



# Ready, Set, Sort

## *America Recycles Day Activity*

**Target Audience:** General or Grade Levels K-12

**Objective:** Encourage people to recycle more by giving them an interactive opportunity to learn what can and can't be recycled in your community.

### Overview

In this game, players will sort materials based on what can and can't be recycled in your community. Use it as a simple way to engage passers-by, or make it a full-blown competition with two teams racing to sort recyclables.

### Step 1: Ready Your Materials

#### Items to Sort

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum soda can | <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen dinner box and tray | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper clip               | <input type="checkbox"/> Steel food can               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum foil     | <input type="checkbox"/> Glass bottle               | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper napkin             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yogurt container             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cardboard         | <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry detergent bottle   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pizza box                | <b>Other Materials:</b>                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chip bag          | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic grocery bag      | <input type="checkbox"/> Recycling bin or box         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cereal box        | <input type="checkbox"/> Office paper               | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic dry cleaning bag | <input type="checkbox"/> Trash bin labeled "landfill" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drink pouch       | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper cup                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic soda bottle      | <input type="checkbox"/> Table                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Envelope          |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber band              |   |

**Note:** Before your event, research what can be recycled in your community. Check with your local recycling coordinator and/or Earth911.com if you have questions, and find out where harder-to-recycle items can be taken for collection if they aren't accepted by your recycling program. For example, many supermarkets and retail locations collect plastic bags and film.

### Step 2: Set Your Station

#### School Setting:

Make it a relay race. Divide the group of students into two teams, and set the trash can and recycling bin at the front of a large open space (cafeteria, gym, large classroom, or outdoors). Give each team an equal number of items and use colored tape or a marker to mark each team's set of materials. Make a start/ finish line about 15 yards from the bins.

#### Local business, community event, or office setting:

Place the recycling and trash bins at either end of your table. Set the materials or paper version of materials in the middle. If you have limited space, you can label one end of the table "landfill" and the other "recycle."





# Ready, Set, Sort

*America Recycles Day Activity* continued

## Step 3: Sort!

**School setting:** Have each team of students line up behind the starting line, with one item in each student's hand. When you say go, the first student in each line runs up and puts his or her item in the proper bin. Then, the students run back and tag the next person in line, until all the materials have been sorted. Check to see which team had the most correctly placed items. You may also designate a referee to tally the score and in the process demonstrate to students what is recyclable.

**Business, community event, or office setting:** As people walk by your table or booth, ask them to either sort your whole set of materials or to pick one and place it in the appropriate bin. You may want to offer a prize to people who can correctly sort 10 materials, or designate another number. Be ready with suggestions about where to recycle the items that the town or county recycling program does not accept. **Note:** If you're at an office where there is space to be active, make it a contest by following the steps for schools (left).

Use the section below as an answer sheet if you are not familiar with what can be recycled in your community.

*(circle one: R = recycle, L = landfill, O = not recyclable in your local collection program, but recyclable elsewhere)*

|                            |       |                          |       |
|----------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| Aluminum soda can          | R L O | Office paper             | R L O |
| Aluminum foil              | R L O | Paper clip               | R L O |
| Cardboard                  | R L O | Paper cup                | R L O |
| Cereal box                 | R L O | Paper napkin             | R L O |
| Chip bag                   | R L O | Pizza boxes              | R L O |
| Cardboard                  | R L O | Plastic dry cleaning bag | R L O |
| Drink pouch                | R L O | Plastic grocery bag      | R L O |
| Envelope                   | R L O | Plastic soda bottle      | R L O |
| Frozen dinner box and tray | R L O | Rubber band              | R L O |
| Glass bottle               | R L O | Steel food can           | R L O |
| Laundry detergent bottle   | R L O | Yogurt container         | R L O |
| Magazine                   | R L O |                          |       |

