



LET IT ROT!

YOU WILL NEED:

- photos of compost bins or Calderdale compost leaflet
- ready-made compost or soil to show class prior to exercise
- two 2 litre plastic (water or juice) bottles with caps
- sharp scissors
- a nylon stocking
- waterproof tape
- a rubber band

AIM

- To understand the role of composting in reducing waste
- For students to create their own compost bottle from their own organic waste and watch the process unfold

STARTER

- Brainstorm/ discussion 'what is compost?'
- Explain terms 'organic waste', 'decompose', 'circle of life' (notes below)
- Generate discussion on organic waste created at school eg. how much organic waste goes in classroom bins, playground litter bins, canteen bins? If organic waste was composted would this make a difference to the amount of rubbish in the school and sent to landfill?

DEVELOPMENT

- Show some compost to the class, pass it around let them handle it or take class outside to look at soil in the school grounds. Students make link between compost and organic waste.
- Show leaflet or photos of compost bins does anyone recognise a compost bin or have one in their garden at home

MAIN ACTIVITY

HOW TO MAKE THE COMPOST BOTTLE:

1. Cut one bottle, 'A,' across its shoulders and across the base.
2. Cut a second bottle, 'B,' about two inches below its shoulders and leave its base attached.
3. Wrap a piece of nylon stocking or netting around the neck of bottle B (the cap should be removed), and secure it with a rubber band.
4. Invert the top portion of bottle B and place it inside the base of bottle B. Tape the two parts together. Place the middle part of bottle A inside the inverted portion of bottle B. Next, add the remaining part of bottle A and make a hinge with a piece of tape. Leave the cap on the bottle.
5. With the point of the scissors, punch 10-12 small air holes into the bottle.



REDUCE REUSE REPAIR RECYCLE REUSE REPAIR RECYCLE

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TO MAKE THE COMPOST Add organic materials through the hinge, along with just enough water to moisten the materials. Periodically add a little water. Observe changes in the temperature, colour, texture, and volume of the materials. When the compost is dark and crumbly, it is ready to use.

HEALTH & SAFETY: Do not use dairy products or meat/animal products in your compost. Never eat any of the material in your compost. Always wash your hands after handling the compost bottle. Also check students to make sure nobody is allergic to mould.

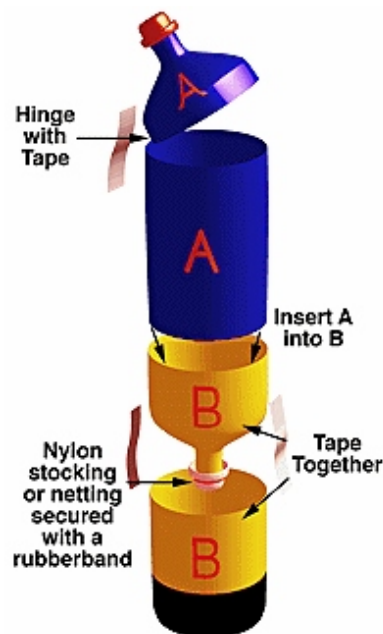
PLENARY

Groups share findings.

- what's in compost bottles
- what has happened / is happening
- weekly check-up on compost, taking notes.

POSSIBLE HOMEWORK

- link to activities measuring organic waste at home
- adverts, posters, promotional material
- artwork depicting circle of life
- school composting project in school grounds



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Compost is a mixture of organic materials (things that were once alive) such as weeds, grass mowings and kitchen scraps. These decay with the help of worms, insects and bacteria into a dark crumbly material, which looks a bit like soil. This is called compost.

WHY DO PEOPLE MAKE COMPOST?

Adding compost to the soil helps to keep it healthy.

Just as we need to eat a balanced diet with vitamins and minerals to stay fit and well, plants need nutrients too if they are to grow well and be healthy. Compost provides these nutrients. Compost has the advantage of reducing the amount of rubbish thrown away. About 30% of household waste is compostable. This is almost 1 out of every 3 things we throw away. Compost also helps the soil hold the correct amount of water. It helps stop it from drying out, which would starve the plants, and from getting too wet, which can drown the plants.

WHAT CAN BE COMPOSTED?

Almost anything that was once living can be composted.

WHAT CAN'T BE COMPOSTED?

Meat and fish scraps, fat and bones should not be put in compost. Although these are from creatures that were once living, they will make your compost heap smell nasty and may attract vermin (rats, foxes and other hungry creatures which will root through the compost in search of a meal).