

**Scottish
Book Trust**
inspiring readers and writers

WHAT A WASTE

Rubbish, recycling.

What a waste activity pack

Environmental activities inspired by *What a Waste* by Jess French

For age 8+

CFE second level

Resource created by Sustainable Kirriemuir

scottishbooktrust.com



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About this resource

This hands-on resource contains tips and activity ideas to support pupils in understanding waste, and some of the things that can be done to reduce, reuse and recycle it.

This resource was inspired by the book *What a Waste* by Jess French, but the activities are flexible and adaptable can be used with any book on an environmental theme.

Sustainable Kirriemuir

Sustainable Kirriemuir is a community group advocating for action in the face of a changing climate. Their mission is not only to promote environmental sustainability at a grassroots level and raise awareness of the effects of climate change; but to provide real opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change and strengthen community resilience. They are working with individuals, groups, schools and businesses for the local community, its economy and its infrastructure. [Explore their website](#) for more information, activities and resources.

Litter picking survey

SCN 1-15a, SCN 2-20b, HWB 2-35a

Activity:

The aim of this activity is to carry out a litter pick and survey in your school playground or in a nearby park with your class, then analysing what type of litter was found. Print and hand out copies of the litter survey worksheet ([appendix 1](#)) for your pupils to keep record of what they find. Split your class into small groups to carry out

the survey, then come back together afterwards to discuss the class findings using the questions below.

You will need:

- Litter survey sheet (provided - appendix 1)
- Pen or pencil
- Bin bag
- Litter picker/grabber
- Hoop (optional)

Discussion Points:

- What were the most common types of litter you found? (You might want to combine the class results and convert the data into a graph or pie chart with your class to analyse the results.)
- Were you surprised at the quantity of litter you found? Was it more or less than you were expecting?
- What do you think could be done to reduce the amount of litter in the school playground?

Writing a formal letter to a politician or a company

SCN 2-20b, LIT 2-20a, ENG 2-27a, LIT 2-29a

Activity:

The aim of this activity is to offer hints and tips to help you and your pupils write a formal letter to either a politician or a company, to ask them to help the environment through changes or laws, such as banning free plastic bags in shops.

Such an occasion requires a more formal letter, with a structure (see [appendix 2](#) and/or [appendix 3](#) for a template). This could link to discussions and other activities around lobbying and activism. You can find more [letter writing resources](#) by Scottish Book Trust available on the website.

- Work with pupils to choose what it is about waste that they would like to write a letter about, who they would like to write it to, or what they want to see change; is it a local politician they want to ask to arrange for recycling bins in the school playground? Or is it a company that produces a lot of waste found during the school grounds litter pick activity that they would like to see using compostable packaging instead?
- Share the letter template ([appendix 2](#) or [appendix 3](#)) with pupils and ask them to write in their details and note what they would like to write in each paragraph. Once they have finished the template, pupils can rewrite their letter in full and you can send them on, on behalf of the pupils. Alternatively, you could then work together on a class letter that the class can send together to their chosen politician.

Palm oil activity

SCN 2-20a, SCN 2-20b, HWB 2-35a

Activity:

Ask each pupil to bring in the clean food packaging of a food item from home. In class, ask the pupils to check the food ingredients on the packaging on their table and record whether they have palm oil in them using the worksheet provided ([appendix 4](#)). Have each table swap packaging, and ask the pupils to look for and record the presence of palm oil again. This could lead to a whole class discussion around palm oil and a poster making session to raise awareness of the negative effects of using palm oil, additionally campaigning for people to use sustainably sourced palm oil. You could ask your local library or supermarket to display the class posters.

You will need:

- Log sheet (provided - [appendix 4](#))
- Pen or pencil
- Access to clean food packaging
- Paper/card and pens (optional for poster making)

Discussion points:

- Which items had palm oil in them?
- Did the packaging mention whether it was sustainably sourced?
- Can you think of an alternative to the packaged food containing palm oil?
Maybe you could use a recipe to make a homemade version?

Chester Zoo has some [great resources and videos](#) about palm oil you can share to support and supplement this activity.

Appendix 1: Litter survey worksheet

Type of Litter	Tally	Notes
Plastic		
Drink carton or bottles		
Plastic bags		
Sweetie wrappers		
Food packaging, e.g. cling film		
Paper/Wood		
Pencils		
Paper/cardboard		
Tissues		
Metal		
Drinks cans		
Foil wrappers e.g. tinfoil		
Other		

Appendix 2: Formal letter template

Recipient's address:

School address:

Today's date:

Dear [If unknown, insert 'To Whom it may concern'],

Introduction Paragraph: tell the reader who you are (briefly), why you are writing and what the purpose of your letter is. E.g., asking the politician to ban a type of single-use plastic.

Main Body: this could be one or two paragraphs. What do you want to say or convey? What changes would you like to see? Try to be concise, straight to the point and clear. E.g., why are you asking them to ban this type of plastic, for example, is it harming local wildlife?

Closing Paragraph: summarise and thank them for their time. Remind them of what change you would like to see in the fight against waste.

Yours faithfully,

(Use sincerely if you know who you are writing to, if it is unknown use faithfully.)

Your first name.

Appendix 3: Formal letter template 2

Recipient's address:

School address:

Today's date:

Dear [If unknown, insert 'To Whom it may concern'],

Introduction Paragraph: tell the reader who you are (briefly), why you are writing and what the purpose of your letter is.

My name is (first name only) _____ and I attend _____ Primary School. We have been reading *What A Waste* by Jess French and learning all about waste. We have recently completed a litter pick on the school grounds and found lots of _____, _____ and _____.

Main Body: this could be one or two paragraphs. What do you want to say or convey? What changes would you like to see? Try to be concise, straight to the point and clear.

The book made me feel _____ about _____. I am concerned about _____ because _____. This will affect my school and city/town/village by _____. We have been working really hard to reduce, _____, and recycle (The 3 R's). I think that it would be really positive if you were to _____. This would help us to _____.

Closing Paragraph: summarise and thank them for their time.

In conclusion, waste is extremely harmful to our planet, and I think that it would be really helpful for our environment if you _____. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and consider making changes to help in the fight against waste.

Yours faithfully,

(Use sincerely if you know who you are writing to, if it is unknown then use faithfully.)

Your first name.

