

What can be recycled?

You need:

- Printed labels
- A mixture of recyclable and non-recyclable packaging (or printed images)

Most of the food and other things we buy come in packaging. If this packaging isn't recycled and gets into the ocean, it can harm, and even kill, whales and dolphins. So which materials can we recycle?



1

Give each group of children a bag of packaging waste (or printed images), for example a selection from: crisp packets, sweet wrappers, card boxes, plastic bottles, plastic carrier bags, plastic wrapping, food tins, drinks cans, yoghurt pots, glass jars, takeaway coffee cups.

2

Give each group of children two labels – “recyclable” and “not recyclable”, and ask them to put one at each end of their table.

3

The children will need to work together to decide where to place each item of packaging.

4

Discuss their results as a class:
Was there anything they disagreed on? Is there anything that can be recycled if you take it somewhere special, but not in home recycling? What materials are in the “not recyclable” pile? Why is there plastic in both piles?

A digital version of this activity is available for children to complete independently, or in pairs, using iPads/tablet computers.

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Notes for teachers

Recyclable	Not recyclable
Card boxes	Crisp packets
Plastic bottles	Sweet wrappers
Yoghurt pots	Plastic food wrapping and packaging
Tins	Takeaway coffee cups
Drinks cans	
Glass jars or bottles	
Plastic carrier bags*	
Drinks cartons	

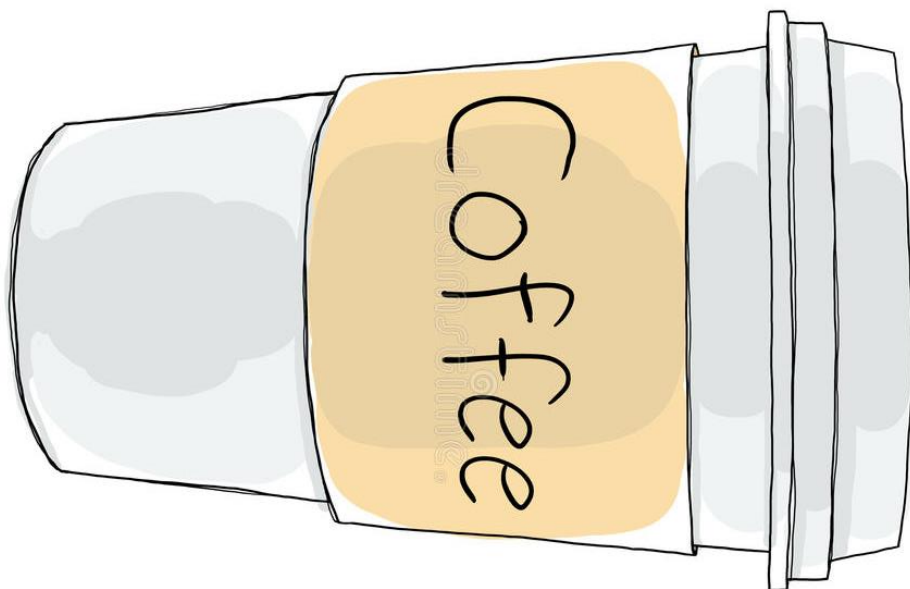
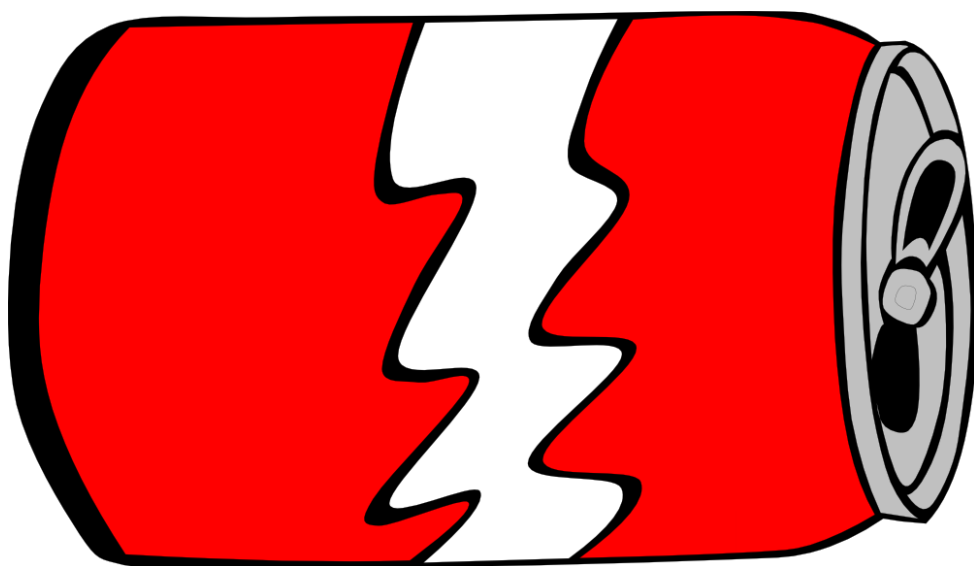
*Some packaging materials can be recycled, but can't be put into household recycling bins. For example plastic carrier bags, and anything else labelled as "Plastic – Film" can be recycled at most large supermarkets.

