



Activity 6 – Plastic Detectives

Learn about the different types of plastic and find examples in your own recycling!

You will need:

- Plastic types information sheet (included with this worksheet)
- A recycling bin full of recycled items
- A magnifying glass (optional)
- Your detective skills!



Time required: 30 mins

Suitable for primary school ages

Safety Tips:

- Watch out for any sharp edges on plastic packaging.

Useful Tip:

- Most packaging will have the plastic symbol on the bottom. It can often be the same colour as the packaging and hard to spot!

Picture of activity



Instructions:

1. Print off or open the Plastic Detectives plastic guide on a tablet. It is included with this worksheet and will help you identify different types of plastic. Have a look through the sheet to familiarise yourself with the plastics and their symbols.
2. Gather your plastic packaging from your recycling bin. If your bins have just been emptied, you can also use food already still in its packaging.
3. Inspect your plastics for one of the 7 symbols, using the worksheet to help you.
4. Once you have found the symbol, tick the box! See how many different types of plastic you can find. Can you find all of them?

DID YOU KNOW?

In the UK, we only recycle 58% of plastic bottles and only 32% of plastic tubs, pots and trays we buy, despite most local councils collecting them for recycling!

Extension activities:

Try how many symbols you can find on our follow up worksheet, **Recycling Detectives!** This worksheet can be found at the bottom of this document.

You could take this activity further by counting the amount of each plastic type you find in your bin and drawing a bar chart using your results. Which plastic type do you use the most of?

Check out [the activity page](#) on The Zone website for related videos to watch!

Recycling plastic

The types you can recycle will depend on where you live, and what your district council collects. You can find out what you can recycle in your area here:

<https://www.recycledevon.org/recycling-collections>

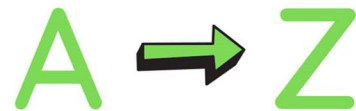
Don't forget to **Wash and Squash** plastics before you put them in your recycling bin!



Some types of plastic will not be collected by your local council, although you may be able to drop them off at supermarket collection points, or at your local Household Waste Recycling Centre. Check where your local Household Waste Recycling Centre is and what you can recycle there: <https://www.recycledevon.org/recycling-facilities-projects-community-groups>

The Recycle Devon website offers a handy guide on where to recycle common materials:

<https://www.recycledevon.org/at-home/a>



Please note: during the coronavirus epidemic, your local waste collection services and household recycling centres may change their services. Please check <https://www.recycledevon.org/waste-during-coronavirus> and your local authority website for updates

Share your pictures with us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram by tagging @RecycleDevon #recycledevon

Home Schooling

Children in **Years 1 and 2** will develop their scientific skills, including close observation, identification and sorting things into groups.

Pronunciation of unknown words will help children of all ages with their decoding skills, along with expanding their vocabulary.

The extension activity of tallying the number of different plastics found and plotting them as a bar chart can help children practise their counting skills, along with collecting and plotting and interpreting data on a bar chart, which is a skill introduced in **Year 3**.

This activity can also help children in **Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to Year 6)** understand our responsibility to protect the environment and how our everyday choices, such as recycling can impact this.



Plastic Detectives



Try to spot these different types of plastic in your recycling bin... How many can you find?

Polyethylene Terephthalate

Common uses:

Drinks bottles, salad trays

Found?



High Density Polyethylene

Common uses:

Milk bottles, household cleaners, shampoo and shower gel bottles

Found?



Low Density Polyethylene

Common uses:

Carrier bags, bin liners and packaging films.

Found?



Polyvinyl Chloride

Common uses:

Meat packaging, cling film

Found?



Polypropylene

Common uses:

Margarine tubs, microwaveable meal trays

Found?



Polystyrene

Common uses:

Yoghurt pots, foam takeaway boxes and cups, egg cartons, plastic cutlery

Found?



Number of symbols found:

/ 6



Not sure what you can recycle? Visit the Recycle Devon Website to check what you can recycle in your local area!

www.recycledevon.org

Recycling Detectives



Try to spot these different symbols on packaging... How many can you find?

Mobius Loop

This symbol means this material can be recycled, but it may not be recycled in your local area.

Found?



Widely Recycled

This symbol means this material is recycled by over 75% of local councils in the UK, and it's likely that your local council will recycle it.

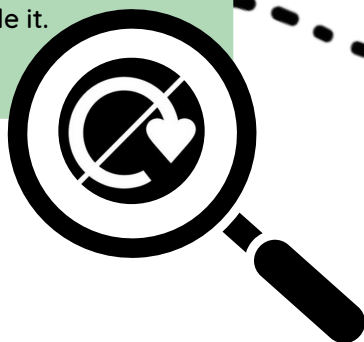
Found?



Not Currently Recycled

This symbol means that less than 15% of local councils in the UK recycle this material, and it's unlikely that your local council will recycle it.

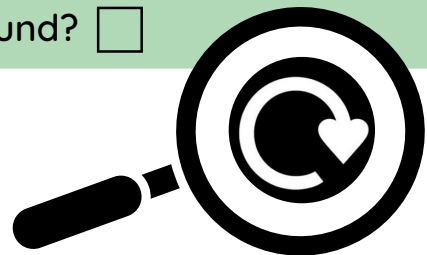
Found?



Check Local Recycling

This symbol means that 15-65% of local councils recycle this material, and your local council may not recycle it.

Found?



Glass

This symbol means that this packaging is made from glass. Check with your local council on how to recycle it!

Found?



Green Dot

This symbol is used in some European countries and means that the producer of this packaging has given money towards the recovery and recycling of packaging in Europe.

Found?



Number of symbols found:

/ 6



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