

# BETTER AT THE BIN IS BETTER FOR OUR FUTURE

## Classroom Guide



Dear Teachers,

Each day the average American generates 4.4 pounds of trash, more than any other country in the world. Plastic is filling our oceans and 90.5% of the plastic used is never recycled. The statistics are staggering and it is clear we need to do better, better for our future and better for the next generation. That is why Recology is excited to introduce Better at the Bin, a call to action in response to the growing impacts of waste on our environment and in our communities.

Better at the Bin starts with recycling and composting, but doesn't end there. Better at the Bin means making smarter choices, reducing, reusing, and refusing plastics. Around the globe students are recognizing the problem with trash and are rising up to address this challenge. Better at the Bin is a tool we can use to empower the next generation to lead the way to a more sustainable future.

This guide is designed to help you engage students with what it means to be Better at the Bin. Coupled with the Better at the Bin Workbook, students will begin to understand that simple actions every day can have a lasting impact and that they have the power to inspire change in their families and among their peers. Together, we can all be Better at the Bin for a better future!



## Trash problems & solutions.

The facts are overwhelming, but our solutions don't have to be. Here are some simple ways to address the mounting trash problem.

Globally we produce 3.5 million tons of trash a day.

**Recycle, compost, and buy only what you need.**

The oceans now contain 25 trillion pieces of plastic debris.

**Refuse plastic bags, straws, and packaging.**

Globally we consume 1 million plastic bags a minute.

**Switch to canvas bags and reusable containers.**

In United States 40 percent of food is wasted.

**Get a kitchen compost pail and start composting.**

Globally we use 500 billion plastic water bottles a year.

**Switch to a metal water bottle. It can save \$200 a year.**

Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees.

**Let no paper go to landfill.**

Whales, fish, and other sea animals eat or get tangled in plastic bags.

**Switch to reusable canvas bags.**

The average American generates 4.4 pounds of trash a day, the most of any country.

**Reduce, reuse, recycle...and refuse plastic.**



## Illustration discussion guide.

San Francisco-based artist Sirron Norris is known for his fun and engaging murals. Recology is excited to have partnered with him to create the Better at the Bin mural.

This mural is designed to inspire people to refuse plastic, reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost. Use this guide to lead a discussion among your students about what it means to be Better at the Bin, why it is important to practice all the Rs (refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle), and how they can make a difference.

On the following pages you'll find the talking points to guide students through the mural narrative along with some questions to instigate conversation.

Have fun and keep recycling!





## Conversation starters.

1. Why do you think the plastic water bottles look sad? What kind of bottle can we use instead?
2. What does it mean when we say something is “reusable”?
3. How can we reduce how much we throw away when we go shopping? What are some things you reuse in your lunchbox? What about here at school? At home?
4. What things do you see on this mural that should go into the green bin?
5. The green bin is for things we cannot eat. What should I do if I have a whole banana but I am just too full to eat it?
6. What do you notice that these characters are doing with their recycling?
7. Why do you think it is important to empty bottles and cans before they go in the blue bin? What might happen if paper is too dirty in the blue bin?
8. What can we do to help keep recycling clean?





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