Most "non-recyclable" packaging is made from plastic, or contains plastic. Crisp packets look like foil, but are made from plastic. Coffee cups have a plastic lining on the inside.

In light of concerns about plastic pollution, some items are now packaged in biodegradable film, which, although it looks like plastic, is actually a plant-based material. This can't be recycled in household recycling, but can be put into a compost heap or food waste bin.

What can be recycled?

Printable litter examples



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Printable litter examples



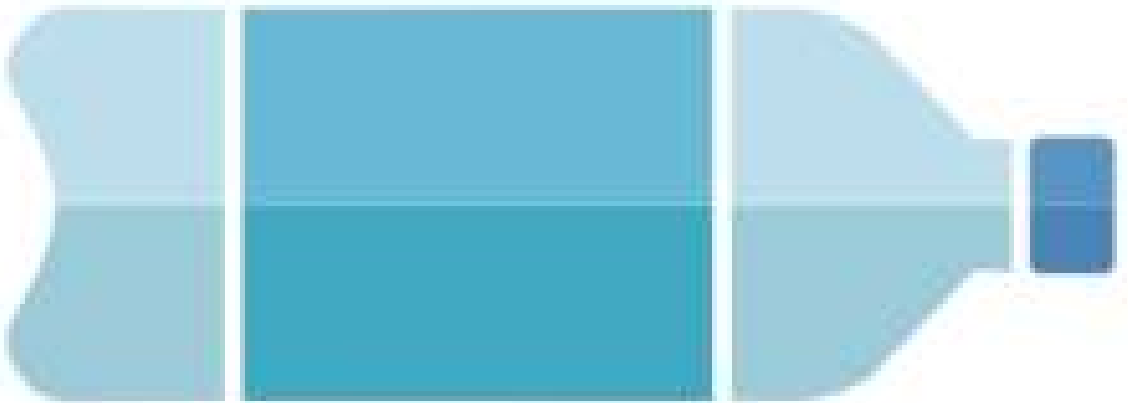
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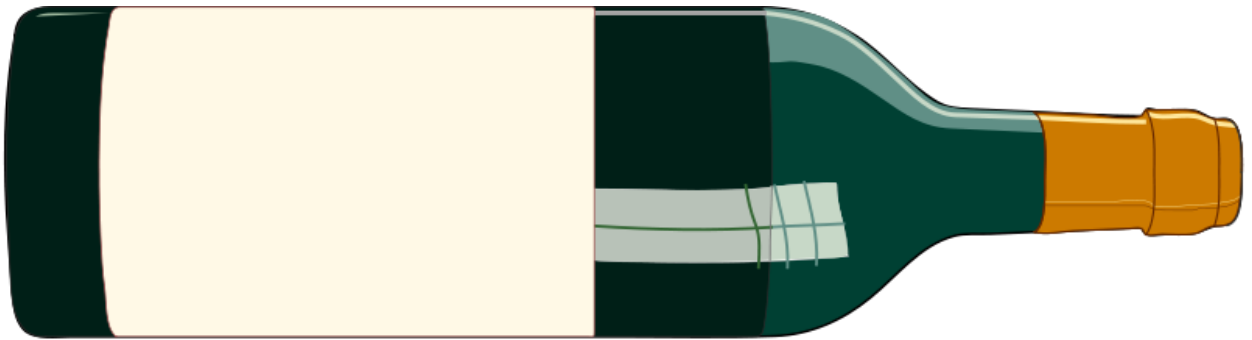
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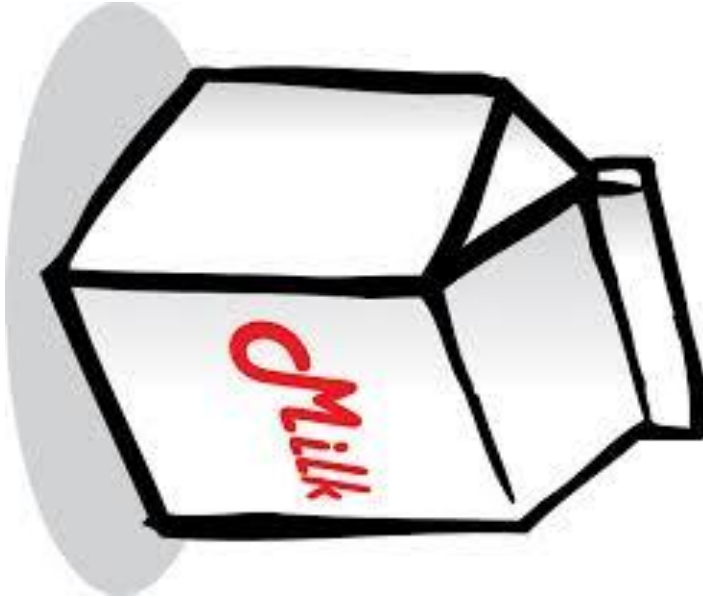
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What can be recycled?

Printable labels



Recyclable

Not Recyclable