

Recycling plastics

Introduction

Plastics are polymers. We use them for a huge range of purposes, from drinks bottles and shopping bags to insulating materials.

When plastics need to be disposed of, recycling is an obvious choice, but there are some difficulties with recycling.

In this activity you will be using your research skills to find out about:

- why and how plastics are recycled
- some of the difficulties involved in recycling plastics.

You will be using your literacy skills to produce a leaflet to give to local people encouraging them to recycle plastics and explaining how they can do it.

Brief

You are going to make a leaflet that will be distributed to households in your area. The leaflet will explain how and why plastics should be recycled.

Your leaflet should:

- explain the reasons for recycling plastics
- describe the difficulties involved in recycling plastics
- suggest how the public can help overcome some of these difficulties
- be clear and use language that can be understood by people with no scientific knowledge fit on one folded piece of A4 paper.

Step 1

Find out why it is important to recycle plastics. Decide on a way to explain this in your leaflet – use words or pictures that will help to convince members of the public to recycle more.

Step 2

Carry out some research into the types of plastic that can be recycled, and the common items that are made of these plastics. Decide how best to show this information – for example, with pictures or a table.

Step 3

Find out about some of the difficulties involved in recycling plastics. Think about collection, transport, and sorting of the plastics, and how the public can help.

Step 4 (extension)

It is only necessary to dispose of plastics because they are used to make things in the first place. Find out about some ways in which use of plastics can be avoided.

Step 5

Now make your leaflet. Remember it has to be informative and engaging. Use some pictures, and perhaps include some amazing facts about plastic-use – you are trying to persuade people to recycle.

Sources

Introduction to recycling plastic

A simple, short introduction to recycling plastics:

<http://www.olliesworld.com/uk/html/plastic.html>

Why recycle

Some reasons why we should recycle plastics:

www.carbonneutralearth.com/why_recycle_plastic.php

Which plastic?

Which plastics can be recycled and what are they used for:

www.thedailygreen.com/green-homes/latest/recycling-symbols-plastics-460321#slide-1

Recycling facts

This is a really informative document about recycling plastics. Some of the ideas are a bit hard but there is lots of useful information:

<http://www-g.eng.cam.ac.uk/impee/topics/RecyclePlastics/files/Recycling%20Plastic%20v3%20PDF%20WITH%20NOTES.pdf>

Wrap

Wrap is an organisation that aims to create a world without waste. This site contains plenty of information and guidance about recycling plastics:

www.wrap.org.uk/category/materials-and-products/plastics

Writing frame

You are going to make a leaflet that will be distributed to households in your area. The leaflet will explain how and why plastics should be recycled.

Summarise your research findings on the key areas below.

Reasons for recycling plastics

Types of plastics that can be recycled and common items made from these plastics

Difficulties involved in recycling plastics

How the public can help overcoming these difficulties

Ways using plastics can be avoided (extension)

Important points

- Remember, you are trying to persuade people to recycle. Use pictures, and perhaps include some amazing facts about plastic-use.
- Your leaflet should be clear and use language that can be understood by people with no scientific knowledge.
- Your leaflet should fit on one folded piece of A4 paper.

Your work

You have made a leaflet explaining how and why plastics should be recycled.

Look at the questions below and think about whether you have met the brief.

- Have you explained the reason for recycling plastics?
- Have you described the different plastics and what they are used for?
- Have you explained the main difficulties involved in recycling plastics?
- Does your leaflet include positive suggestions of what people could do to help?
- If you have done the extension task, have you included some ways in which use of plastics can be avoided?
- Is your leaflet colourful and engaging? Are there pictures, and will people read your leaflet?