

Is our community ready to recycle?

Context	All UK local authorities have recycling targets and initiatives aimed at reducing the amount of waste that goes into landfill or incineration. However, recycling rates vary hugely among communities and students may find it interesting to investigate the common mismatch between awareness of recycling and actual action.		
Length of time	Half day	Suitable locations	Town or village centre
Equipment needed	Blank map of the survey area; questionnaire		
Suggested delivery			Objectives and Key Skills
<p>Recycling facility survey</p> <p>Students can map everywhere they see a facility which allows them to recycle waste within a predefined survey area. Such facilities would include litter bins with recycle options, textile or glass recycling bins in car parks, specific product recycling points in public spaces (e.g. battery drop offs) etc. Students can devise a key and map each facility, producing a final map of areas where public recycling is easy to do as well as recycling black spots where there are no public recycling facilities.</p> <p>Recycling attitude survey</p> <p>Students can design a short survey that they can ask to members of the public. This can be designed as a Likert scale where respondents have to answer whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or are neutral about a series of statements. These statements could cover concepts such as inclination to recycle, frequency of recycling habits, ability to recycle, barriers that stop people recycling and what impact future additional recycling facilities might have on respondents' recycling practices.</p> <p>Litter survey</p> <p>Students can carry out litter surveys in different areas of the town or village. As well as noting the volume of litter found in different locations, students should also note how recyclable the litter is that they find. Students will then be able to map whether recyclable litter is found in areas where there is a facility black spot, or whether the abundance or lack of recycling facilities has no impact on whether people actually choose to recycle.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can use a variety of mapping techniques (including GIS) to compare recycling facilities with where litter is and is not found in large volumes. Students can use the data from the Likert survey to find areas of consensus and areas of conflict in the way local people approach recycling.
Potential risks to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should be careful when interviewing members of the public to ensure that they are stopped in a place that does not place either themselves or their interviewee in the line of traffic. Students should always work in groups when interviewing members of the public and ensure interviews take place in visible public places. 		
Possible follow-up activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can look at secondary data from their local authority to see how recycling rates have changed in their area over time. With their investigation in mind, students can suggest a new initiative that their local authority could use to encourage more people or industries to recycle their waste. 		
Useful links	<p>Recycle now https://www.recyclenow.com/ (information on what can be recycled in one's local area)</p> <p>Local authority recycling data https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results</p>		