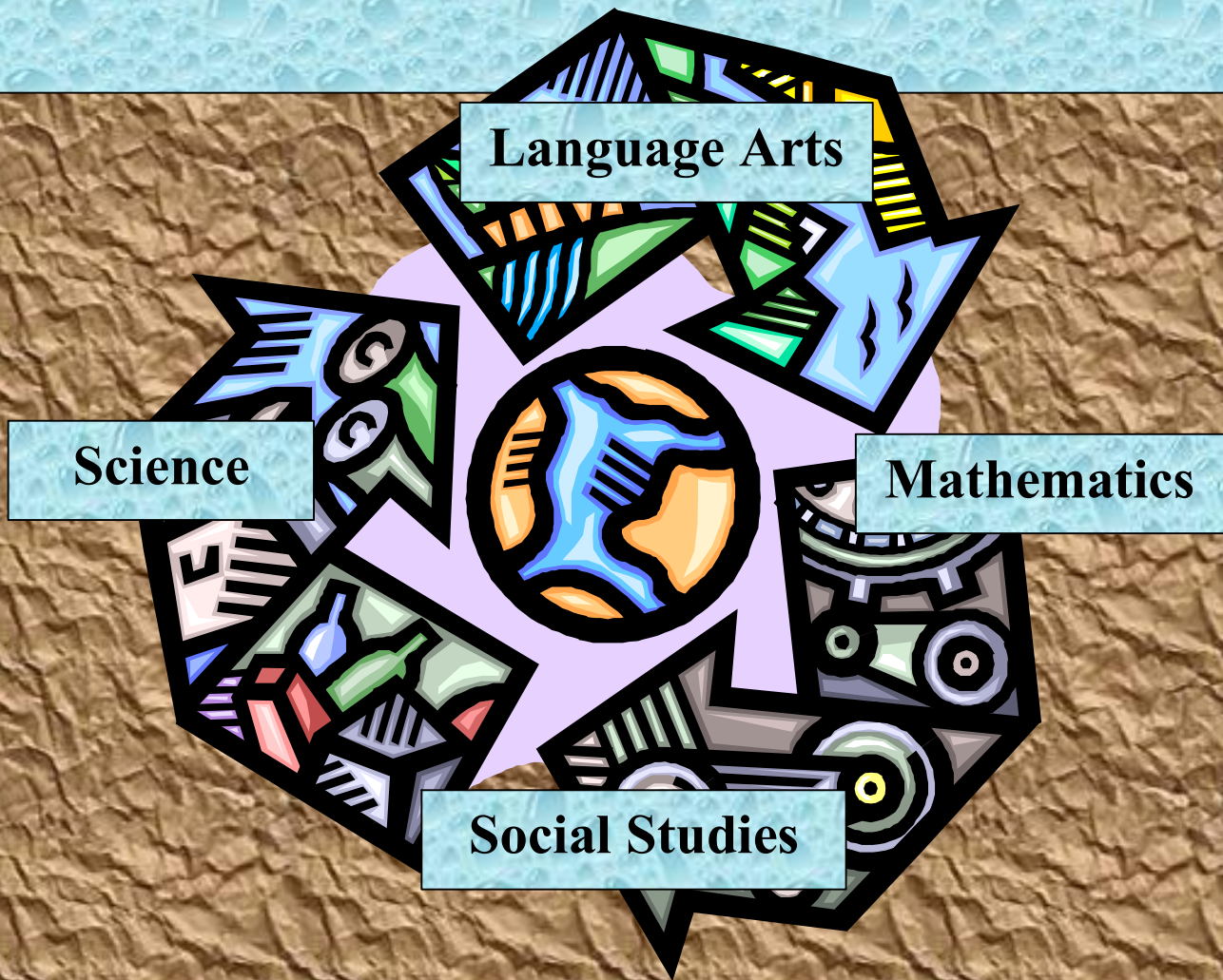


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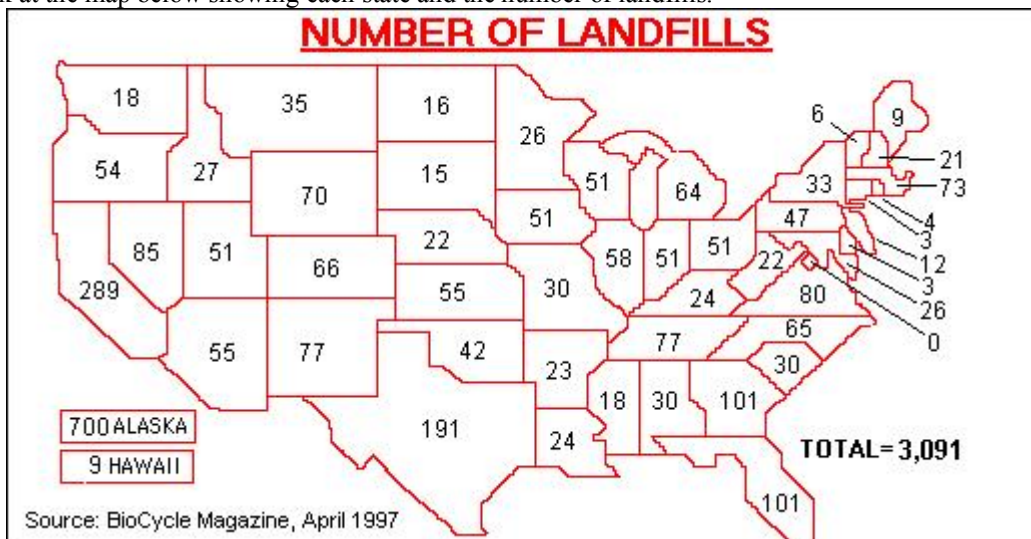
A Thematic Unit about Trash

By Nancy L. Wilkinson



Garbology Social Studies Activities Other Social Studies Activities

- 1) Looking at the trash heaps of ancient cultures. What did they throw away? What can their garbage tell us about their culture?
- 2) What would an archeologist a 1000 years from now say about our garbage?
- 3) Look at the map below showing each state and the number of landfills:



- Color-code the map to show the different landfills. Create another map of the United States showing population. How do the two maps compare? Do you see any potential problems?
- (This map can be found at

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/muncpl/factbook/internet/mswf/states.htm#top>)

- 4) Through the Internet site, www.epa.gov find the data on solid wastes about your state. This data can be found in the fact book. Compare the data with a state that is far away (for example, the east coast and the west coast.) How does it differ? What might this tell you about the culture of that state?
- 5) What is the budget for the Office of Solid Waste? <http://www.epa.gov/osw/> The EPA Office of Waste Management has for its goal for 2003:

"Better Waste Management, Restoration of Contaminated Waste Sites, and Emergency Response. —To ensure that America's waste will be stored, treated, and disposed of in ways that prevent harm to people and the environment, EPA will research ways to reduce uncertainties associated with ground-water/soil sampling and analysis, to develop methods and models of contaminant transport, and to reduce the time and cost associated with site characterization and the site remediation activities that it guides. Field analytical methods for characterizing soils are also intended to provide cheaper and more timely analyses and to reduce the uncertainty of site characterization"

- 6) Research the budget for the federal government. This information can be found at <http://w3.access.gpo.gov/usbudget>. What is the budget amount for the EPA's Office of Waste Management? (The 2003 budget has been reduced to 15 million down from 2002 estimated 36 million and 2001 30 million.) How much must each adult American pay to have this department control our solid wastes? Why do you think the budget was so drastically reduced? If you were to raise the amount, from where would you take the money? Use the Internet site <http://www.kowaldesign.com/budget/> to create a new federal budget.

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- 7) Look at the federal laws for landfills. They can be found at http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/cfrhtml/00/Title_40/40cfr258_00.html. What does each law mean? Which sections would you change?

