

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

HASS, Science, Technologies

How has recycling changed over time?

Students will:

- Understand that although people have continued to recycle goods over time, some of the reasons for recycling today are different to what they were in the past.
- Develop creative problem solving skills by designing useful items and/or toys out of waste items.

ENGAGE

Show students a picture of the 'upcycled box' from the Shire of Toodyay history collection.

- What materials is the box made from?
- What condition is the box in?
- What do you think was the original purpose of the wooden box?
- What do you think this object was used for when it was decorated?



EXPLORE

Look at the items on your desk and around the classroom.

- Do we have any boxes in the classroom? What material are they made from?
- What materials are some other things in the classroom made from?
- What happens with those items when we don't need them anymore or if they get broken?
- What happens with items which go in the bin?
- What does 'recycling' mean, and what sort of items are recycled?
- How and why do we recycle things?

You can watch a video about [why recycling is important](#).

EXPLAIN

- Plastic was invented in 1907. Before then, things that today are usually made from plastic would have been made from wood, paper, glass, metal or other natural materials.
- Today, plastic is cheap, easy to get and there is a lot of it. It is not usually considered a precious item, so it is often thrown into the bin. However, it is bad for the environment and takes a long time to break down, which is why we are encouraged to reduce, reuse and recycle things made out of plastic. Recycling other items, such as glass and metal, preserves natural resources and uses less energy than making them from scratch, which is also good for our planet.
- People before 1907 didn't have to worry about the environmental pollution associated with plastic, they still tried to reduce, re-use and recycle their waste products. In most cases, however, this was done in order to save money and because they faced shortages of other things they needed and wanted.
- Dealing with scarcity was particularly true during the early years of Toodyay, when there were few shops or factories nearby, insufficient labour, and before good roads and rail were built which made getting goods into Toodyay slow and expensive. A lot of the tools and materials to make things out of had to come from overseas or interstate. Hence, even well-off families had to 'make do', often creating useful items out of objects they would otherwise throw away.
- The box in the picture belonged to the Whitfield family, who were relatively wealthy, and who probably could afford a fancy box if there was one easily available. This object started off as an old packing box, and was 'beautified' with upholstery tacks (the nails that hold fabric and padding on furniture). It was then used for storing documents.
- Show students photos other examples of 'upcycled' items from the past.

EXTEND

Discuss:

- What are your favourite toys and games?
- What are they made from?
- Are toys things we need, or things we want?
- If people in the past had to deal with shortages of practical items, how likely is it that children would have had a lot of toys?

Provide students with a range of natural materials that can be found in your area (eg. sticks, pebbles, gum nuts, leaves, sand etc), plus a selection of items made from natural materials (eg. woollen socks, glass jar, wooden spoon, string, newspaper).

Challenge students to use the items to:

- make something useful; and/or
- turn them into a toy or a game.

EVALUATE AND REFLECT

In what way could we reduce, re-use and recycle more in our classroom?

WANT TO DO MORE?

- Explore what happens to rubbish when it goes to landfill, what sort of items can be recycled, and what the recycled items are turned into.
- Look at an example of an [artist using recycled materials](#), and create your own recycled art exhibition.



Handmade wooden box decorated with brass upholstery studs in pretty design. Brass shaped key hole for decoration. Two rusted hinges and nails. Lid is missing. Late 19th Century.

Shire of Toodyay local history collection 2001.653



Handmade fly whisk made from umbrella handle and part of a tail (probably from a cow) that have been joined by tightly wound string.

Shire of Toodyay local history collection 2001.692



Homemade ti tree broom with wooden handle. Mid/late 19th Century
Shire of Toodyay local history collection 2002.1856



Wooden cupboard made from packing case material.
c. 1850s. It was on display in Connors Mill with a note
inside door to state that it was made by George
Whitfield.

Shire of Toodyay local history collection 2006.1