



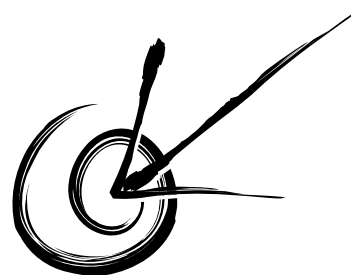
# The Litterbug

## Lesson aims

### Have you ever been a litterbug?

Students will learn about the school's litter stream and conduct a litter audit in their school. They will compare their results to the Clean Up Australia Day *Rubbish Report*.

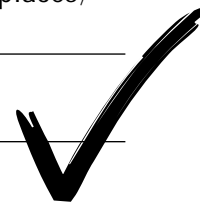
The students will develop a positive attitude against littering. They will develop solutions to help prevent and reduce littering.



## Learning outcomes

### As outlined in the National Profiles:

Studies of Society and Environment	Place and Space	Features of places; People and places; Care of places
	Resources	Use of resources; Management and enterprise
	Natural and Social Systems	Natural systems; Economic systems
Mathematics	Chance and Data	Collecting data; Displaying and summarising data; Interpreting data
The Arts	Creating, Making and Presenting	Exploring and developing ideas; Using skills, techniques and processes Presenting





## Background information

The single most common litter item in Australia is the cigarette butt. Other common forms of litter include paper, food wrappers, fast-food packaging, bottle caps, glass pieces, glass alcohol bottles, plastic straws and soft drink bottles.

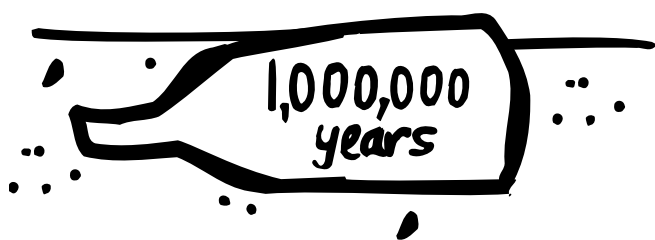
### What effect does litter have on the environment?

- Kills aquatic life directly (eg. through choking) and indirectly through its impacts on water quality.
- Causes blockages of the drainage system and flooding.
- Dangerous to people particularly when it involves items such as broken glass, needles and syringes.
- May be a fire hazard (lit cigarettes being thrown from vehicles).

### How long will litter last?

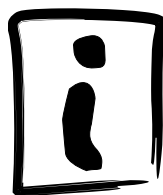
Litter takes a long time to break down in the environment.

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| • Glass bottles         | 1,000,000 years   |
| • Plastic bags          | up to 1,000 years |
| • Aluminium cans        | 80 - 100 years    |
| • Plastic containers    | 20 - 30 years     |
| • Cigarette butts       | 1 - 5 years       |
| • Orange & banana peels | 2 - 5 weeks       |



### Why do people litter?

- People think the item is not litter (cigarettes, food scraps).
- People are not willing to look for a bin.
- Lack of social pressure to do the right thing.
- Absence of realistic penalties or consistent enforcement.
- Social rebellion.
- Lack of knowledge of the environmental effects of littering.
- Poor packaging design.
- Amount of litter already present at a particular site.
- Presence and wording of signs referring to litter.
- Number/placement and appearance of bins at/near the site.



## Sources & further information

#### Clean Up Australia:

produce an annual rubbish report.

[www.cleanup.org.au](http://www.cleanup.org.au)

**NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change:** the site provides some useful facts about litter.

[www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

#### Victorian Litter Action Alliance:

background information.

[www.litter.vic.gov.au/](http://www.litter.vic.gov.au/)



## Classroom activities

### 1. Background Discussion

- Ask the class what “littering” is. Ask the class whether any of them have littered. What was littered? Why? Do the students know of any areas in or around the school where litter can be found?

### 2. Litter Collection

- Draw a map of your school playground and mark where there is litter found and where the rubbish bins are located.
- Divide the class into small groups. Using student suggestions, select a destination for each group to search for litter. The locations can be indoors or outdoors and must be as specific as possible. Identify the locations on the map. The goal of the exercise is to collect and analyse all litter located within the selected area. Measure the distance from the rubbish bin to where you found the litter. Allow 15 - 30 minutes for the litter collection.

