

Be the Bin Patrol

SimplyRecycle.ca by MMŚM

School Signage Project

THEME	Materials & Sorting	MATERIALS (Flexible)
GRADE LEVEL(S)	Mixed Grades (Optional Extension Tier)	• Large paper or cardstock • Markers, pencil crayons, scissors, glue • Examples of recycling signs (optional) • School bin photos (optional) • Tape to hang signs • Recyclepedia app or recycling guide for guidance
ESTIMATED TIME	60 minutes (can be done over two sessions)	
KEY TERMS	Signage Posters or labels that give important information. Sorting rules Local instructions for what goes where.	
		KEY FEATURES OF THIS LESSON
		Cross-grade collaboration: Older students lead and guide, younger students contribute ideas and drawings. Real-world impact: Creates signage to improve actual school bin use. Creative and interactive: Design, colour, slogan writing, and peer discussion. Leadership and reflection: Great for building older students' confidence while helping younger ones learn.

Why This Lesson Matters

Students learn best when they teach each other. This activity empowers older students to reinforce their knowledge while younger students learn in a supportive, peer-led environment. The result improves sorting at school and builds community.

Learning Objectives

- Apply sorting knowledge to real school environments
- Collaborate across grades to design helpful waste bin signs.
- Communicate recycling rules in creative and clear ways.
- Promote leadership and peer education.



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Lesson Sequence

1. Kickoff (10 min)

Tour the classroom or hallway bins. Ask: 'What signs do we see? Are they helpful?' Discuss what's missing or confusing. Explain the challenge: each group will create new signs to help students sort properly.

2. Team Setup (5 min)

Create mixed-grade teams. Ideally, 1 - 2 older students per group. Let older students act as 'Bin Patrol Captains' to help guide the process.

3. Brainstorm (10 min)

Each group chooses 1 bin to focus on (garbage, recycling, compost, if available). They list: What goes in this bin? What common mistakes happen here?

4. Design Time (25 min)

Groups design a sign that uses images, short text, and colours. Encourage creativity and clarity. Signs should show: what belongs, what doesn't, and a fun reminder or slogan.

5. Share & Hang (10 - 15 min)

Each group presents their sign to the class. Then hang the signs near real bins or create a display wall. Bonus: give friendly names to bins (e.g. 'Blue Buddy', 'Nope Bin').

Assessment / Understanding Check

- Clarity and accuracy of the finished signs.
- Evidence of teamwork and discussion.
- Participation in a peer presentation.

Optional Extensions

- Create bin signage in French or multiple languages used in your school.
- Develop signage for the lunchroom, gym, or outdoor bins.
- Write a script and film short bin tutorials with older students.



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Bin Signage



Bin Name or Type: Write the name of the bin here (e.g., Blue Buddy, Compost King, Trash Can Dan).

What Belongs in This Bin? List or draw the correct items.

Use simple images or keywords like: paper, plastic containers, apple cores (for compost).

What Doesn't Belong Here? List or draw common mistakes to avoid.

Examples: food wrappers, black plastic, plastic bags.

Helpful Tip or Slogan: Add a fun or catchy reminder. Some examples:

"If it's greasy, it's garbage!", "When in doubt, check it out!", "Empty and dry!", "Leave lids and labels on!"

Space to Draw Your Sign Here: Use this area to sketch the full design. Make it bold and clear!