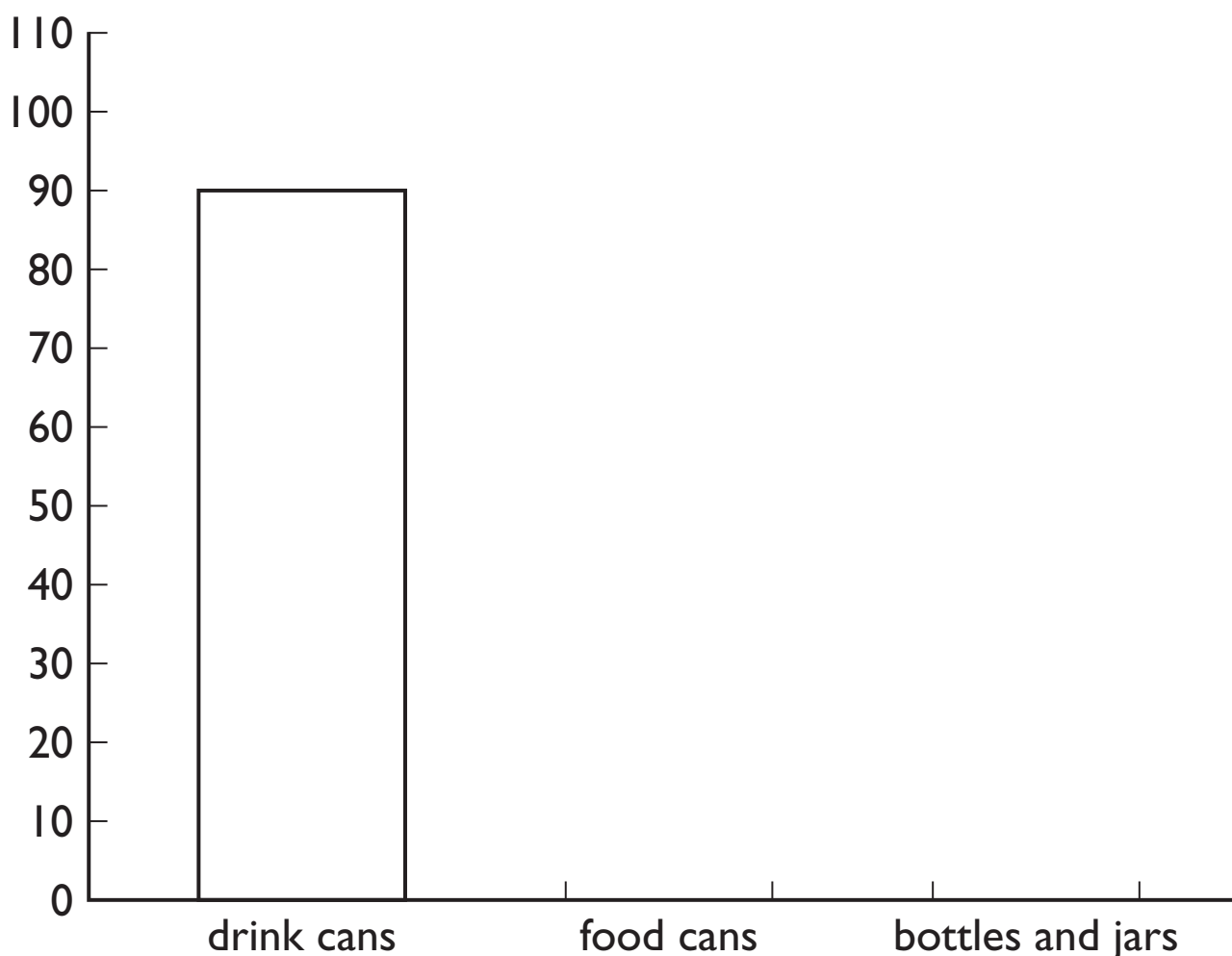


The waste we create: Ourselves

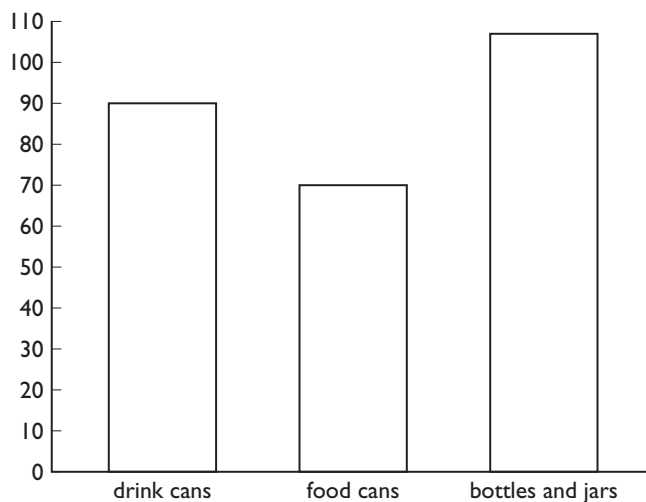
We each use many things that are sold in cans, bottles and jars. All of these can be recycled.

In the space below, complete a bar chart of these facts. One bar has already been done for you. Each year, each of us uses, on average, 90 drink cans, 70 food cans, and 107 bottles and jars.



Answers

The completed bar chart should look like this:



Notes

This cross-curricular activity uses simple mathematics charting to show the amount of various categories of waste that we each create.

To give students some idea of the volume of each type of waste, see how many of each type of waste are needed to fill a waste bin in class. Then discuss the recycling bins that are found in public places and why they are placed publicly, rather than have the recyclables collected from each household. This can create a little more mathematics. If we get through 107 bottles and jars a year, how many do we get through in a

week? The answer is about 2. But a household may have several people in it, so the total per person needs to be multiplied by the number in the household.

All the same, the volume per household is small and so it is better to wait until the volume has built up. Then it is most convenient to take bottles and jars to the bottle bank where we can enjoy listening to them smash up as they are dropped.

Why do we want to smash them up? To reduce their bulk so we can fit more in each bin.

Cans do not break in this way, but we can reduce their bulk by squashing them. Many councils also collect recycling from homes if it is put in the recycling boxes provided to householders.

Extensions

You can go on to look at how we might store the waste cans and bottles until we have enough to recycle. Some people keep a number of small dustbins next to the main bin for this purpose. This keeps them tidy and out of harm's way.

Students could do an audit to find out how many of their families recycle and how they do it in an average week. It would also show how many people do not recycle.