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LIFT THE RIGHT LID

Lower primary lesson ideas
cttg.sa.gov.au/waste



Lower primary waste education resource

Every year South Australians generate millions of tonnes of waste. This includes food, plastic packaging, clothing and more. So what can we do?

This resource provides a range of Australian curriculum-aligned waste and recycling lesson ideas, as well as fun hands-on activities that you can do with your students in the classroom. They have been developed for lower primary students, but can easily be modified to suit other year levels.

The lessons and activities are designed to foster a better understanding of the importance of correct waste disposal and how it impacts on the environment.

Students will also be introduced to terms like reduce, reuse and recycle and will be encouraged to consider how they can reduce the amount of waste they create both at school and at home.

Adult supervision is recommended for all activities.

Lesson ideas

1. Geography
2. History
3. Science
4. Design and technology
5. Health and physical education
6. Mathematics
7. English
8. The arts
9. Languages

The worksheets referred to in the waste education lesson ideas are included in the lower primary worksheets document on cttg.sa.gov.au/wasteeducation.

Waste education lesson ideas

1. Geography

- **Thumbs up game**

As a class, or in pairs, play the ‘*Thumbs up or down?*’ game. Playing this game, students must think about each waste related statement, then show whether they think the answer is true or false by drawing a thumbs up (for true) or down (for false) in the relevant box. This is a great way to test the knowledge of the class at the beginning and end of your waste education journey.

- **Ways to reuse it**

We’ve all heard of recycling, but what is upcycling? Upcycling refers to creating something of value out of unwanted materials or waste. In this activity, students are asked to think of an everyday item or material that’s disposed of regularly. Using the ‘*ways to reuse it*’ activity sheet, students must think of and record the different ways the item or material could be reused, including upcycling. Prior to completing this task, student could view one or both of the ABC videos about upcycling:

[Video 1 - Upcycling kids](#)

[Video 2 - What is upcycling?](#)

- **Bin bingo**

In this activity, students are required to move around the classroom and ask their fellow classmates a series of questions relating to waste and recycling. The aim of this game is to fill in as many of the squares as possible within the allocated time. Note, students are only allowed to ask each student three questions and are only able use a fellow classmate’s name once. The first person to fill in all of the boxes wins.

- **Which bin**

Do your students know which bin to put common household items in? This activity is designed to test their knowledge and can be conducted in a number of different ways. The ‘*which bin*’ activity sheet is a great place to start. You may also like to use the [which bin](#) website. The A-Z listing provides a great research tool.

www.whichbin.sa.gov.au

- **Put in the right bin**

As a class, read the student facts about household waste and recycling on the KESAB website. Then, explore the ‘*Stuff at home – put it in the right bin*’ interactive house on the KESAB website to see which household items belong in each bin. This link also leads to ‘Curriculum support’ resources consisting of more lesson ideas and activity sheets.

kesab.asn.au/stuff

- **Pretend play**

Set up a corner in your classroom with a pretend recycling station or waste collection truck and allow students to role play the waste management process. For information, and to download a series of printable big books on the topic, visit the [wipe out waste](#) website.

wow.sa.gov.au

- **Feed your Mini Muncher**

Does your classroom have a Mini Muncher kitchen caddy? This activity is designed to engage students in the correct disposal of household organic waste such as food scraps, paper towel, used tissues and compostable packaging.

Using the *Feed your Mini Muncher kitchen caddy* activity sheet, ask students to cut out items from old magazines or catalogues that they think should be put in the Mini Muncher and stick them inside the caddy.

For more information on which items can be turned into compost visit cttg.sa.gov.au/minimuncher

- **Waste not**

As a class or in pairs, brainstorm a list of common grocery items. Examples could include toilet paper, soap, fruit and vegetables, bread and milk. In pairs, students must choose one of the items from the list and come up with different ways to avoid and reduce wastage of that particular item. Students should then be encouraged to share their ideas with the class.

- **Room for improvement**

As a class, discuss the classroom waste collection system. This is a great starting point to talk about landfill, combined recycling and organic waste, as well as how to dispose of it correctly. Then split the students into small groups and ask them to come up with ways to improve the disposal of waste in the classroom.

You might also like to look at how much waste is generated in the classroom, what types of items end up in each bin, and as a class how you can reduce the amount of waste you create.

To make things a bit more interesting, you may like to weigh your waste and see if you can reduce it each week. You may also like to compete against another class.

