

OBJECTIVE

To identify recyclable materials available for collection in your community.

MATERIALS

Waste and recyclable material such as: aluminum can, apple core, cardboard box, cell phone, cereal box, chip bag, drinking straw, glass jar, margarine tub, milk jug, milk carton, newspaper, notebook paper, paper clip, paper coffee cup, paper grocery bag, pencil stub, plastic bottle, plastic grocery bag, rechargeable battery, shampoo bottle, steel food can, telephone book, used facial tissue.

WHAT IS RECYCLING?

Recyclable material is waste that can be used again by being manufactured into a new product. Aluminum, glass, paper, plastic, scrap tires, steel and used oil are just some of the materials that can be recycled into new products.

When manufacturers buy materials (i.e., plastic containers, glass bottles, steel cans), they want to be assured of the quality. By cleaning and separating recyclables according to your community's instructions, you ensure that manufacturers will be able to use recyclables in place of raw materials. True recycling does not occur until collected recyclables are made into new products and purchased by consumers. You can help by looking for products made from recycled materials.

DEMONSTRATION

1. Several days prior to this activity, ask participants to collect and bring in clean samples of waste.
2. Put all of the items in a box at one end of the room. At the other end of the room place two boxes labeled: Recycle and Disposal.

3. Divide the class into two teams and explain that they'll be playing a relay game.
4. A student from each team should stand next to the box full of items.
5. When the leader says go – the students should grab an item from the box and run to the other end of the room, place it in the proper box (recycle or disposal), run back and tag the next student. The race continues until everyone has had a turn or one team wins.
6. After the race, look at what has been placed in each box. Are all of the items in the right box? Has anything been misplaced?
7. Discuss the reason why local programs may not recycle all materials that could be recycled. Often cost is a factor (i.e. it is just too expensive to collect and process some materials). Sometimes communities also do not generate enough volume of a particular material to justify collecting it. Markets can be limited, making it difficult to find an end user for some items.

DISCUSSION

What is currently collected for recycling in your community? What isn't able to be recycled? What are some alternatives for the products that can't be recycled? Which items that aren't collected locally do the students think should be collected?

Visit Keep America Beautiful (kab.org) and use the homepage recycling finder to identify what is... and isn't...recyclable in your community.



Click this QR code with your Smartphone to see an animated video of how commingled recyclables get mechanically separated out at a Material Recovery Facility (MRF). <http://www.kab.org/MRF>