ESL BRAINS

From trash to treasure

[You can do this vocabulary exercise to prepare students for the discussion in the lesson. Ask them to look at the word cloud below and find:

a) tools people use to create or repair things: *scissors, nails, brush*

b) types of materials: *fabric, wood, paper, ceramic, glass, metal*

c) words connected to making something by hand: *DIY, handmade*

d) actions people do when they don't need/want something anymore: *throw away, give away, donate, recycle, repurpose*

e) words to describe objects people usually throw away: *old, useless, broken*]

1. **Make a list of five things that people throw away most often. Then, say what they can do with these things instead.**

   EXAMPLES: *People often throw away electronics. They can try to repair them instead. People often throw away empty milk cartons. Instead of this, they can clean, dry and recycle them.*

2. **Read the points and say what 'upcycling' is.**

   [You can also ask students if any of the points below are about them.]

   You should definitely try upcycling if…

   - you are a creative person.
   - you like creating handmade things.
   - you dislike throwing away things.
   - you would like to save money on buying new things.
   - you care about the environment.

3. **Watch a video [https://youtu.be/rd7qP9FdTaI] and check your ideas about upcycling.**

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Upcycling is the process of turning unwanted materials or products into new items by repurposing them and giving them a new life and value.

4. Choose two comments about the video that you agree with the most. Explain your choice.

- It's really inspiring to try upcycling and make a lot of unique cool things.
- The owner just doesn't want to spend money on new things.
- It looks great on Instagram but I think it's old and untidy.
- It shows that the owner cares about his place and every detail of it.
- He's doing a good job reducing waste and being more eco-friendly.
- He collects too many things and I think it's messy.

5. Discuss the questions.

- Which of the upcycled objects in the video did you like?
- What is the difference between upcycling and recycling? Recycling is turning waste into new products, while upcycling is giving waste a new life by creatively transforming it into new items.
- Have you ever tried upcycling? How can you benefit from it?
- Is upcycling a form of art? Do you need to be creative to do it?
- Have you ever done a DIY project?
- What can be difficult about creating things by hand?

6. Look at some examples of how businesses upcycle and discuss the questions below.

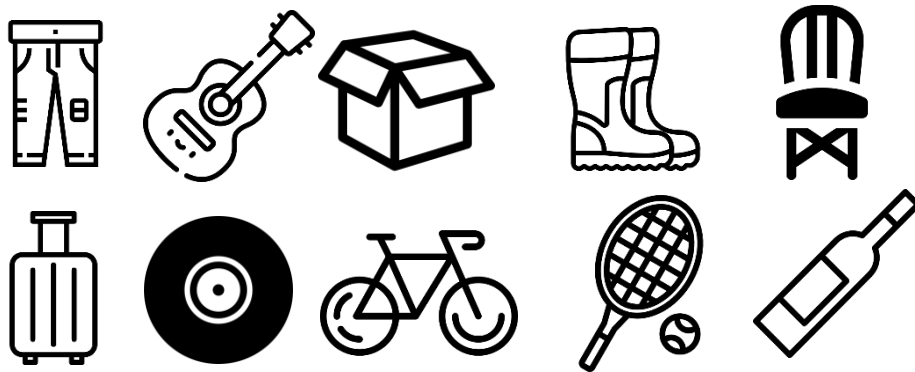|	
A company creates swimwear from unsold items from old collections.	A music band performs using upcycled kitchen objects.
A company repurposes old wood into stylish furniture.	A company creates bags, wallets and other accessories from old billboards.

- Which idea do you think is the most creative?
- Would you buy any of these products or go to the band's concert?
- Why do companies make upcycled products? Why do people want to buy them?
- Do you know any other companies that upcycle? How do they do it?

7. **Choose some of the objects below and brainstorm ideas for how you can upcycle them. Think how you would do it and what you might need for it.**
   [You can ask students to do this activity in pairs or small groups. Ask them to come up with an idea for an upcycling project and discuss its implementation. Ask if their project can be turned into a successful business and how. Students can present their projects to the rest of the class.]

8. **Choose one of the thoughts and add more details.**

There is something special about handmade things…

Upcycling can be a great hobby…

I would like to build my own house…

Recycling and upcycling are really important for the environment…