

Should Three Rs Become Ten?

For decades we have been teaching children (and adults) to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. These three words, together, have become so commonplace, that I'm sure almost any child in Canada can recite the Three-R mantra. Many even understand that the "Three Rs" are a hierarchy, with "Reduce" at the top.

Recently, however, I'd been hearing talk of five Rs rather than three. This caused me to do a little digging and what I found was a list of ten great words to consider when we make daily decisions that impact our environment. Here they are for you to contemplate, to discuss, and to order as you like.

Reduce the amount of stuff that we buy. The less we buy, the less we impact our planet.

Reuse. Choose to purchase well-made, durable goods that can be used more than once, rather than disposable items.

Recycle plastic, metal, paper, glass, batteries, and anything else that can be recycled. Take time to learn what can be recycled and what cannot.

Refuse to accept over-packaging. Leave packaging in the store whenever possible. Write letters to manufacturers who over-package their goods. Tell them that they will save money and have happier customers if they reduce their packaging.

Repurpose things that can no longer be used in their current form. Turn something old into something new and different. Broken pottery makes great mosaic tiles!

Rethink the way we manufacture things. Make manufacturing a "cradle to cradle" cycle rather than "cradle to grave". Consider "biomimicry" in manufacturing. Rethink the way we live, the way we grow our food, the way we move from place to place.

Renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, can be purchased locally and installed now.

Repair items that are broken rather than throwing them out. Mend something.

Replenish. Put back what we take. Make sure that water is returned to the environment as clean as it was when it was taken. Replant.

Respect the wonderful planet on which we live. Recognize that most of the resources on Earth are finite and understand that future generations also need to live here.

How many of these words **RRR**esonate with you? Can you and your students come up with even more?