

Primary

Recycle Right

... Recycling Relay

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify what is, and is not, recyclable in their local area;
2. Articulate why placing non-recyclable items in the recycling bin is problematic;
3. Know where to go for more information about recycling in their local area.

Background

Recycling through council kerbside collections is a simple and effective way to reduce our impact on our environment. However, when non-recyclable items are placed into recycling bins at home, recyclable material becomes contaminated. Contamination makes it difficult for the recycling facilities to process the material. Impacts of contamination include:

- Workers must sort through the material to take out contaminants (these are often dirty and dangerous materials such as nappies and car batteries).
- Plastic bags cause the recycling machinery to break down; this is dangerous for workers to fix.
- Recyclable material that is placed inside plastic bags cannot be processed and is sent to landfill.
- Batches of recyclable material can become unusable because of the contamination (eg. just 5g of drinking glass can spoil a tonne of recyclable glass; polystyrene contamination spoils recycled paper).
- Costs, both financial and environmental of recycling increase.

Introduction

In this lesson students will learn, in a fun and interactive way, what can and can't be recycled as they work in teams to see how quickly and accurately they can sort recyclable and non-recyclable items.

Duration

This activity will take approximately one hour.

Materials

- List of recyclable and non-recyclable items for kerbside collection in your local area (available at RecyclingNearYou.com.au)
- 4 tubs labeled "Recycling Bin"
- 4 tubs labeled "Rubbish Bin"
- 4 cardboard boxes (for mixed items)
- A mix of recyclable and non-recyclable items (all empty and clean) as listed on your local area list at RecyclingNearYou.com.au. You will need 4 examples of each item you choose to use.

Activity

1 Class survey

- a. Ask students to indicate, by a show of hands, who recycles in their home. What are some of the items they recycle?

2 Class research

- a. Draw two columns on the board. One headed 'recyclable' and one headed 'not recyclable'.



- b. As a class log on to RecyclingNearYou.com.au, enter your postcode and go to your local council page. Then click on 'Kerbside Recycling Collection' (at the top of the left menu). This will give you a list of what is acceptable for recycling in your local area and what is not.

If you can't do this as a class, print off this list before class and have it ready to talk through with the students.

- c. Copy these lists of recyclable and non-recyclable items onto the board (or into workbooks).

3 Class discussion

- a. What would happen if things from the non-recyclable list are put into the recycling bin? What problems would that cause?

See Background information above.

- b. Tell the class to look at the two lists carefully as they are about to play a game where they need to remember which things are recyclable in their local area and which aren't. When everyone is ready to play the game, erase the columns from the board (or ask children to put away their workbooks).

4 Playing the game: Recycling Relay

- a. Split the class into four groups. You will need four sets of materials (both recyclables and non-recyclables as listed above) mixed up and separated into four cardboard boxes, four "rubbish bins" and four "recycling bins".

- b. Line up the four groups side by side with the box of mixed recyclable and non-recyclable items next to the first person in the relay. Place a recycling and a rubbish bin opposite each group at whatever distance you prefer.
- c. When told to go, the first student in each group must take one of the items from the box, run to their set of bins, and place their item into the correct bin, before returning and tagging the next person in the team.
- d. This continues until all the items in their box have been sorted (this may require rotating through the group two or possibly three times depending on the number of students per group, and the number of items to be sorted).
- e. The winning team is the first to finish with all items in the correct bin.

5 Wrapping up

- a. Ask students to recall which items are recyclable and which aren't. If there are common or consistent mistakes, discuss these specific items as a class.
- b. Did students discover any items that they didn't realise could or couldn't go in their recycling bins?

Additional Activity

Students could prepare a chart to take home showing what can and cannot go in their recycling bin based on what they have learnt in class.



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