

Plastic recycling labels

Most plastic packaging is now labelled to help recycling.



PETE



HDPE



V



LDPE



PP



PS



OTHER

Using the pile of plastic you collected in the previous activity, look for the recycling label. It will look like one of the symbols shown above. If it doesn't have a label, put it to one side.

Now look at your pile of unlabelled items. Most plastic bags are LDPE, so add these to pile (4). Cling film is usually LDPE as well so add this to pile (4).

Look at the others. Does a lack of labelling make it hard to recycle it?



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Weigh each pile and write the answers here:

(1) gm; (2) gm; (3) gm; (4) gm; (5) gm; (6) gm; (7) gm.

Make a chart of the results on the reverse of this sheet.

Answers

This will depend on the plastic collected by each student.

This activity should be done in conjunction with the previous activity so that you do not end up with two lots of waste to dispose of!

Notes

This is an extremely important activity.

For the first time, students will notice the labelling on many packages and they will begin to understand that there are many kinds of plastic. Because many plastics look so alike (but have very different properties) they will then begin to understand the need to sort the material.

They will also begin to see the most common types of plastic in items thrown in the bin. Of course, plastic is used more widely than this, but material in the bin is an indication of what is most often thrown away and wasted.

Try to find a reason for including such items as plastic dinner plates, plastic knives and forks and so on, as used in aircraft meals, many canteens and the like. Get students to discuss if there is any alternative to this. (Plastic in aircraft meals has been reintroduced after terrorist attacks, so a whole range of wider issues can be discussed if you wish).