



# Put Rubbish Away for Good!

## Lesson aims

**Students will become rubbish detectives and investigate areas of unsightly rubbish in their school or community.**

Students will need to take photographs or draw the "crime scene", investigate where the rubbish came from, profile the perpetrators of the rubbish and look at ways of preventing and reducing rubbish. Students will become aware of the various forms of rubbish found in their environment, where the rubbish came from and how it can be prevented, reduced, reused or recycled.



## Learning outcomes

As outlined in the National Profiles:

<b>Studies of Society and the Environment</b>	Resources	Use of resources. Management & enterprise.
	Natural & Social Systems	Natural systems. Economic systems.
<b>English</b>	Writing	Texts; Contextual understanding; Linguistic structures and features; Strategies
	Reading and Viewing	Texts; Strategies
<b>The Arts</b>	Creating, Making and Presenting	Exploring and developing ideas. Using skills, techniques and processes. Presenting.





## Background information

**Rubbish** is one of the most visible signs of pollution. It is anything that is left where it is not meant to be. Rubbish is unsightly and dangerous. It can cause injury to people and wildlife. It encourages pest animals such as rats, mice and seagulls as well as the spread of germs and disease.

Not disposing of rubbish correctly is a serious offence and penalties up to \$2200 may be imposed in some states for people who are caught. There a number of ways we can reduce the rubbish crime rate including:

- Never dispose of rubbish incorrectly.
- Ask people to pick up their rubbish.
- Pick up the rubbish of others.
- Organise a classroom rubbish project.
- Talk to your family and friends about ways they can reduce rubbish.
- Run a local anti-rubbish campaign using posters, stickers, rubbish police etc.

**Waste** is the name given to everything that we throw away. After waste is collected from your rubbish bin most of it is buried in big holes in the ground called landfill sites.

Landfills produce a toxic liquid called leachate. Leachate is a mixture of rainwater that filters through the top of the landfill and other liquids in the waste itself. The liquid mixes with substances such as organic acids (produced from rotting kitchen waste) and other hazardous substances. If not properly managed or collected leachate can make its way into the surrounding groundwater or surface waterways and be harmful to aquatic, plant, animal and human life.



## Sources & further information

**Clean Up Australia** Litter prevention in Schools programme.

[www.cleanup.org.au/attachments/LPS\\_guide.pdf](http://www.cleanup.org.au/attachments/LPS_guide.pdf)

**Environment ACT** Kids Zone section provides students with information on litter and waste in the ACT.

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

**Northern Territory Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment** provides links to their Litter Strategy to reduce litter and increase resource recovery.

[www.ipe.nt.gov.au](http://www.ipe.nt.gov.au)

**NSW EPA** provides facts about litter, litter laws and how to take action against litter.

[www.epa.nsw.gov.au/litter/factsaboutlitter.htm](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/litter/factsaboutlitter.htm)

**Queensland Environmental Protection Agency** provides information on waste regulation including offences for littering

[www.env.qld.gov.au/](http://www.env.qld.gov.au/)

**South Australia Department for Environment and Heritage** provides information on reducing rubbish.

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

**Tasmania Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment** provides information on the litter management and legislation in Tasmania.

[www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au)

**Victorian Litter Action Alliance** coordinates litter prevention activities in Victoria.

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

**Waste Wise WA** for information on litter fines and penalties in Western Australia.

[www.wastewise.wa.gov.au](http://www.wastewise.wa.gov.au)

**Australian Conservation Foundation:** Provides fact sheets on a range of environmental issues.

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

**Paper Making:** Guide to making paper.

[www.infostuff.com/kids/paper.htm](http://www.infostuff.com/kids/paper.htm)

**Waste Services NSW:** Provides information on landfills.

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

## Rubbish Most Wanted



- Ask students to categorise the evidence and determine the most frequent rubbish components for example plastic, paper, metal.
- Using their evidence, ask students to draw a picture of the type of behaviour they believe led to the crime. For example:  
**'foul shooting litterbug'** where rubbish is thrown into a bin, misses the bin and the person walks away or **'wedging litterbug'**



