



EduTrend Contents

W4C · CRAFTS AND HANDMADE ARTS · HIGH SCHOOL

Sustainable Craft Design

Design a crafted product from reclaimed materials

Ages 15–18

Level: Advanced

75 minutes

Individual and small
groups

Activity 05

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 05 · AT A GLANCE

Sustainable Craft Design

Students explore how craft and sustainability connect, analyse a product's life cycle and apply the 6 Rs. They write a brief and specification, sketch ideas, and prototype a useful crafted item from reclaimed wood, textiles or card, then evaluate it against the specification.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- analyse a product's environmental impact across its life cycle;
- apply the 6 Rs to design decisions;
- write a brief and specification;
- prototype and evaluate a crafted product.

KEY WORDS

sustainability · life cycle · upcycling
· 6 Rs · design brief · specification ·
prototype · craftsmanship

CURRICULUM LINKS

Art and design and design
technology: materials and making.
Geography: resources and waste.
Business: craft enterprise.

1

EXPLORE

Look and handle

2

IMAGINE

Generate ideas

3

PLAN

Sketch and
measure

4

MAKE

Practise the
technique

5

REFLECT

Check and critique

6

REFINE

Finish and share

Materials (per group)

- Reclaimed materials: offcuts of wood, fabric, card, jars, packaging
- Hand tools appropriate to materials: saws, drills, needles, craft knives with mats
- Glue, fixings, sandpaper
- Sketchbooks and specification templates
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Collect clean reclaimed materials.
- Check tools and safety equipment.
- Prepare a product for life cycle analysis.
- Show examples of upcycled craft.

SAFETY

Use tools only after a demonstration. Clamp work; wear eye protection when sawing or drilling. Check materials are clean.

ACTIVITY 05 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Push students past decoration: the best upcycled products solve a real problem well.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Hook	Show an everyday product and trace its journey from raw material to landfill.	<i>"Where is its biggest impact?"</i>
10–25 min Analyse	Groups map a life cycle and apply the 6 Rs.	<i>"Which R would help most?"</i>
25–35 min Brief	Students write a brief and a specification for a useful product.	<i>"Who is it for and what must it do?"</i>
35–65 min Prototype	Students sketch ideas and prototype from reclaimed materials.	<i>"Does it meet the specification?"</i>
65–75 min Evaluate	Test and present, evaluating against the specification.	<i>"What would you change for a final version?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Design and prototype a useful crafted product from reclaimed materials, and justify its sustainability using the 6 Rs and a life cycle view.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The craft in brief

A product's life cycle runs from raw material extraction through manufacture, transport and use to disposal. Designers can reduce impact at each stage. The 6 Rs used in design education are reduce, reuse, recycle, rethink, refuse and repair. Upcycling turns waste into products of higher value.

Craft traditions often valued repair and reuse long before modern sustainability debates, such as the Japanese practice of kintsugi, mending broken pottery with lacquer and gold. A specification lists measurable requirements, so a prototype can be tested and evaluated objectively.

Common ideas to listen for

- "Recycling is always the best option." Reducing and reusing usually save more.
- "Natural materials are always sustainable." Impact depends on sourcing, transport and lifespan.
- "Upcycled products can be rough." Craftsmanship and durability matter for sustainability too.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use a guided brief and a single material such as card or fabric.

Stretch

Estimate material savings and write a short product pitch for a craft market.

WORKSHEET 1

Life cycle map

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Map a product’s life cycle.

Life cycle

Stage	Impact	Improvement (which R?)
Materials		
Manufacture		
Transport		
Use		
Disposal		

WORKSHEET 2

Brief and specification

Define your product.

Design brief

Specification points

WORKSHEET 3

Evaluation

Evaluate your prototype.

Specification points met and not met

Sustainability justification

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Analyses life cycle	Writes a clear specification	Evaluates against criteria

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Sustainable Craft Design is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C Crafts and Handmade Arts programme (high school, level: advanced). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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