

Recycling Action Plan Toolkit

Challenge Objective:

Investigate how recycling works at your school or in your community, then create a plan to make it better.

Challenge Overview:

Through this toolkit, you'll become a recycling advocate. You can do this on your own, with friends, as a club, or with your class. You can...

- Explore how recycling works (or doesn't work) at your school or in the community
- Talk to people who deal with recycling every day
- Research how other entities are solving similar problems
- Create an action plan to improve the process
- Share your ideas with decision-makers who can help you make a difference

Short on Time? Choose Your Path:



Explorer:

Do the Explore and Research steps only



Storyteller:

Focus on Interview and Design steps



Investigator:

Do Research, Design, and create a Poster or Slide Deck



Advocate:

Focus on Design and Take Action steps

EXPLORE

Goal:

Understand recycling management in your area and how effective it is.

Choose a site (school, library, community center). Once you've chosen a spot, walk around and observe:

- What bins are available? Are they labeled?
- Are they being used correctly?
- Try to find the recycling policy or research the management system in your community or at the site. You can ask a teacher, an administrator, or look online for this information.
- Reflect on: What's working? What needs improvement?

Optional: Take photos of your discoveries to present with your findings later.



LEARN FROM AN EXPERT

Goal:

Get additional info from those in the know.

Choose one or more people to interview at your site, like:

- A custodian, teacher, or administrator
- A facilities or maintenance staff member

Sample questions you can ask:

- What recycling rules exist here?
- What problems do you encounter?
- What would make recycling easier or more effective here?

Make sure to take notes to include in your action plan.

No one to interview? Watch a short video from sanitation workers, school green teams, or email your questions to an expert.



RESEARCH

Goal:

Find out what's working in other communities.

Activity:

Research how other schools, communities, or groups are improving recycling in their area.

Look up examples such as:

- Schools with Green Teams or recycling clubs
- Cities with strong recycling programs
- Campaigns that teach proper sorting

Write down two or three ideas that could work at your site.



DOCUMENT YOUR FINDINGS

Goal:

Turn your findings into a realistic plan.

Activity:

Think about a plan of action to improve recycling in your community, along with who would need to be involved in that process.

Use this structure:

- What's the problem and why does it matter?
- What's your evidence? (observations, interviews, research)
- What's your solution or steps that should be taken?
- Who needs to be involved and what are the next steps?

Present your plan in a way that fits your style: letter, slide deck, PSA, short video, or report.



Make sure to keep your idea clear, focused, and research based. Refer to the templates attached for inspiration!

TAKE ACTION

Goal:

Share your plan with those who can help and spark change.

It's time to make your research heard. Choose how to share your work (or come up with your own idea!):

- Email your plan to a teacher, principal, or community group
- Present it in person at a town meeting or a club
- Share it through a newsletter or your school announcements
- Make a short video or TikTok-style clip showing your recycling plan in action
- Start a “Green Team” or club to implement your plan, track progress together, and share more ideas



REFLECTION

Ask yourself:

- In what ways do you think your recycling action plan made a real difference in your school or community?
- How could you measure the impact of your project beyond the numbers?
- How could your experience with this plan inspire change at a broader level?

From raising awareness to creating lasting change, your energy and ideas have the power to make a difference far beyond this project.

