

## **RECYCLING SURVEY**

### **K-12**

**OBJECTIVE:** The student will become familiar with popular attitudes toward recycling and the practice of recycling in the community.

**RESOURCES:** Duplication of survey forms, chalkboard.

**INTRODUCTION:** Many items present in household waste are recyclable provided that the householder has the initiative to recycle and a convenient outlet exists for the recycled materials. It has been estimated that recycling takes only a few minutes each day. While over 50% of residential waste is recyclable, only about one percent is presently recycled in Pennsylvania.

Some communities collect recyclable materials with regular garbage collection. Some communities rely on householders to transport recyclables to a collection center. Some collection centers pay for certain recyclable materials.

Recycling helps to conserve energy and natural resources, contributes to the economy, and reduces the amount of municipal waste requiring disposal. Recycling also promotes an awareness of the finiteness of our natural resources and offers an environmentally acceptable method of municipal waste management.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Engage the class in a discussion on the subject of recycling. Survey the class to determine whether any students assist in a family recycling effort, or recycle on their own. Ask for descriptions of how recycling is accomplished and what materials are recycled. Why do they recycle? Is money earned from the effort? Have any students visited a recycling center? Solicit descriptions and impressions.
2. Suggest to the class that it would be interesting to discover how others feel about recycling. A survey could be conducted which would also determine how many others in the school and community recycle.
3. Have the class brainstorm a list of questions that they might ask to others about recycling. Suggestions include:
  - Do you know the meaning of the term "recycle"?
  - Do you recycle? Why?
  - Why don't you recycle?
  - Do you think you should recycle?
  - What materials do you recycle?

- How do you recycle?
- Where do you recycle?
- Do you get paid for recycled materials?
- How much time is devoted to recycling each day or week?
- Do you think you could recycle more?

Assemble the questions selected into a logical order and an easily presentable format. Allow sufficient space for answers. A single page survey form limited to ten or fewer questions is suggested.

4. Duplicate the survey form and distribute one or several forms to each student. Ask the students to interview students in other classes, or teachers, neighbors, friends, relatives, etc., completing a survey form for each interview. Allow several days or a weekend for the survey.
5. Collect the survey forms. List the questions or numbers of the questions on the chalkboard and compile the results. Develop percentages for each response.
6. Discuss the results with the class. Are certain materials recycled more frequently than others? Why? What is the recycling participation rate? Do any recyclers recycle more than one item? Do non-recyclers suggest common reasons for not recycling? Are the reasons valid? Why do people recycle?