### 3. Collection Results & Analysis

- After the litter collection, have each group examine the collected litter materials. Each group should categorise the litter and determine the most frequent litter components.
- Record the data on the board, overhead or computer.
- Have each group present its experience to the class. Each group should identify its litter search area on the map.
- After the group presentations, discuss:  
**Which** locations yielded the most litter and why?

**Can** any of the littered items be recycled or used in some other way?

**Can** the source of the litter i.e. human, water, animal be identified?

**Does** the school or community have rules or laws against littering? If so, are the rules or laws enforced? What penalties are involved?

**How** is litter managed at your school?

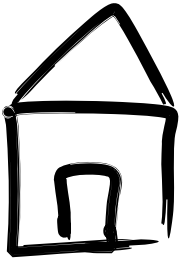
**Does** the school provide garbage bins near the litter locations?

**How** can the amount of littering be prevented?

- Compare results to the Clean Up Australia Day *Rubbish Report* available from the Clean Up website [www.cleanup.org.au](http://www.cleanup.org.au)

### 4. Anti-Litter Campaign

- Ask students to complete the *Worksheet: How Do People Litter?* to assist them in understanding how people litter.
- Ask the students to develop an anti-litter campaign. Depending on their ability the campaign can include any of the following activities:
  - Poster
  - Drawing
  - Logo or slogan
  - Advertisement
  - Radio jingle
  - Letter
- Ask students if they have seen any anti-littering campaigns on television or through the media. Using the background information discuss:
  - Why** and how do people litter?
  - What** are the most popular forms of litter in the school and outside of school?
  - What** type of litter stereotype will be targeted in the campaign? Refer to the *Worksheet: How do people litter?*
  - What** will be the key message of the campaign?
  - What** words can be used to communicate the key message?
  - Should** the campaign target a type of litter?



## Extension / Home-based activities

### Lower Primary

#### Before and After

Draw a picture of what you would like your school to look like before/after the anti-litter campaign.

### Middle Primary

#### Ongoing Audit

Undertake the litter audit on an ongoing basis to measure any changes in littering. The changes could be plotted on a graph.

#### Litter Spies

Watch students in the playground during lunch and record the number of times you see students littering. When you spot a student littering approach them and ask them if they did litter.

