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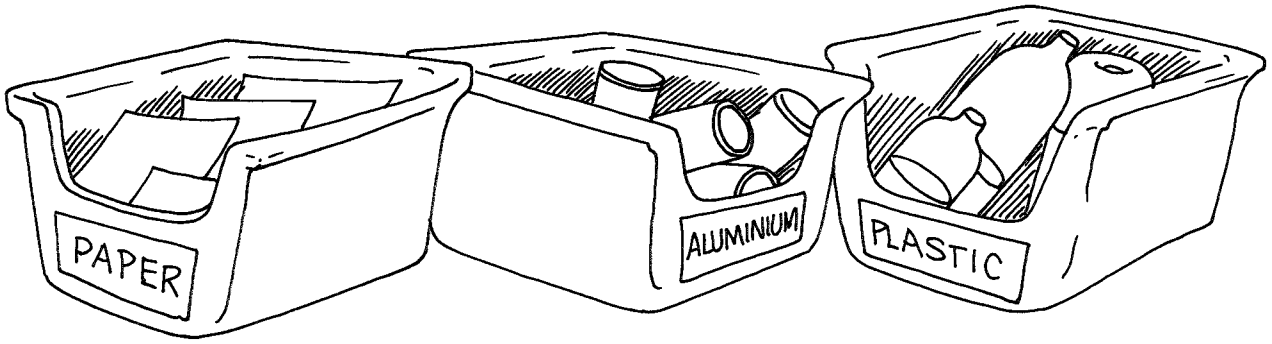


INTRODUCTION

The need to recycle is growing every day, but at times it may seem like too much: bundling newspapers, washing and separating cans and bottles, composting greens. Children may wonder why they should bother when it's so easy to let the rubbish collectors carry everything to a landfill.

Australians are the second highest waste producers in the world, second only to the Americans. We're running out of places to bury all of the mess.

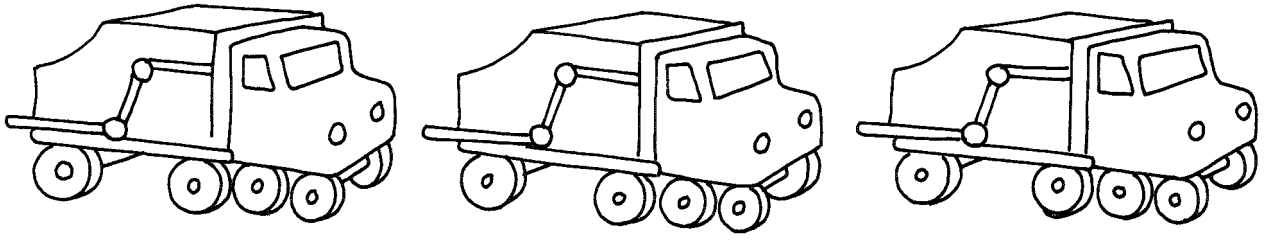
What can we do?

The recycling movement goes back many years, gaining widespread attention in the 1980s. On average, most Australian cities recycle only about 10% of their waste. We can do better than that and you, as an educator, can be especially helpful. We must continue with our recycling efforts and help our children learn about the need to reduce, to reuse and to recycle the leftover rubbish.

Despite the complexities of environmental issues, even young children are concerned about the state of our planet. Using hands-on, close-to-home projects, you can bring environmental problems and solutions to a level your students will understand. Help them participate in efforts to make the world a cleaner, healthier place by starting in their own school, homes and neighbourhoods. The satisfaction they'll feel may encourage them to attack the larger problems that plague the planet. You will instil the generation of the future with goals to save the world!

Learn to Recycle! offers scores of integrated-learning activities that enable children to:

- Learn about the need for conservation
- Understand the concepts of reusing and recycling
- Relate ecological issues to the entire curriculum and to the development of responsibility and citizenship.



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Learn to Recycle! is divided into five sections:

Literature links employs fiction and nonfiction picture books to introduce information about conserving resources, recycling and cutting down on waste and pollution. Crafts, projects and language extension activities build connections between the books and the environment.

