RECYCLING AND CARING FOR THE PLANET

Activity Pack -- FREE Resource

Ages 5-9 | No Prior Reading Required

Classroom, Library and Home Use

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Which Bin?

At a recycling centre, materials are sorted into bins: Paper, Plastics, Glass, Metals and Compost. Machines help -- a magnet lifts steel cans and cameras read plastic codes -- but people help too, by rinsing containers and sorting carefully.

Activity 1: Sort It!

Bins: Paper Plastics Glass Metals Compost

Item	Which Bin?
Newspaper	
Banana peel	
Soft drink can (rinsed)	
Glass jar (rinsed)	
Plastic bottle (rinsed)	
Coffee grounds	

Activity 2: Compost Check

Tick what can go in the compost. Cross what can't.

Item	Compost	Not compost
Apple core	[ ]	[ ]
Plastic bag	[ ]	[ ]
Leaves from the garden	[ ]	[ ]
Tin can	[ ]	[ ]
Egg shells	[ ]	[ ]

Think About It

* Why should we rinse containers before we recycle them?

* Who helps turn food scraps into soil in a compost bin?

Park Clean-Up Count

After a windy day, litter can blow together in parks: cans, plastic bags and cardboard. Let's count a clean-up!

Activity 1: Tally It Up

A class collected this litter. Count the tally marks and write the number.

Litter	Tally	Number
Cans	𝍸 𝍸 ||	____
Plastic bottles	𝍸 ||||	____
Plastic bags	|||	____
Paper	𝍸 𝍸 ||||	____

1. Which litter was found the most? _____

2. How many pieces of litter altogether? _____

Activity 2: Recycling Sums

1. A class recycles 10 bottles each week. How many in 2 weeks? _____

2. 8 cans are in the bin. 5 more are added. How many now? _____

3. There were 12 pieces of paper. 7 went in the paper bin. How many are left? _____

Think About It

* What could stop litter from blowing into the park in the first place?

* How could your class count the litter it saves from landfill?

Upcycle Lab

Upcycling means turning used items into something better. An old glass jar can become a planter. A plastic bottle can become a bird feeder. A tin can can become a pencil holder.

Activity 1: Old to New

Draw a line, or write the letter, to match each old item to a new use.

Old Item	Letter	New Use
Glass jar	____	A. Bird feeder
Plastic bottle	____	B. Pencil holder
Tin can	____	C. Planter for seeds
Fabric scraps	____	D. Patchwork bookmark

Activity 2: My Upcycled Creation

DRAW SOMETHING NEW YOU COULD MAKE FROM SOMETHING OLD:

Old item: _____ New use: _____

Think About It

* Why is upcycling even better than throwing something away?

* What old item at home could you give a new life?

Caring for Our Places

Note to students:
This worksheet explores personal feelings. There are no right or wrong answers -- your thoughts are your own. Sharing is always optional. If any question brings up big feelings, please talk with a trusted adult.

Seeing litter in a place we love can make us feel upset. Helping to clean up can make us feel proud. Our hearts can feel full of purpose when we care for the places we share.

Activity 1: Feeling Check-In

Circle the words that show how you feel.

When I see litter in a park, I feel:
Sad Cross Worried Okay Other: _____

When I help clean up, I feel:
Proud Happy Helpful Tired Other: _____

When I make something new from something old, I feel:
Creative Clever Excited Other: _____

Activity 2: My Favourite Outdoor Place

DRAW YOUR FAVOURITE OUTDOOR PLACE:

One way I can look after it: _____

Think About It

* How can litter hurt animals?

* Why do you think helping out can make our hearts feel full?

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Recycling is part of a bigger picture: the three R's. First, we **reduce** how much stuff we buy. Then, we **reuse** items whenever we can. Finally, we **recycle** what remains.

Activity 1: Which R?

Tick whether each action is Reduce, Reuse or Recycle.

Action	Reduce	Reuse	Recycle
Using a refillable water bottle	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Turning a jar into a planter	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Putting a rinsed can in the recycling bin	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Borrowing books from the library	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Choosing not to buy something you don't need	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Activity 2: My Green Promise

I will REDUCE by: _____

I will REUSE by: _____

I will RECYCLE by: _____

Think About It

* Why do you think 'reduce' comes first in the three R's?

* What is one small change your family could make this week?

My Green Team Goals

Here is a challenge: start a green team! Make posters about the three R's, teach others to sort and clean materials, and hold an upcycling art show.

Activity 1: My Green Goals

Write or draw one goal for each time.

Goal Tier	My Goal	How I Will Do It	When I Will Start
THIS WEEK			
THIS TERM			
THIS YEAR			

Activity 2: Green Team Tracker

Colour a star each day you do it.

I did it!	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
I used a refillable bottle or lunchbox	*	*	*	*	*
I put something in the right bin	*	*	*	*	*
I picked up litter safely	*	*	*	*	*
I reused something instead of throwing it out	*	*	*	*	*
I taught someone about recycling	*	*	*	*	*

Think About It

* What would a recycling club at your school do first?

