

## Summary of Activity

**Grade:** 4-6

**Time:** 1hr

**Theme:** Energy conservation

**Description:** Assemble a recycling board with examples of different types of recyclable materials.

## Ecoliteracy learning outcomes

Reduce the use of non-renewable items. Understand the importance of re-using and recycling materials at home and at school.

## Materials

- Examples of different types of recyclable materials
- In sufficient quantities for each of 4-5 groups:
  - Bristol board
  - Markers or pencil crayons
  - Scissors
  - Glue or tape
  - Items for model recycling board – see below

## Vocabulary

Landfill, recycling, paper, plastic, compost, symbol, organic, waste.

## Instructions

1. Begin with a plastic water bottle in your hand. Ask the class if they know what happens to things like the bottle that they throw in the garbage. To give an example, show the picture of the landfill. This is an example of a place where materials like the bottle end up. They don't just disappear – they take up space, and don't break down for decades, if not hundreds of years!
2. Ask the class if they know what happens when (the right) things get put into the compost and recycling bin. You can show the example of the plastic water bottle – these are often made of recycled plastic – and a picture of the compost. These are ways we can cut down on things that go into landfills.
3. Introduce the Three Rs (Reduce, Re-Use, Recycle) as a way of reducing the amount of pollution that is created by making new materials. Have the class break up into groups to discuss how they can reduce and reuse an object that you show them. Examples of objects could include a canned vegetable can, a juice box or even a piece of plastic jewelry.

**\*Note:** To help Recycle, it is important to know what can be recycled in your school or community. Some communities and schools ask that paper and plastic be sorted into different containers, while others promote a single-stream approach. It's best to know what your school's policy on recycling is before beginning this next task. This activity is created with a school that has a single-track recycling program with separate compost containers at school. However, it could be easily modified to suit a community where compost bins are available at home or the school only accepts certain types of materials for recycling.



## RECYCLING BOARD

Have examples of the following cleaned, so that students can touch them safely:

- A cardboard cereal box
- A 'soft' plastic container, such as a plastic Dasani or Aquafina water bottle
- A 'hard' plastic container, such as a Gatorade bottle
- A piece of Styrofoam
- A picture of a compostable item (banana peel, bread crust, etc)

4. On the board, create a "model" recycling board. Divide your model into "recyclable waste", "garbage" and "compost". You can also include the types of things students can use to identify each type of waste, including "organic" waste like peels and rinds, and different types of recyclables like paper and plastic.
5. Have students help you place each picture in the right category on the board. Ask them to explain how they know that this is where the item goes (what is it made of, what kind of symbol to look for, etc). Tell them they should bring an item from home the next day that can be recycled or thrown in the garbage.
6. The following day, in groups, have students divide up their materials by type. Hand out printed examples of compostable items. Next, have them divide their posters up like the model on the board.
7. For each section of the board, have students draw or paste an image of the type of bin that corresponds to each type of recyclable. For example, if compostables in your board go into a green bin, make sure that a picture of this bin is available for groups, or have them sketch the green bin that is in your room.
8. Discuss with students what a message for their board might say. Have groups discuss and then write their ideas on a board, so that all teams can use them. This should be something that catches the eye of the other students and encourages them to do their part to recycle.
9. Once boards are finished and decorated, have student groups head out to hang them up around the school.



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