[Video - Bin audit](#)

2. History

- **Interview**

Has the way we manage waste changed? This activity requires students to interview either a parent or grandparent about waste and how it was managed when they were little. Depending on the year level, students may record their findings in pictures or a short story/report.

As a class, discuss how this differs from how waste is managed now both at home and in the community? You may also like to encourage students to predict how waste might be managed in the future.

3. Science

- **KWL**

As a class (with an enlarged copy), or on individual copies (depending on the year level), encourage students to contribute ideas about waste and recycling, including what they know about managing waste, what they want to know and what they are learning. Record the information on the *'KWL chart' activity sheet*. You could use this to guide your education journey and encourage the class to add to the sheet after each lesson.

- **Litter break down drag and drop**

As a class, use the interactive *'Litter break down drag and drop'* game to test their knowledge on how long some common litter items take to break down.

kesab.asn.au/litterless/

If your class does not have computer access, you can print the *'Litter break down cards'* and use them to explore how long common items take to break down. See lesson seven using the link below.

kesab.asn.au/litterless/unit-of-work/

- **Greenhouse gas**

When food goes to landfill and starts to break down it produces methane, a greenhouse gas.

As a class, explore the terms 'Greenhouse gas' and 'methane' and the impact these gases have on the environment.

You may like to conduct an experiment to show how quickly a type of food decomposes under different conditions. For example, take several pieces of bread. Place one under a window, one inside a paper bag, bury one in the ground, and seal the other in a plastic bag. Encourage students to make predictions using the 'Watch it waste' activity sheet, draw pictures of what they see and reflect on their observations.

Gloves, masks, tongs and other safety equipment is recommended for both teachers and students involved in this activity.

[Video - How our food choices impact the environment](#)

4. Design and technology

- **Recycled bottle planters**

Using an empty plastic bottle, create your own 'recycled bottle planter'. Students should think about the shape of their planter and how they would like to decorate it (using recycled materials of course). They should also consider what plant or herb they would like to grow. Perhaps suggest plants or herbs that they could take home for long-term use.

Students will need teacher assistance with the construction stage. The ABC video below is your step-by-step guide to creating recycled bottle planters.

[Video - Make pot planters from plastic bottles](#)

- **Mini Muncher redesign**

Redesign the Mini Muncher kitchen caddy. Students should think about where it is used, how it is used and the different types of waste it used to collect. What would you change? Draw your Mini Muncher and create a prototype using recycled materials.

- **Waste eating monster truck**

Using reused materials such as cardboard boxes, toilet rolls and bottle lids, construct your own 'waste eating monster truck'. Give your monster a name and think about what types of waste they would like to eat - do they prefer recyclable material or perhaps they like to eat green organics.

- **Packaged products**

Students to complete the 'Packaged products' activity sheet. Students will need to cut out images from old magazines or supermarket catalogues to complete this activity.

Once finished, ask students to identify the most common type of packaging. Ask them, "Can it be recycled?" If it can't, ask students to come up with some alternative packaging options for the product.

Prior to undertaking this task, students could view the following ABC video. While watching the video students should take note of the products purchased and how those products are packaged.

[Video: Fruit and vegetable shopping](#)

5. Health & Physical Education

- **The great recycling relay**

This activity not only combines education and fitness, it supports a practical application of waste and recycling knowledge. It can be used in the middle of a unit of work, or at the end, to assess students' knowledge of the correct disposal of materials.

Split the class into small teams. Each team should be provided with the same set of colour-coded bins and clean waste materials. There should be one bin for landfill, one for organics and another for recyclables.

Students then take it in turns to dispose of items in the provided bins. The aim of the game is to get the items in the right bin, not to finish first.

After the relay, examine the contents of the bins, with 'tricky' items discussed as a class.

- **My nude food lunchbox**

Complete the *'my nude food lunchbox'* activity sheet. Students must think about what they want to include in their lunchbox, which must not include any wrapping or packaging.

As an extension to this activity you may like to show the two ABC videos listed below.

The first is a video shows an example of what lunch boxes and their contents looked like in the 70's. The second, shows lunchboxes today and facts about bread.

[Video - What's for lunch](#)

[Video - Daily bread](#)

Even though food can be disposed of in the organics bin, we still throw away a huge amount of food in Australia. Students to discuss how we can reduce food waste both at school and in the home. Students might also consider preparing a *'foods we all like'* list for their family to help ensure that food purchased will not be wasted. When preparing their list, students should consider including healthy foods and foods without packaging.