* Write your own green motto in 10 words or fewer.

Teacher's Companion

No Prior Reading Required
This pack is fully standalone. No book or characters are referenced. Any student can complete these worksheets without prior reading. Suitable for classroom, library, and home learning programmes. This pack is an excerpt of a full book-specific learning pack available with purchase at **learningsmart.au**

Australian Curriculum Alignment

Learning Area	Strand	Year Level	Content Description (summary)
Science	Chemical Sciences	F-Yr 3	Everyday materials can be sorted, changed and reused (WS1, WS3)
Science	Biological Sciences	F-Yr 3	Living things such as worms and microbes break down food scraps (WS1)
Mathematics	Statistics and Number	F-Yr 3	Read tally marks; add and subtract within 20 (WS2)
Design and Technologies	Design Processes	F-Yr 3	Design and make a product from reused materials (WS3)
HASS	Geography	F-Yr 3	Caring for places; how people can reduce waste (WS4, WS5)
Cross-curriculum Priority	Sustainability	F-Yr 3	Actions to reduce, reuse and recycle (WS5, WS6)
Gen. Capabilities	Critical and Creative Thinking	F-Yr 3	Classify items and generate reuse ideas (WS1, WS3)

16 Key Recycling and Caring for the Planet Lessons

#	Lesson
1	Litter can make places messy and hurt animals.
2	Recycling turns used materials into new things.
3	Materials are sorted into paper, plastics, glass, metals and compost.
4	Machines help sort: magnets lift steel cans; cameras read plastic codes.
5	People help too: rinse containers and check recycling symbols.
6	Dirty or oily items, like greasy pizza boxes, can't be recycled.
7	Composting turns food scraps into rich soil.
8	Worms and microbes break down food scraps in compost.
9	Upcycling turns used items into something better.
10	The three R's: reduce, reuse, recycle.
11	Reduce comes first: buy less stuff.
12	Reuse items whenever you can.
13	Recycle what remains.
14	Refillable bottles and library books help reduce waste.
15	Small actions, repeated by many people, make a big difference.
16	Big idea: Recycling is the beginning of new adventures for our planet.

Answer Keys and Discussion Guidance

WS1 -- Which Bin? (Answers)
Newspaper = Paper; banana peel = Compost; soft drink can = Metals; glass jar = Glass; plastic bottle = Plastics; coffee grounds = Compost. Compost: apple core, leaves, egg shells. Not compost: plastic bag, tin can.

WS2 -- Park Clean-Up (Answers)
Cans 7; bottles 4; bags 3; paper 9. Most: paper. Total: 23. Sums: 1. 20; 2. 13; 3. 5.

WS3 -- Old to New (Answers)
Glass jar = C; plastic bottle = A; tin can = B; fabric scraps = D. Accept other sensible reuse ideas.

WS4 -- Sensitivity Note for Educators
Some students may feel worried about the environment. Keep the focus on positive, achievable actions. Do NOT require sharing. Remind students never to pick up sharp or dirty litter without a grown-up and gloves.

WS5 -- Which R? (Answers)
Reduce: refillable bottle; borrowing library books; not buying what you don't need. Reuse: jar planter (library books can also count as reuse). Recycle: rinsed can in the bin.

WS6 -- Challenge Tracker
There are no correct scores. Celebrate every attempt; any day left blank is a chance for a gentle reminder, not correction.

Upsell Note for Educators
This generic pack is based on the Learning Smart book series. The full book-specific learning pack -- which references the characters, story moments, and adventure narrative -- is available with book purchase or subscription at **learningsmart.au**. Book-specific packs significantly increase student engagement and reading motivation.

Differentiation Strategies

Level	Strategy	Example Application
Below Level (support)	Reduce written output; use sentence starters; allow verbal responses; pair with peer.	WS2: use counters for the sums. WS4: use feeling faces instead of writing.
On Level (standard)	Complete all activities as written. Use discussion partner for Think About It sections.	Standard completion with class debrief of Think About It questions.
Extension (enrichment)	Run a supervised litter audit of the playground with gloves; tally and graph the results.	WS3: hold an upcycling art show with labels explaining what each item used to be.

7 Discussion Questions

1. Why does litter in a park bother people?
2. How do machines at a recycling centre sort cans and plastics?
3. Why can't greasy or dirty items be recycled?
4. What is the difference between recycling and upcycling?
5. Why does 'reduce' come before 'reuse' and 'recycle'?
6. What could our class do to make less waste at lunchtime?
7. How could we start a recycling club at our school?

Classroom Display Ideas

Which Bin? Station: Five labelled boxes with picture cards for students to sort.

Three R's Poster Wall: Student posters about reduce, reuse and recycle.

Upcycling Art Show: Display the WS3 creations with 'before' labels.

Litter Tally Graph: A class graph of litter collected in a supervised clean-up.

Worm Farm Corner: A class compost or worm farm with a feeding chart.

Green Promises: Students' WS5 promises on paper leaves.

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