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| Recyclable vs. Non-recyclable Plastics |
| Objective |
| Did you know that not all plastics are recyclable? When plastics are incorrectly disposed of, they can negatively impact the environment. Through story writing, students will learn to categorize common plastic items as recyclable or non-recyclable items. |
| Preparation |
| Materials:* Pencils and erasers
* Lined paper/writing notebooks
* A list of plastic waste items (provided below)
* Blackboard/white board/easel with paper and appropriate writing tool (chalk, marker, or dry erase marker)
* Time length: Approximately 1 hour

Divide students into 5 groups and assign a waste item to each group. Have the list of waste items or similar items provided below available for the lesson.

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| **Plastic Waste Item** | **Appropriate Disposal Method**  |
| Water Bottle | Recycling (empty and without cap) |
| Yogurt Cup | Recycling (empty without lid) |
| Plastic Food Container | Recycling (empty) |
| Plastic bags | Recycling (placed inside another bag) |
| Plastic Cutlery | Garbage |
| Plastic wrap/ Saran wrap | Garbage |
| A Full Bottle of Sunscreen Lotion | Community Recycling Centres  |

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| Activity |
| 1. Share the plastic items from the chart with students. Have the students imagine that the plastic items were located outside in different places around their school/neighbourhood.
2. Assign each student a plastic waste item. Direct students to write a story about the journey of one of the plastic items, describing how it got there and what will happen to it next. It is suggested that the length of the story be limited to ½ - 1 page in length.
3. In the interest of time, pick 1 willing student from each waste item group to share their written stories.
4. As the students are reading their stories, write down how the waste item ended up on the ground in the first place, and where it ended up at the end of the story. After, list and discuss the harmful impacts of incorrect waste disposal.
5. Next, generate a discussion about the proper disposal method for each of the items.
* When discussing the disposal of the full bottle of sunscreen lotion, mention that generally speaking cosmetic products should be taken to the Community Recycling Centre (CRC) in Peel as they are considered household hazardous waste (HHW)—waste that can hurt people, animals and the environment.
* When discussing the plastic cutlery, ask why it is still important to put it in the garbage instead of tossing it somewhere outdoors. Also, think of ways that the plastic cutlery can be kept out of landfills and alternatives.
1. Give students a few minutes to think about how their stories would change if the scenario was that the plastic waste item was properly disposed, reused, or recycled. With a show of hands, see how many students would change the ending of their story.
2. To conclude: Although a plastic item may be recyclable elsewhere or have a recycling symbol, it may not be accepted as recycling in Peel. This is because what’s accepted in Peel’s recycling program is based on whether we have a manufacturer that wants to buy the recycling. If we don’t have a buyer for an item it is unlikely to be accepted in our recycling program. It is best to check whether an item is recyclable or not by checking Peel’s Waste Sorting tool: <https://peelregion.ca/scripts/waste/how-to-sort-your-waste.pl>?

In conclusion, emphasize that the Region of Peel has a waste management system in place but for it to work well, we all must do our part to make proper use of the system. |