Recycling awareness turns students into scientists and detectives as they observe how conserving and recycling affect the local environment. Simple experiments and constructions allow children to get involved directly in the recycling process.

Displays for children to make provides easy-to-follow directions for creating displays, T-shirts, calendars and other eye-catching creations. Students can use these items to share conservation information with children in other classrooms and with people in the neighbourhood.

Show time highlights songs with ecological themes. Student-made costumes further enhance the productions.

Reaching out involves children in ecological action with projects such as publishing a monthly newsletter and creating a classroom recycling centre.

Introduce this recycling unit with the two decorative bonus posters. Certain activities in this book refer to information provided on the posters.

Through the activities in *Learn to Recycle!* your students will experience, explore and appreciate the world of conservation and recycling. They may even make their community a more aware and cleaner place through recycling.

TEACHING THE BASICS

Your students need to grasp certain concepts in order to understand various environmental problems. The following background information may prove useful in maximising the value of the activities that follow.

Compost: This is a mixture of dead leaves, grass and other organic materials, partially decomposed, which is used for fertiliser and potting soil. Garden waste and food that can be composted take up over a quarter of the space inside most landfills.

Tips: Also known as rubbish dumps, tips are places where solid waste is deposited and left uncovered for a period of time. Properly planned and operated tips are generally safe, but serious problems can arise. As the waste decomposes it produces methane and this gas has to be removed before it builds up and causes an explosion. Methane from tips is now being used as a fuel.

Landfills: These are any places where solid waste is buried. The one thing that distinguishes landfills from tips is that soil is used to cover a layer of compacted refuse at the end of each day. This cover soil reduces odours, wind-blown litter and water seepage through the waste. It also helps prevent the spread of disease organisms.

Organic materials: Included under this heading are food scraps and vegetable waste. Sewage liquid and semi-solid waste from houses, offices, farms and factories are also examples of organic materials. This type of waste is fairly easy to get rid of. It normally rots down quickly in landfills.

Precycling: When you don't buy things that are over-packaged or that can't be reused you are precycling. Often items are wrapped in plastic, which is made from oil. Once oil is turned into plastic, it can never become part of the Earth again. About 40% of all rubbish in tips is packaging. Reducing the amount of packaging means reducing the amount of rubbish!

Recycling: When you reuse materials instead of throwing them in the bin you are recycling. Last year, Australia recycled around two billion individual cans, but that is still only 63% of the cans we used. Recycled cans are much cheaper to make. It takes only one-twentieth of the electricity to recycle a can than to make one from scratch,

TOWER OF THE SUN

Story:

Colin Thompson's *Tower to the Sun* (Red Fox) is about a world that has become so polluted that the sun is no longer visible. A very rich old man tells his grandson about the sun and the blue sky and, longing to see the sun, the grandson suggests that they try to get above the clouds. But planes don't fly any more because of the shortage of fuel and the balloon they build can't get high enough. And so they start to build a tower – a very tall tower – which is created by 'recycling' all the tall buildings in the world. Finally, the old man gets to sit on the top of the tower under a blue sky and warm shining sun. Then everyone on the earth comes to the tower and sees the sun.

Environmental connection:

This book introduces the children to a terrible future for our world if we continue to use up the resources and pollute the environment at our current rate. The pictures in grey and black are a graphic illustration of the ugliness of pollution and points out that wealth is of no use when there is no beauty left. After reading *The Tower to the Sun* children many want to start a classroom recycling program (see page 43).

Language extension:

Divide the class into groups to discuss the problem and solution that the rich man and his grandson decided on. Is it possible that the world could end up like this? Was it a good solution? You may wish to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting (PMI) analysis of the 'tower solution'.

Then go on to discuss what effect the tower to the sun would have had on the people? Get the children to write a story or create a small play about what all the people decided to do after they had seen the sun.

ADDITIONAL POLLUTION BOOKS: *Where the Earth Meets the Sea* Jeannie Baker (Walker Books).