

Lesson 1: Recycling

Aim of this lesson

Investigate recycling on a personal and family level.

Resources

Sets (1 for each group) of black bin bags or carrier bags containing examples of the following:

Styrofoam (plastic cup), plastic container, leaves, glass bottle, tin can, plastic bag, plastic soda bottle, paper, orange peel, milk carton, aluminium can.

Risk Assessment

Take care with rough edges, food scraps. Wash hands after handling, or provide disposable plastic gloves.

Starter

Before the lesson, collect the “contents of an average bin” (so that students can see the objects that they will have to sort out in the next section) and put into plastic bin bags. One bag per group.

Tip the contents onto the desks in front of them for the students to see. Ask them to sort the material into 2 groups – “bio-degradable” and “non-biodegradable” (you might have to explain the terms first).

Ask the students to look at the Table of decomposition rates (Resource 1 – NB page 2 gives the answers) and try to match the object to the time taken for it to decompose and fill in the table.

Main Activity

Go through the answers (some of the decomposition times are incredible!). Ask students whether it is a good or a bad thing to throw all this rubbish away.

Ask students if they know what happens to the rubbish once the council takes it away. Ask students what they know about recycling schemes in the area.

Show a relevant TV programme or schools programme about recycling (e.g. the ITV “Tonight” programme from 3/12/04 – “How green is your house?”) to set the scene.

Design a questionnaire to ask parents and family how much recycling they do and what kind of things they recycle.

Plenary

Ask students to tell you what other things they regularly throw away that were not in the carrier bag at the start of the lesson e.g. what happened to their old mobile phone if they got a new one for Christmas?

Homework

Ask parents and family to fill out the questionnaire. Due back next lesson.