

Waste Sort

Teacher Notes

Primary (1-4)

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The Waste Sort activity raises awareness about the 'end of life' of products. It supports knowledge of the alternatives to landfill, including recycling and reusing. Students look at a range of common objects/materials and are asked to find two or three different ways of sorting them.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Waste Sort

Empty out the various waste items onto the table. Look through and explore different and similar characteristics of the various items. You need to decide on an approach to sorting these materials. How could you categorise them into different groups?

2. Discussion

1. Which way did you choose to sort your items? Why?
2. How can you include waste education in our curriculum?
3. How could we improve our waste systems at school to reduce our waste to landfill?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT

Formative

1. Participation in the Waste Sort activity
2. Participation in the Discussion questions above

BACKGROUND NOTES

By making thoughtful behaviour and consumer choices, we can reduce our waste to landfill. The 5Rs (Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) - also known as the waste hierarchy - provides a methodical approach to minimising waste to landfill. It prioritises the elimination of disposable waste items through consumer choice (Refuse), the repurposing of items (Reuse) and, where possible, recycling of items.

Victorians are great recyclers but there is still room for improvement. Our household rubbish bins still contain items that could have been recycled. According to the [Victorian Government's 'Get It Right on Bin Night' website](#), this equates to around 450,000 wheelie bins full of recycling ending up in landfill each week (of which Metropolitan Melbourne is responsible for 300,000 of these bins).

Waste education is vital. Understanding the types of waste materials we generate and the alternatives (guided by the 5Rs) can significantly inform habits that minimise waste to landfill.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

For this activity you will need a range of collected and cleaned waste materials for sorting. Below are some suggestions:

- Paper and cardboard
- Hard plastic (plastic bottles, yoghurt and milk containers, old shampoo bottles, etc.)
- Soft plastics (chip packets, glad wrap, etc.)
- Aluminium foil and cans
- Steel cans
- Glass (or pictures of glass if safer)
- Electronic items (old phone cords, keyboards, batteries, etc.)
- Cloth (old clothing, etc.)
- Think broadly too about things we throw out – stationary, grass cuttings, jewellery, make up, etc.

ACCESS THIS ACTIVITY

Visit the **CERES School of Nature and Climate** website to download the activity - <https://sustainability.ceres.org.au/education-resources/curriculum-activities/>

Curriculum and RSS Links

KEY CONCEPTS

5Rs (Refuse, Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) Plastics, Landfill

KEY LEARNING INTENTIONS

1. Understand ways to minimise waste through the application of the 5Rs
2. Identify materials that can be reused or recycled into new products
3. Sort and categorise materials on the basis of observable properties such as texture and flexibility

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM

Science

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| F - 2 Everyday materials can be physically changed or combined with other materials in a variety of ways for particular purposes (VCSSU045) Objects are made of materials that have observable properties (VCSSU044) | 3 - 4 Science knowledge helps people to understand the effects of their actions (VCSSU056) Natural and processed materials have a range of physical properties; these properties can influence their use (VCSSU060) |
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Design & Technologies

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| 3 - 4 Investigate the suitability of materials, systems, components, tools and equipment for a range of purposes (VCDSTC027) | 5 - 6 Investigate characteristics and properties of a range of materials, systems, components, tools and equipment and evaluate the impact of their use (VCDSTC037) |
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SUGGESTED RESOURCESMART SCHOOLS MODULE LINKS



Undertaking the activity as described above links to the *ResourceSmart Schools Waste Module - actions B1.2, B1.3*

Below is a list of extension activities that link to additional actions of the Waste module:

1. Students create easy-to-follow bin signage to encourage correct waste sorting and recycling at school (*ResourceSmart Schools Waste Module - actions A2.6, A7.7*)
2. Students undertake a bin audit of the school. Students report back to the whole school on contamination and opportunities for reducing waste going to landfill (*ResourceSmart Schools Waste Module - actions A1.1 C2.1, C2.2*)

SUGGESTED RESOURCESMART SCHOOLS MODULE LINKS (Cont'd)

3. Students run an upcycling competition where commonly discarded waste items are repurposed in a creative and/or functional way (*ResourceSmart Schools Waste Module - action B1.3*)
4. Students run a Nude Food lunch day at school to raise awareness around packaging and waste. Follow up with a whole school community survey to investigate opportunities to hold these on an ongoing basis (*ResourceSmart Schools Waste Module - actions A3.1, A3.2, B1.4, C1.2, C1.4, C2.1*)
5. Invite local indigenous group/s to share their perspectives on waste from an environmental and historical point of view (*ResourceSmart Schools Waste Module - actions B1.5, B1.6*)
6. Students write a learning story about key findings of the activity and share in your school's newsletter and website (*ResourceSmart Schools Waste Module - actions C1.1, C1.3*)

Speak to your CERES ResourceSmart Schools Facilitator about further links to the Waste Module.