What can be recycled?

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.

You need:
- Printed labels
- A mixture of recyclable and non-recyclable packaging (or printed images)
What can be recycled?

Notes for teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recyclable</th>
<th>Not recyclable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Card boxes</td>
<td>Crisp packets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bottles</td>
<td>Sweet wrappers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoghurt pots</td>
<td>Plastic food wrapping and packaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tins</td>
<td>Takeaway coffee cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks cans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass jars or bottles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic carrier bags*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks cartons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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

- Battery
- Coffee cup
What can be recycled?
Printable litter examples
What can be recycled?
Printable litter examples
What can be recycled?
Printable litter examples

[Image of a yogurt container]

[Image of a plastic bottle]

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What can be recycled?
Printable litter examples

[Images of recyclable items: a bottle and two cans.]
What can be recycled?
Printable litter examples

Milk carton

Cardboard box
What can be recycled?

Printable labels

Recyclable

Not Recyclable

Recyclable

Not

Recyclable

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