

# Sample High School Art Lesson Plan: EcoChallenge – Recycled Sculpture Project

Lesson Title:

Transforming Trash: Creating Art from Recycled Materials

Grade Level:

High School (Grades 9–12)

Lesson Duration:

2–3 class periods (can be extended for larger projects)

---

## Objectives

- Students will explore the relationship between art, sustainability, and environmental advocacy.
  - Students will design and construct a sculpture using only recycled or upcycled materials.
  - Students will reflect on the environmental impact of their material choices and communicate a message about sustainability through their artwork.
- 

## Materials Needed

- Clean recycled materials (plastic bottles, cardboard, cans, fabric scraps, etc.)
  - Hot glue guns, tape, scissors, wire, string
  - Paints, markers, or other decorative supplies (optional)
  - Sketchbooks or paper for planning
- 

## Lesson Activities

### 1. Introduction & Inspiration (Day 1)

- Begin with a discussion about the environmental impact of waste and the concept of upcycling in art.
- Show examples of professional and student artists who use recycled materials (e.g., Dale Chihuly-inspired plastic sculptures, community murals, or Earth Day art installations)<sup>467</sup>.
- Discuss how art can raise awareness about environmental issues and inspire change<sup>6</sup>.

## 2. Brainstorming & Planning

- Students brainstorm issues related to waste and sustainability that matter to them.
- Each student sketches a sculpture idea that communicates a message about sustainability or environmental stewardship.
- Peer feedback and refinement of concepts.

## 3. Construction (Days 2–3)

- Students gather and sort recycled materials.
- Construct sculptures, focusing on craftsmanship, creativity, and clear communication of their environmental message<sup>47</sup>.
- Encourage problem-solving and collaboration as needed.

## 4. Presentation & Reflection

- Students present their finished sculptures to the class, explaining their material choices and the message behind their work.
  - Class discussion: How can art influence people's attitudes and behaviors about the environment?
  - Written reflection: What did you learn about sustainability through this project? How might you change your own habits as a result?
- 

## Assessment Criteria

- Creativity and originality of the sculpture
  - Effective use of recycled/upcycled materials
  - Clarity of environmental message
  - Participation in discussion and reflection
- 

## Extensions & Variations

- Organize a school-wide exhibit or community showcase of student eco-art<sup>6</sup>.
  - Collaborate with local environmental organizations for additional impact.
  - Integrate digital storytelling by having students document their process and share on social media or school website.
-

This lesson plan not only fosters artistic skills but also empowers students to become advocates for sustainability, making their art a catalyst for environmental awareness and action

## **National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) – Visual Arts (Grades 9–12)**

### **Creating**

- **VA:Cr1.1.1a** – Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors.
- **VA:Cr2.1.1a** – Engage in making a work of art or design without having a preconceived plan.
- **VA:Cr2.3.1a** – Collaboratively develop a proposal for an installation, artwork, or space design that transforms the perception and experience of a particular place.

### **Presenting**

- **VA:Pr4.1.1a** – Analyze, select, and curate artifacts and artworks for presentation and preservation.
- **VA:Pr6.1.1a** – Analyze and describe the impact that an exhibition or collection has on personal awareness of social, cultural, or political beliefs and understandings.

### **Responding**

- **VA:Re7.1.1a** – Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.
- **VA:Re9.1.1a** – Establish relevant criteria in order to evaluate a work of art or collection of works.

### **Connecting**

- **VA:Cn10.1.1a** – Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas.

- **VA:Cn11.1.1a** – Describe how knowledge of culture, history, and life experiences influences responses to art.
- 

## **Common Core State Standards (CCSS) – English Language Arts (ELA-Literacy)**

### **Speaking and Listening**

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1** – Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4** – Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly and logically.

### **Writing**

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1** – Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence (as in the reflection).
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4** – Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### **Language**

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6** – Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
- 

## **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) – Environmental Science Connections**

While NGSS isn't required for art, your project beautifully integrates environmental science themes:

**HS-ESS3-4**

- *Evaluate or refine a technological solution that reduces impacts of human activities on natural systems.*  
→ Students reflect on material choices, environmental impact, and propose awareness through art.

## **HS-ETS1-2**

- *Design a solution to a complex real-world problem by breaking it down into smaller, more manageable problems.*  
→ This applies to the design and construction phase, where students use creative problem-solving with recycled materials.