### Classroom activities

#### 1. Find a rubbish 'crime scene'

- Introduce the term rubbish, what it means and what effect it has on the environment. Ask students if they are aware of what happens to people if they are caught throwing away rubbish in the school and wider community?
- Ask the class if they know of any areas in or around the school where rubbish can be found?
- Divide the class into small groups. Using student suggestions, select a destination for each group to use as their rubbish 'crime scene'.
- Depending on their ability and the equipment available ask the students to take photographs or draw the 'crime scene'.
- Students will now have to collect the rubbish as evidence. Wearing gloves, students should place the evidence into a bag or box so that it can be taken back to the classroom.
- Once back in the classroom ask each group to examine the evidence. Wearing gloves and using a piece of cardboard each group should display and label each piece of evidence.

where pieces of rubbish are stuffed into gaps between seats and other places.

Refer to *Kids Clean Up Kit Activity: The Litterbug* for other ways people litter.

- Have each group present their crime scene to the class. They should display:
  - **A crime scene photo / drawing**
  - **A collage of evidence**
  - **Behavioural drawings**

After the group presentations, discuss:

- Which crime scene yielded the most rubbish?
- Can any of the collected items be recycled or used in some other way?
- What types of behaviours caused the rubbish crime?
- What was the most popular behaviour and why?
- Does the school have rules against littering? If so, are the rules enforced? Who has the authority to enforce the rules? What penalties are involved?
- Does the school provide rubbish or recycling bins near the crime scenes?
- How can we reduce the rubbish crime rate? Reinforce positive behaviour, i.e. correct items into recycling bins.

# Mayor announces that the city has run out of room for rubbish.

## Rubbish bins overflowing!

In a news conference yesterday, the Mayor announced that the rubbish bins have started to overflow. Despite the Mayor's efforts to find a suitable location for a new landfill, the rubbish crisis has not been resolved. There have also been reports that the landfills are releasing bright yellow toxic liquid into the local creek – polluting our water. Dead animals and fish have been seen on the banks of the creek. An

emergency meeting has been called for this evening to discuss final plans for dumping the city's rubbish.

During the news conference, the Mayor said, "Er, our best plan so far is to eliminate school playgrounds. If we dumped the rubbish in the space currently occupied by all school playgrounds and sports fields we should be able to resolve the problem for another year or two. And hey, the kids will still have their classrooms to play in...".



Parents and students began protesting the proposed action but stopped when they realised that the next best plan was to dump the rubbish in everyone's backyards.

## 2. Creative Writing

- Ask the students to imagine what it would be like if the city ran out of room for rubbish. Read them the make-believe news story from the year 2025.
- Ask students to prepare a make believe newspaper article or newspaper picture from the year 2025 about issues that might arise from running out of room to put rubbish. Some story items might be about:

**What** effect does the rubbish have on hygiene and health?

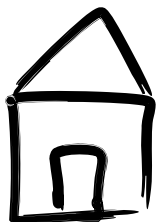
**What** does all the rubbish smell like?

**What** is the rubbish made up of in the year 2025?

**Why** is there so much rubbish?

**Why** aren't people recycling?





## Extension / Home-based activities

### Lower Primary

Invite your local police station to hold a school talk about littering and what happens to people who are caught littering.

Design and paint your school's rubbish bins.

### Middle Primary

Investigate if the rate of litter crime in the school is increasing or decreasing and what is causing the change. Students may need to interview teachers to work out the number of litter penalties occurring.

Design a bumper sticker or a postcard encouraging people not to litter. Send to family and friends.

### Upper Primary

Research the penalties and fines imposed for littering in your state or territory. Information is available from your local council and/or police department.

Organise a rubbish police beat or litter blitz during one week every school term. Teams of students can patrol the school wearing rubbish police badges and look for people who are littering. Rewards should also be given to students who put rubbish in the bin.

