



Composting 101

Did You Know?

If Henry the VIII had been able to eat a takeaway beef burger then the polystyrene packaging would be just starting to decompose about now!

Decomposing is the process of objects breaking down or decaying. If you have organic matter, this process is called composting with compost being made.

Use this presentation to learn about composting and compost and complete the challenges as you go along or at the end. Just look for this picture:



What is Compost?

Compost is the name of a soil-like material that is produced from organic waste.

Organic waste consists of things that grow naturally in our environment.

Compost is produced when organic waste rots in a compost bin.



What is the problem with organic waste in our rubbish bins?

- Disposing of organic waste in your rubbish bin is a waste of this valuable resource.
- Nearly one third of what we throw out could be composted. Composting at home reduces the amount of waste we send for Energy from Waste.





Is composting a type of recycling?

Look at the picture.

It shows the cycle of recycling journey for compost.

Composting is a way of recycling raw fruit and vegetable peelings that we would otherwise throw away. It creates a new and usable product - compost.



Can you fill in your own compost cycle?





What goes in a compost bin?

Making compost is a bit like making a cake. You need the correct ingredients and method. Let's look at the ingredients first.

The ingredients fall under three categories:

Greens

Quick to rot.

Provide lots of nutrients including nitrogen.

Provide moisture.

Browns

Slow to rot.

Provide carbon and fibre.

Create space in the compost bin for air. Air is needed for the process to work.

Reds

The things you don't put in.



Greens, Browns and Reds



Fruit and vegetable peelings and scraps, teabags, leaves, grass clippings, old flowers but not weeds.

Dry twigs and leaves, egg shells, cardboard, paper (shredded or scrunched up), pencil shavings, toilet roll tubes, straw.



Bones, bread, cat litter, dairy products, disposable nappies, dog faeces, dog food, meat and fish scraps, olive oil, plastic bags.



Match the ingredients to the correct category with the activity.

How is compost made?

Now let's look at the method.

 <p>Location.</p> <p>Put your compost bin on free draining soil where it is easy to get to. It needs sun too.</p>	 <p>Ingredients</p> <p>Add 1 part 'green' to 2 parts 'brown'.</p>
 <p>Mix.</p> <p>Use a fork to mix the ingredients.</p>	 <p>Time.</p> <p>It takes between 9 and 12 months for your compost to become ready.</p>
 <p>Minibeasts.</p> <p>These will find their own way into your bin. They will eat their way through the ingredients.</p>	

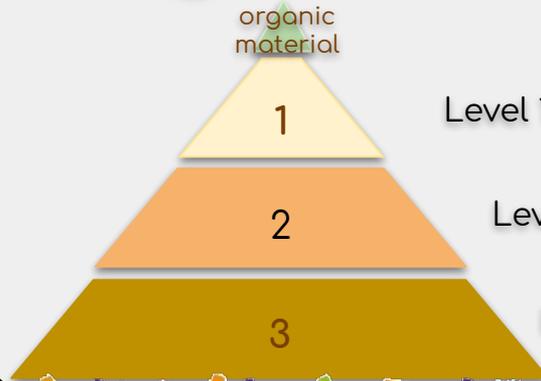
Compost Creatures

Watch the video to find out about some of the creatures that work in a compost bin.

Why not go on your own minibeast hunt?



Did you know? Your compost bin has its very own food chain or web.



Level 1 decomposers eat organic material

Level 2 decomposers eat Level 1's

Level 3 decomposers eat Level 2's



Compost Food Web

Here's a closer look at the compost food web.

<p>Primary Consumers</p>	<p>Bacteria, fungi, actinomycetes, soldier flies, nematodes, some types of mites, snails, slugs, earthworms, millipedes, sowbugs, whiteworms.</p>
<p>Secondary Consumers</p>	<p>Springtails, some types of mites, feather-winged beetles, nematodes, protozoa, rotifera, soil flatworms.</p>
<p>Tertiary Consumers</p>	<p>Centipedes, predatory mites, rove beetles, fomicid ants, carabid beetles.</p>

