

Rubbish or Recycling?

Foundation – Level 2

Teacher notes

This curriculum resource has been designed to support students in the City of Casey to understand what items are accepted in kerbside recycling.

Council collects hard plastics with numbers 1 to 5, clean paper and cardboard, glass bottles and jars, and aluminium and steel packaging for recycling (for a full list of acceptable and unacceptable items, [please refer to the website](#)).

These materials are taken to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) to be sorted, processed, and turned into new products. When incorrect items are placed in the recycling bin, this leads to contamination and can be a safety hazard for workers processing the recycling. It may also result in the entire truckload being diverted to landfill, which impacts our environment.

In this lesson, students identify and categorise items found at school or home based on their recyclability. Students are encouraged to engage in further conversations and activities at home to 'Recycle Right'.

Victorian Curriculum links

Science

- People use science in their daily lives ([VCSSU041](#))
- Earth's resources are used in a variety of ways ([VCSSU047](#))

English

- Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations using interaction skills, including listening, while others speak ([VCELY174](#))
- Engage in conversations and discussions, using active listening, showing interest, and contributing ideas, information and questions, taking turns and recognising the contributions of others ([VCELY210](#))
- Listen for specific purposes and information, including instructions, and extend students' own and others' ideas in discussions through initiating topics, making positive statements, and voicing disagreement in an appropriate manner ([VCELY244](#))

ResourceSmart Schools links

This activity relates to [ResourceSmart Schools](#) Waste Module actions B1.2, B1.3, B1.4 and C1.1.

Learning intentions

- Students will be able to recognise, describe and classify items based on their material type.
- Students will be able to understand what items can and cannot be recycled in the City of Casey.
- Students will be able to reflect upon recycling processes at school and at home.

Resources

- Access to an IWB/whiteboard
- Computer or tablet with internet access (for remote learning)
- Variety of clean recyclable items (e.g. hard plastic bottles/containers, metal lids, aluminium foil/packaging, paper, cardboard, glass jar) and non-recyclable items (e.g. soft plastic packaging, clothing, tetra pak/cartons, plastic caps, household rubbish, artificial food waste) **or** images of these items.
- Access to City of Casey recycling, general waste and food/garden waste bins **or** images of these bins.
- Coloured and grey lead pencils.
- 'Rubbish or Recycling Scavenger Hunt' and 'Rubbish or Recycling Sort' templates.

Differentiation

- **Support:** Establish small, teacher-led groups to provide direct assistance or organise mixed ability groups to enable peer support, use simplified images or hands-on materials, and modify questions to suit student ability.
- **Extension:** Encourage students to graph the items found at home or at school and write statements to explain their findings. Students may also like to create and share their own 'Recycle Right' campaign to educate their school community or household. This could be in the form of a story, poem, comic, poster or short animation.

Assessment

As students complete learning tasks, monitor their understanding, and provide feedback as required. Collect and annotate student work samples and note understanding through discussion and reflection questions.

Lesson structure

Warm up

- Group students and distribute a clean sample of recyclable material (e.g. paper, cardboard box, hard plastic, glass, aluminium, etc.) to each small group. If completing the task remotely, share an image of a recyclable material instead to each group.
- Ask students to examine their material and record what they see, hear, feel, and smell. If working remotely, ask students to describe what they think their material looks like, feels like, smells like, and sounds like.
- Come together as a class and share observations, similarities, and differences. Ask students whether they have seen any of these materials before and note examples of recyclable products or items on a class anchor chart/whiteboard. Explain to students that these materials

are very important and can be placed in the City of Casey's blue bin.

Mini lesson

- Introduce students to the three bins (recycling, general waste and food and garden waste) that the City of Casey provides. Ask students to think about what things they place in each bin and share their ideas with a partner. Discuss ideas as a whole class.
- Explicitly teach students that paper/cardboard, plastic containers and bottles, glass and metals can be collected in the blue recycling bin and that these materials can be turned into new products in a factory. This is called recycling.
- Explain that students will be going on a scavenger hunt to find different items in their classroom (or home) to figure out what is recyclable – and what is not.

Learning tasks

- Distribute scavenger hunt templates to small groups and explain that they will need to search for and either draw or photograph items to match the description. Students that struggle with fine motor skills can be supported to collect these items using the supporting images.
- Make it a game if you wish – whoever can find the most items or identify the items quickest is the winner.
- Once students have collected items, they will need to sort them into recyclable or non-recyclable and explain their choices. This may be completed with or without the 'Rubbish or Recycling Sort' template.
- If completing task remotely, students can upload their work to Seesaw (or another online platform).

Reflection

- As a group, come together to share items found in scavenger hunt and discuss whether they can be recycled or not. Update class anchor chart/whiteboard brainstorm listing what items are recyclable and what items are not during the conversation. Highlight tricky items that should not go in the rubbish (e.g. e-waste, food/garden waste) and changes to recycling (e.g. tetra pak/cartons and small plastic lids). It may help to physically sort the items (or item images) into the City of Casey bins (or bin images).
- Ask students to reflect upon their findings using the following questions:
Were there more recyclable or non-recyclable items?
Did you find any items that you were unsure about?
Which bin should the non-recyclable items go in?
Could the non-recyclable images be disposed of (or used) in another way?

Further learning

- Have students graph the items found at home or at school and write statements to explain their findings.
- Ask students to record and share their learning at an assembly or in the newsletter/bulletin.
- Invite students to create and share their own 'Recycle Right' campaign to educate their school community or household. This could be in the form of a story, poem, comic, poster or short animation.
- Follow up this learning task by [contacting the Waste Education Team](#) for a 'Recycle Right' incursion, Q&A session, staff, or parent workshop.