6. Mathematics

- **Waste audit**

What can students do to help reduce the amount of waste they send to landfill? This activity asks students to complete the *'Waste audit'* activity sheet to collect data about the type of waste thrown out in their house. After gathering this data, ask students to identify the types of waste that could be avoided in the future. What can students do to help their family avoid creating waste? This could include redesigning their household bin system or creating a poster.

- **Waste and recycling board game**

Use recycled or reused material to create a 'waste and recycling' board game, such as bottle tops for counters and cereal box card for the board. Students should include directions such as "move back three spaces" for incorrect waste disposal, or "move forward 3 spaces" for using the correct bin.

- **Recycling makes cents**

Ask students to put up their hands if they recycle cans and bottles at a depot. Explain that whilst items such as soft drink cans and plastic bottles can go in the recycling bin, they can also be taken to special recycling depots for a 10 cent refund.

Encourage students to monitor how many items that attract a 10 cent refund their family uses weekly. Ask them to calculate how much money they could possibly save each week, month or year if they took those items to a recycling depot.

Watch the *'Recycling Makes Cents'* video on the Kesab website about 'Canny' the can to learn more.

kesab.asn.au

7. English

- **Waste big book**

As a class, create your own big book about waste and recycling. Think about the common items that are discarded at school and design a resource that other classes could use. The book should include important tips for reducing, reusing and recycling commonly disposed of items. Consider also using recycled paper or scrap paper to construct the book.

- **Waste and recycling word wall**

Create a waste and recycling word wall in your class. Continue to add to the wall as new words arise. Consider using the cardboard from old cereal boxes or any other packaging that could easily be cut up into cards and used by students to write their words on. Students could also use individual letters cut from old newspapers or magazines to create words relating to waste and recycling.

As an extension, you could challenge students to create whole sentences using the words on the waste and recycling word wall.

- **Waste words**

Students to start a waste management key words dictionary with the 'Waste words' activity sheet (provided).

- **Recycling symbols**

Why are symbols important? As a class, discuss the importance of symbols and the role they play in communicating information. Use the recycling symbol (and/ or the [Australasian Recycling Label](#)) as an example. Are students familiar with these symbols and do they know what they mean. Ask students to look for the symbol on packaged products their family buys regularly. Can they find them?

To extend the lesson, ask students to develop a set of symbols for a packaged product that tells people how to correctly dispose of the packaging.

- **Meet the family**

Students to view the family of waste eating monster trucks and discover who they are and what each collects. Students to choose from 'Chomp' (the general waste truck), 'Tasty' (the organics truck) or 'Crunch' (the recycling truck) and write a 'character profile'. The character profiles should include their name, physical appearance, personality/traits, likes/dislikes, fast facts and a picture.

- **Waste monster talk**

What would our waste monsters say if they could talk? Use the 'Waste monster truck talk' activity sheet to imagine, and then create, the types of conversations waste management trucks might have if they could speak.

- **Larry litter**

As a class view and listen to, the *interactive 'Larry Litter'* story book. After reading the book, complete the 'Larry Litter story sequence' activity sheet (provided)

kesab.asn.au/litterless/interactives/

- **The amazing journey of your recyclables**

As a class read 'The Amazing Journey of your Recyclables' big books (which include stories about plastic, paper, steel, aluminium and glass). The big books can be downloaded from the 'Wipe out waste' website.

www.wow.sa.gov.au

8. The Arts

Visual arts

- **Recycling collage**

Students to create a waste and recycling collage using only reused and/or recyclable materials.

- **Design your own bin poster**

Students research the bin system in the local Council area and identify the different lid colours. They then use the colours of the different bin lids to create a poster for the school or home to educate others about what belongs in each bin.

- **Design your own waste monster**

First, select your favourite waste monster and colour in the waste monster garbage truck. Then turn the page over and use your imagination to create your very own waste monster. What are they called? What do they would look like? How do they sound? and what would they say?

- **Junk craft**

Using classroom resources and recycled materials and objects, encourage students to use their imaginations and create their very own junk craft masterpiece.

Kesab's Junk Craft website provides instructions for six junk craft activities.

kesab.asn.au

9. Languages

- **Educating others**

What are the top 5 languages spoken in your school (or Council area) other than English? Select one of the languages and design a simple 'reduce, reuse, recycle' poster using that language. Alternately, students could produce a 'reduce, reuse, recycle' poster that uses pictures or symbols only (no language).



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