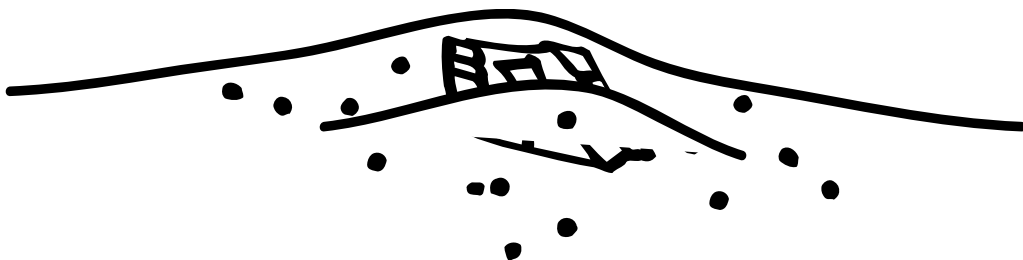
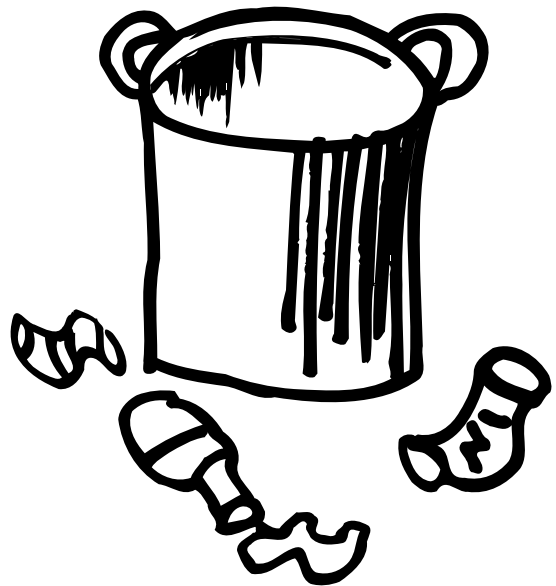
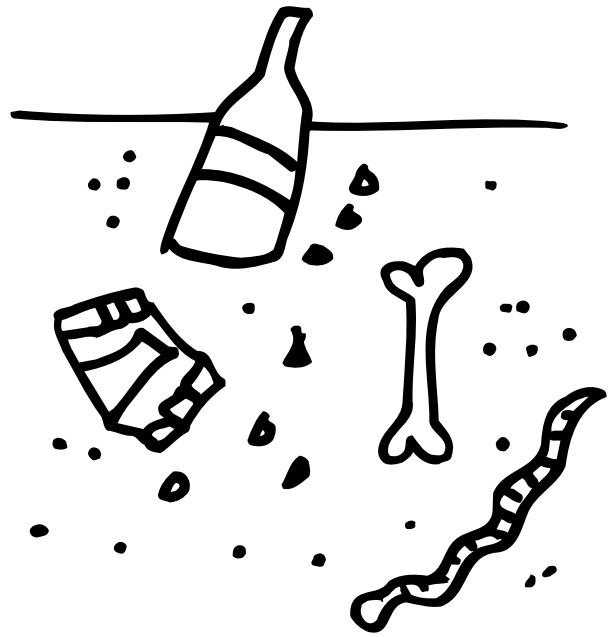
### Upper Primary

#### How do we Compare?

Compare your litter audit results to the Clean Up Australia *Rubbish Report*. The report can be downloaded from the website [www.cleanup.org.au](http://www.cleanup.org.au)

#### What's Your Opinion?

Interview friends and family on their attitudes towards littering asking them if they litter and what they think of people who do litter. You will need to develop a list of questions and analyse the results.



## The Litterbug

# Worksheet: How do people litter?

There are many types of litterbugs in the world. A study was completed by the Beverage Industry Environment Council, which gave names to these litterbugs. Read about some of them below.

- **Foul Shooting Litterbug**

Litter is thrown at a bin, it misses the bin and the person walks away.

- **Clean Sweeping Litterbug**

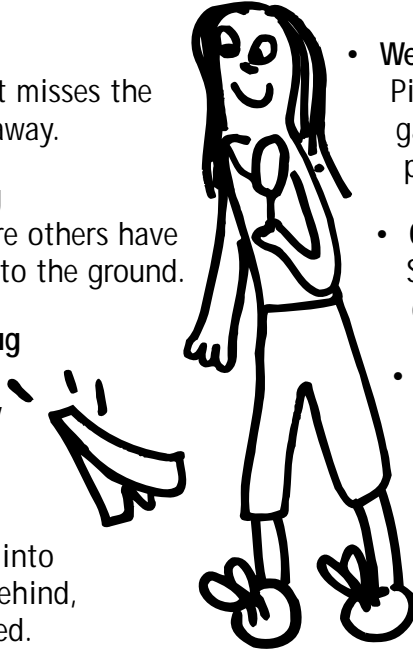
On arriving at a table where others have littered, waste is swept onto the ground.

- **Flagrant Flinging Litterbug**

Litter is flung through the air or dropped without any apparent concern.

- **90%ing Litterbug**

Most of the rubbish is put into the bin, but some is left behind, or smaller items are dropped.



- **Wedging Litterbug**

Pieces of litter are stuffed into gaps between seats and other places.

- **Grinding Litterbug**

Smokers who grind their cigarettes into the ground.

- **Inching Litterbug**

Litter is left and the person slowly moves away from it.

- **Undertaking Litterbug**

Litter is buried, often under sand at the beach.

Choose one of the litterbugs described above and draw a picture or cartoon on how they litter.

Name of my litterbug \_\_\_\_\_