



Generation Green Schools

CIRCULAR ECONOMY TOOLKIT

What's the problem with waste?

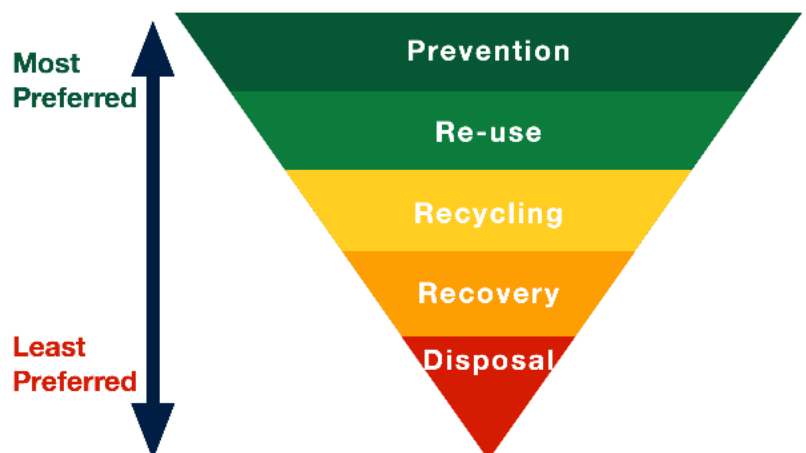
Every day, we create waste — from food scraps to plastic wrappers. Northern Ireland alone produces 7.7 million tonnes of waste each year — that's like 1.3 million elephants! Most of it ends up in landfill, pollutes our planet, and contributes to climate change.

Types of waste

ORGANIC WASTE (comes from living things)	INORGANIC WASTE (doesn't break down naturally)
- Food scraps (banana peels, leftovers) - Paper and cardboard - Organic waste can rot or break down naturally with the help of tiny bugs and bacteria – this releases a greenhouse gas called methane	- Plastic (bottles, wrappers) - Metal (cans, foil) - Glass (jars, windows) - Electronics (phones, TVs) - Synthetic materials (rubber, polyester)

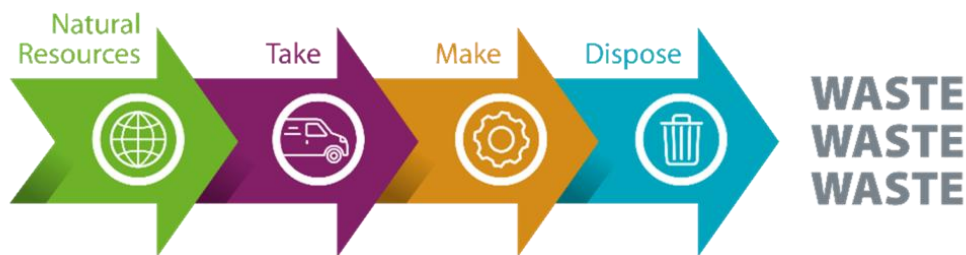
Waste hierarchy

- Inorganic waste sticks around for hundreds of years and pollutes land and oceans
- The waste hierarchy: ranking waste management options from most to least environmentally friendly
- Most products we use are thrown away after one use — this is called a **linear economy**





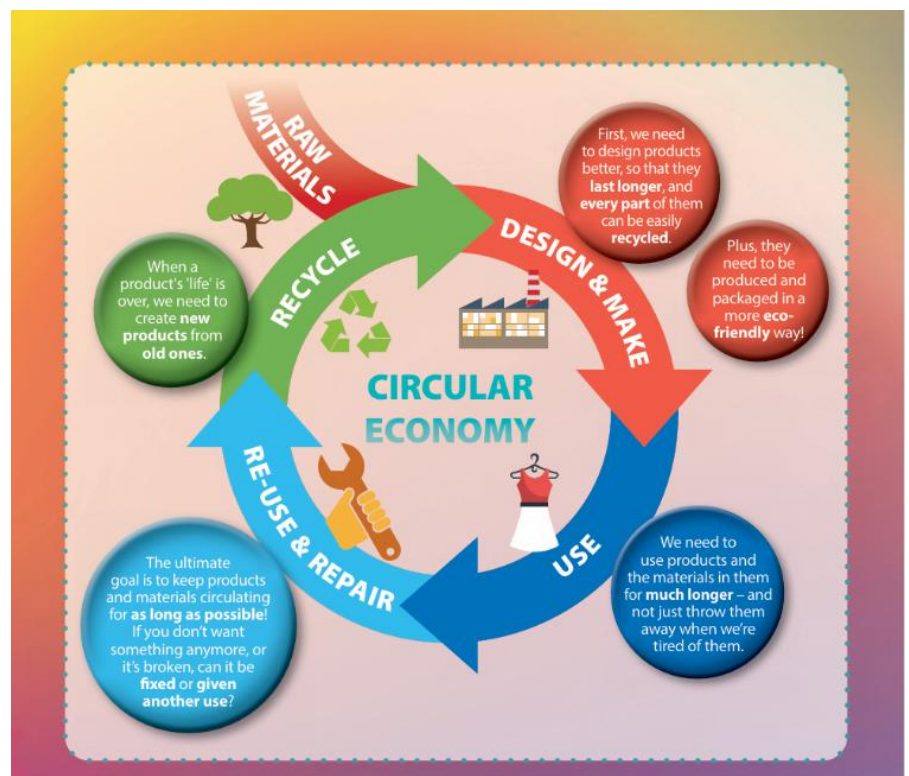
Linear economy



Circular Economy: A Smarter Way

Examples of Circular Economy:

- **Designing better products** that last longer and are easier to recycle
- **Reusing and repairing** things instead of throwing them away
- **Recycling** materials into new products
- **Reducing waste** and protecting nature



Real-Life Examples

 **Plastic Bags:** Now we pay for them — this encourages reuse

 **Fast Fashion:** Buy less, swap clothes, donate, repair, recycle

 **Food Waste:** Plan meals, eat leftovers, compost, use apps like Too Good To Go

 **Wonky Fruit:** Brands like Oddbox and DASH use “ugly” fruit to fight waste

Why It's Cool

- Helps fight climate change 🌱
- Saves money 💰
- Protects animals and nature 🐾
- Makes you part of the solution 💪