

Sort You Out!

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THEME	Materials & Sorting	MATERIALS (Very Low Prep)
GRADE LEVEL(S)	1 - 2	3 big colour-coded signs or papers labelled: - Blue = Recycling - X Red = Garbage - Green = Compost - A list of 10 - 15 common items to call out (e.g., juice box, apple core, chip bag) Optional: printed images of the items - A small open space in the classroom or hallway
ESTIMATED TIME	30 - 40 minutes	
KEY TERMS	Recycle Give old materials a new life. Garbage Goes to the trash. Compost Food and nature stuff.	

Why This Lesson Matters

Young learners build understanding **through motion and imagination**. This activity helps students internalize sorting categories by becoming part of the process: they embody the items and decide where they go. It's simple, fun, and helps them remember what goes where.

Learning Objectives

- Recognize basic waste categories: recycling, garbage, and compost.
- Respond physically to identify where items belong.
- Begin developing sorting habits through movement and play.



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Lesson Sequence

1. Hook (5 min)

Show or describe a common object like a banana peel. Ask students where it belongs and introduce the idea that today, they will pretend to be the items and sort themselves.

2. Mini Lesson (5 min)

Explain the three bin categories with examples and the colour-coded signs. Reinforce with 2 sample items per bin.

3. Main Activity – “Sort You Out!” Floor Game (15 – 20 min)

1. Tape each bin sign in a different corner of the room.
2. Teacher calls out an item (e.g., ‘Yogurt cup!’).
3. Students pretend to be that item: they can make silly shapes or movements.
4. Teacher says: Ready? Sort! – and the kids must run to the bin they think is correct.
5. Ask 1-2 students: ‘Why did you go there?’ Confirm and explain as needed.
6. Repeat with 8-10 items.

4. Wrap-Up (5 min)

Ask students what surprised them, which one was the trickiest one, or what colours are the bins at home.

Assessment / Understanding Check

- Observe student choices during sorting.
- Ask 1 – 2 students per round to explain their bin choice.

Optional Extensions

DRAWING ACTIVITY	Students draw themselves as an item and show which bin they went to.
HOME CHALLENGE	Ask students to sort their after-school snack and/or dinner food packaging (e.g. pasta bag or box, fruit or yogurt containers, etc) with a family member tonight and report back on what they found.



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