

The Great Paper Debate



Background.

To order to maintain a healthy compost heap, a supply of 'brown' material is needed to balance out the wet, soggy fruit. In school, paper is an excellent item to add to your compost bin to balance out the fruit. The paper soaks up any extra moisture and if scrunched up, provides vital air spaces for the composting creatures.

However, most types of paper can also be recycled and many companies now run paper collections for schools. The process of recycling paper involves transporting the used paper to mills where it is shredded, pulped and pressed into new sheets. The difficulty is deciding which is the most environmentally friendly option. By constructing and presenting a persuasive verbal case, children consider both recycling and composting as sustainable options and draw conclusions on which option they think is best.

Literacy

NLS Year 5, Term 2, Persuasion 1

Learning Objectives: Children should learn: -

- To construct an argument in note form, persuading others of a point of view.
- To present a clear, logical verbal case, using a combination of fact and persuasion.

Learning Outcomes: Children: -

- Work together to produce an argument for or against composting paper, noting down any main points.
- Verbally present their case to the class and respond to opposing comments.
- Draw conclusions from the debate, considering both viewpoints.

Teaching Activity

Note this is a long session and may be split into two or three shorter sessions.

1. Use the power-point presentation to discuss how paper is recycled and how paper is composted. Ask for any initial thoughts or comments.
2. Explain that the class will be working in four teams. Two will be arguing for recycling, two will be arguing for composting. Each team has a copy of either the recycling or the composting background story and a fact sheet.
3. Give time for each team to create their arguments using the fact sheet, persuasive phrases and any of their own thoughts. Teams can make notes and draw pictures.
4. Each team selects one (or two) 'representatives' who will present their case to the rest of the class.

Holding the debate

5. Ask the paper recyclers to present their cases first. Composters note down any questions they want to ask. Then swap over - composters present, recyclers listen.
6. At the end of all the presentations, teams get to ask their questions.
7. Hold a 5-10 minute time out for teams to plan their responses to any questions.
8. Ask each team to present their responses then hold a general discussion. Which is best, paper or recycling? Is one always better than the other? Is a compromise needed?
9. Decide on a set of rules for which types of paper go in which collection box.

The Great Paper Debate
Team 1 - The Recyclers.

At 11:00am in the morning, John is sitting in his literacy lesson. He is trying to write instructions on how to make a piece of toast, when he realises he has made a mistake and missed out an important step – put the bread in the toaster! Frustrated, he scrunches up his piece of white paper and throws it in the classroom composting caddy. ‘At least it will rot down to make compost’, he thinks. Then John has second thoughts... Perhaps he should have put the paper in the recycling box, then it would be recycled into a new sheet of paper. Unsure, John decided to ask his teacher which would be best.

“Why don’t you spend the rest of the lesson finding out about paper recycling and come and tell me what you decide”, she suggests. So John gets to work.

Use John’s findings to argue that it is better to recycle paper than put it in the compost bin.

Think about:

1. What is paper made from? Where do the trees come from?
2. How much electricity is used to recycle paper? Is this more or less than making paper from new?
3. What is recycled paper used for?
4. Your ideas why it is better to recycle paper.

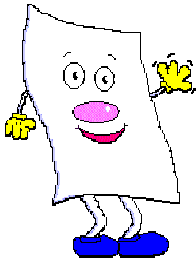
What we found out

Where paper comes from



1. Paper is made from trees. The trees are chopped down and the wood chipped and turned in to pulp to make paper.
2. Most, but not all, trees come from special forests where trees are grown just to make paper. New trees are planted to replace the trees chopped down.
3. It takes 17 trees to make 1 tonne of paper.

Types of paper



1. There are lots of different types or 'grades' of paper. White paper, glossy paper, magazines, newspaper and cardboard are just a few.
2. White printing paper is the best or highest grade; cardboard is the worst or lowest grade. Each time a piece of paper is recycled, it becomes a lower grade. Factories add new pulp to recycled paper to stop this happening.
3. A piece of paper can be recycled 6 times before it is no use.
4. Sugar paper cannot be recycled.

How paper is recycled



1. Paper is recycled in a special factory or mill. These mills need to be built, costing time, money and using materials such as metal.
2. It takes less electricity to recycle a piece of paper than it does to make a piece of paper from new.
3. Less water is used to recycle a piece of paper than making it from new.
4. Less rubbish is created recycling paper than making it from new.

How paper is composted



1. The paper is scrunched into balls and put in the compost bin. Cardboard is twisted.
2. Take care which types of paper you use. Glossy magazine paper takes a long time to rot down. Brightly coloured paper may have harmful chemicals in the colour.
3. Worms, snails, woodlice and other composting creatures then rot down the paper to make compost.
4. Compost can be used to grow more trees, plants or flowers.

The Great Paper Debate
Team 2 - The Composters.

At 11:00am in the morning, Amy is sitting in her literacy lesson. She is trying to write instructions on how to make a piece of toast, when she realises she has made a mistake and missed out an important step – put the bread in the toaster! Frustrated, she scrunches up her piece of white paper and throws it in the recycling box. ‘At least someone will use it to make a new piece of paper’, she thinks. Then Amy has second thoughts... Perhaps she should have put the composting caddy, where it will rot down to make compost. Unsure, Amy decided to ask her teacher which would be best.

“Why don’t you spend the rest of the lesson finding out about composting and come and tell me what you decide”, he suggests. So Amy gets to work...

Use Amy’s findings to argue that it is better to recycle paper than put it in the compost bin.

Think about:

1. What the compost can be used for.
2. *Where* you can compost your piece of paper. (What do you not need to build?)
3. Can all types of paper be recycled?
4. Your ideas why it is better to compost paper.