make them. Brainstorm how students can make sure all the cartons consumed at school and at home are recycled and then ask students to draw a picture of this on the back of the sheet.

## ACTIVITY 2

DO THE MATH & MAKE A DIFFERENCE! • GRADES 5-6

This activity will guide students through the process of creating a public service announcement (PSA). It will be based on data they collect about how many resources can be conserved by recycling cartons at school.

To get started, help your classroom determine the number of students in your school and find out whether your school is enrolled in a milk program. They will use the information to complete the worksheet to find out how carton recycling saves paper, trees, water, and energy, as well as reducing landfill and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.



Organize students into small groups. Suggest that each group use the data to create a PSA to alert other students, teachers, and administrators about the benefits of recycling, how to recycle milk and juice cartons, and/or why recycling is important. Students can either record their PSA or perform it live for the class or the entire school.

### **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES FOR ALL GRADES**

- Have students count how many cartons they use each day and then extrapolate the information to figure out how many they use each week, month, and year.
- Create a classroom display or draw pictures showing all the recycled things that can be produced from a recycled carton.
- Have students create carton recycling labels for their blue boxes at home and school.
- Have students perform a visual waste audit to determine whether they are capturing all of the cartons and recyclable materials generated in their school.

