



Eco Activity: May

Compost survey

Members of the Eco Team conduct a survey of Key Stage 2 pupils to find out how much they know about composting. Based on their findings, they make a plan to ensure that all pupils understand why composting is important, what can and can't be composted, and how they can do their bit to support the school's composting.

Group	Eco Team												
Space needed	Access to a computer for analysing the survey's results												
Timing	Two hours – this can be spread out over several sessions according to when your Eco Team meet and how long your meetings last.												
You will need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clipboards and pencils (one of each per pair of pupils) • Printed A4 survey recording sheets (one per pair of pupils). See following pages. • Printed A3 survey recording sheet (for demonstration purposes) • Compost survey results spreadsheet. This can be downloaded from zone.recycledevon.org/teachers/compost 												
Health and safety	Ensure adequate adult supervision whilst the Eco Team are moving around school conducting the survey.												
Introduction	<p>Discuss with the Eco Team what they know about composting. This might include: why composting helps the environment; what can and cannot be composted; what minibeasts and micro-organisms are involved in the composting process; how to use compost in the garden to grow more plants. <i>Pupils can refer to the assembly information sheets used in November's Eco Activity 'Compost assembly'.</i></p> <p>Members of the Eco Team are compost experts! But how much do other pupils in the school know about composting? Explain that the team is going to do a simple survey to find out. Based on the results, they will decide how to spread the composting message further.</p>												
Main session	<p>Show pupils the printed survey sheets and read through the questions together. Use the A3 sheet to model using a tally to record pupils' responses to each question. Emphasise the importance of asking the questions in a neutral way to avoid leading pupils towards the correct answers.</p> <p>Discuss with the team how many children they think should be surveyed.</p> <p><i>Would it be fair to talk to 5 children in a school of 350? Why not?</i></p> <p>Statisticians have formulae for working out sample sizes for different types of survey. The table below shows a sample size to be reasonably sure you are getting a good picture of your pupils' composting knowledge.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>KS2 pupils</th> <th>Sample size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>60</td> <td>33</td> </tr> <tr> <td>120</td> <td>44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>180</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>240</td> <td>53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>360</td> <td>58</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	KS2 pupils	Sample size	60	33	120	44	180	50	240	53	360	58
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<p>Main session (cont.)</p>	<p>To calculate a sample size based on your exact pupil numbers see the additional resources section for a web link.</p> <p>Once you have decided how many pupils to survey, discuss with the team how to choose which pupils these should be. It is important to include children of different ages - the easiest way to do this is to divide your total sample size between your KS2 classes. Then decide how to select the individual pupils from each class. If you ask for volunteers you risk getting a sample of compost enthusiasts, so it is better to do a 'lucky dip'.</p> <p>Finally, discuss logistics such as timing and how pupils will be grouped for conducting the survey. If your Eco Team meets at lunch time, it may be possible for pupils to conduct the survey straight away, talking to pupils in the playground. If the team meets after school, discuss the best way to conduct the survey, sharing out responsibilities within the group.</p>
<p>Plenary</p>	<p>Having conducted the survey, pupils input their results into the compost survey results spreadsheet, which generates simple graphs and charts. Analyse and discuss the results of the survey. Key questions are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do pupils know what can and cannot be composted? <i>All items on the survey can be composted except food cans, plastic bags, crisp packets and bubble wrap.</i> 2. Do pupils know what composting equipment you have at school? 3. Do pupils understand why composting is important? <i>All statements on the survey are correct except 'Composting helps recycle plastic and metal' and 'Composting makes more pupils cycle to school.'</i> <p>Are there any knowledge gaps or common misunderstandings? What can the Eco Team do to fill these gaps? They could, for example, plan a compost themed assembly; make new labels for compost caddies; run a poster design competition; or make a compost themed display for the Eco notice board.</p>
<p>Extension or simplification</p>	<p>If the results of your survey show that your KS2 pupils are already knowledgeable about composting, discuss how to celebrate this expertise and build on it by, for example, educating pupils about the importance of balancing 'greens' and 'browns.' For more information on 'greens and browns' see 'The Compost Mix' in the introductory section at the front of this handbook.</p> <p>If you are planning a campaign to raise awareness of composting, or introducing new composting equipment, conduct this survey before and after your whole-school activities, and compare the results of the two surveys.</p>
<p>Additional resources</p>	<p>Use www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html to calculate a sample size based on your pupil numbers. Set a 10% margin of error and a 90% confidence level. The population size is your number of KS2 pupils on roll. Leave the response distribution at 50%.</p>



Don't let Devon go to waste



Eco Activity: May

Compost survey: Recording sheet for pupils

Date of survey: _____ Number of children to be surveyed: _____

Names of people conducting the survey: _____

Record the year group of each child taking part in your survey using a tally:

Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6

Ask:

1) Do you know what composting is?

Yes

No

Not sure

--	--	--

2) Do you compost at home?

Yes

No

Not sure

--	--	--

3) What do you think should be put in a compost bin?

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Grass clippings			Plastic bags		
Leaves			Vegetable peelings		
Food cans			Crisp packets		
Cardboard			Egg shells		
Shredded paper			Banana skins		
Sawdust			Bubble wrap		

4) What composting equipment do we use at our school?

			None
'Dalek' composter	Jora	Ridan	
			Not sure
Hot Box	Slatted composter	ScotSpin	

5) Which statements about composting do you agree with?

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Composting helps wildlife in the school grounds.			
Composting reduces the amount of waste we send to landfill sites.			
Composting helps us to recycle plastic and metal.			
Composting saves the school money.			
Composting helps us grow our own fruit and vegetables.			
Composting makes more pupils cycle to school.			