



America Recycles Day
NOVEMBER 15

Bet the Bottle Tops

America Recycles Day Activity

Objective

Host a fun, interactive guessing game to convey that plastic bottle tops are recyclable.

Overview

This activity is inspired by the classic “Jellybeans in a Jar” guessing game. Instead of candy, you will fill a jar or other container with caps from assorted plastic bottles. People will guess how many there are, and whoever is closest wins a prize. As people place their bets on scraps of paper, ask them if they know that plastic bottle caps are recyclable. Use the talking points below to teach participants about bottle caps and the recycling process.

Talking Points:

- With modern sorting technology, plastic bottle screw caps (made of #5 polypropylene or #2 HDPE) are separated out from other plastics and recycled into new products.
- It used to be common practice to remove the caps before recycling plastic bottles because it was a safety hazard when pressure caused the caps to pop off during processing.
- Now, many material recovery facilities (MRFs) perforate plastic bottles to mitigate this hazard.
- Recycle your bottle caps!

Step 1: Prepare Materials

First, check with your local solid waste recycling office or AmericaRecyclesDay.org/find-recycling to make sure your local recycling facility accepts plastic caps.

- Save the caps from plastic drink bottles over a few days or weeks before your event. You may want to get help from your family, friends, or coworkers.
- Pick a clear container to fill with caps– it takes about 150-200 assorted caps to fill a 1 liter container.
- Wash, dry, and count your caps before filling the container, and record the answer somewhere secret but accessible, like in a note in your phone.

You will also need:

- Pencils and paper for placing bets
- Basket or other container to collect bets
- Prize, i.e. “I Recycle” t-shirt (order at AmericaRecyclesDay.org) or an ARD sticker or button
- Tent card for your event table (print on card stock from page 3 if applicable)

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Step 2: Engage

This activity can be done in different ways, depending on your audience.

- A. **At the office:** Set out the jar of bottle caps with the prize along with the table tent (page 3) and ask employees to write their guesses on business cards or paper scraps with their name.
- B. **In the classroom:** Take a few moments to go over the talking points on the previous page. Then, have students pass around the jar of bottle caps and collect a guess from each student.
- C. **At an event:** Leave the jar of caps and the prize on your table with the tent card (page 3). Make sure you ask for an email or phone number so you can contact the winner. A simple way to do this is to ask people to write their guesses on business cards.

Step 3: Reward

At the end of your event, go through all the bets and award the prize to the person who came the closest.



The America Recycles Day team has stumped many event attendees with this container of assorted bottle tops. Now it's your turn!

Bet the Bottle Tops:
**How many are
in the jar?**