

# Know What You Throw

**Grades:** Elementary, Middle

**Time:** 35 minutes

## Overview

Students learn waste related terms and how to sort waste according to categories. They set up a recycling system in their classroom and help create school wide awareness about recycling.

## Materials

- Classroom space
- 1 item of each kind:
  - o renewable resource (such as paper)
  - o Non renewable resource (such as a metal can)
  - o Biodegradable (such as a fruit peel)
  - o Non-Biodegradable (such as a plastic bottle)
  - o Latex gloves (for teacher to handle materials)
- Paper (folded into four quarters and marked with appropriate headings, one for each student)
- Magazines to cut up
- Scissors
- Tape or glue

## Procedure

**Part 1 Warm up:** Using your charts created earlier, remind your students about what waste is and how much we create each day. Tell them that the class is going to look at the different kinds of materials that make up all that waste.

Help students understand the meanings of these terms:

Renewable resources / non renewable resources

Biodegradable / non biodegradable

Write brief definitions of each on the board.

Discuss the differences between renewable resources and non-renewable resources and their impact on the environment.

Discuss the fact that some waste is bio-degradable, while other types are non-biodegradable, so that they understand that some things can be broken down while others cannot.

Explain that these are just four general categories. Some things may fall into more than one. For example, paper is biodegradable, but it is also a renewable resource. Show the examples from the materials list.

**Part 2** Once your students have learned about the different types of waste, they can create a collage to show what they've learned. Give each of them the folded paper with the four headings. They can use magazines to find pictures of items that fall into each category. Remind them that some items can go in more than one category on the paper.

When they finish, you can lead the class in a discussion by asking what it means to the environment to throw away things made from nonrenewable resources.

Wrap up: Have students display their collages around the school or in a designated place in the hallway.

Independent work: Ask students to write, draw or find pictures of five items from their waste at home for each category. Share these items during class the following day.