

WASTE

Activity W03

Type

Class activity (CA) and Demonstration (D). Exploring with the class what we mean by waste through a story. What is their understanding of the word or concept of 'waste'?

Objectives

Introduces some of the ideas behind the waste theme and starts students thinking about waste and their own habits.

Curricular Strands

SESE, Science–Science and the environment

SESE, Science and Geography–Environmental awareness and care

English–Developing cognitive abilities through oral language; Emotional and imaginative development through language; Reading; Developing interests, attitudes, information retrieval skills and the ability to think

Skills

Questioning; communicating; creative thinking; exploring feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding

Time

10–15 minutes for the concept map; 20 minutes for the story and questions

What a waste!

→ A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CATHERINE KELLY

WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of the student activity sheet containing the story
- Blackboard or whiteboard

WHAT YOU DO

- 1 Generate a concept map for the waste theme by writing the word 'waste' on the blackboard. Ask the pupils to call out all the words or phrases that come to mind when they hear the word (e.g. litter, rubbish, dirt, waste paper, wasteland).

Write these on the board, using arrows to link words that are connected. If pupils are familiar with concept maps they can do the above individually or in groups.

- 2 Following the activity, hand out the attached story and read it with the class.

Questions

- 1 Read through the story once for general understanding. Read the story again and ask students to underline the word 'waste' wherever they see it.

- 2 How many times is the word 'waste' used?
- 3 In the story, is the word 'waste' always used to describe rubbish? What else do we waste?
- 4 People say that we live in a very 'wasteful' world. Having read this story what do you think they mean?

Go further

- 1 Ask a grandparent or other older person you know to tell you whether Catherine's story would have been different in Ireland a few decades ago.
- 2 Ask students from different places (e.g. different parts of Ireland or other countries) if all the things that happen in the story also happen in the places they come from.



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A DIARY OF CATHERINE KELLY'S DAY

Catherine woke up to her mother calling her for school: 'Quick! we're late! No time to waste!'. She got up and went down to the kitchen for her breakfast. She poured milk into her favourite cereal and was careful to use just as much cereal and milk as she needed. Her mother had warned her before about putting too much milk in the bowl: if she didn't finish it all it was a waste of food.

It was Monday morning, and bin day where Catherine lived, so she helped put out the bins. When she looked inside she saw all the rubbish that came from their house in just one week! Old cereal boxes, plastic bags, yoghurt cartons and leftover food. It seemed such a

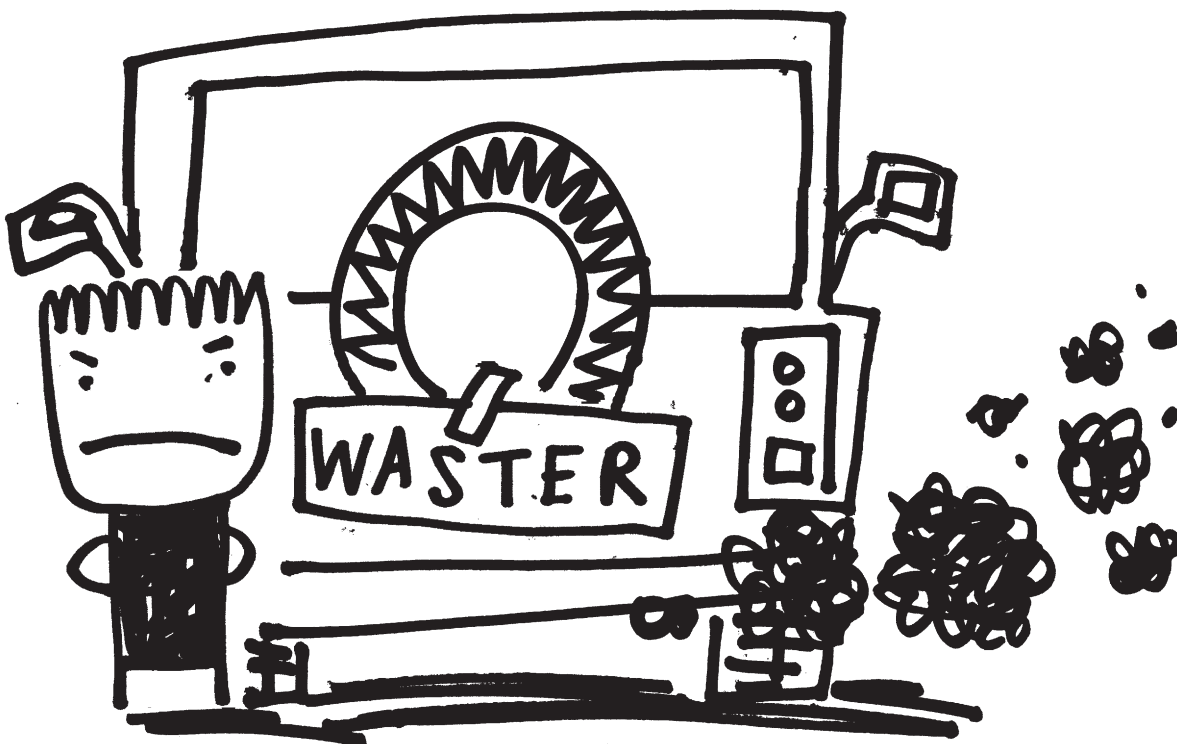
terrible waste to cover food in so many different packages and then throw all this packaging out. 'What a waste!' she thought.

A lot of people got lifts to school, but the traffic was so bad they just seemed to be stuck in one spot, so Catherine walked with her Mum and friends. 'It's really such a waste of time and petrol driving a short distance to school, especially when the traffic is so bad that it takes longer than walking', said her Mum.

After calling the roll, Catherine's teacher, Ms Rosy, told them that today they were going to talk about their local environment and how they might care for it. In

Ireland, nine out of every ten bags of waste collected end up in dumps or landfills. Landfills are areas of land where all of our waste is buried. They can be the size of several football pitches.

Catherine tried to imagine the size of a landfill in her head, it seemed very big indeed: Ms Rosy told the class that instead of putting all of our waste into one big bin and sending it to the dump, we could reduce, reuse and recycle our waste. They had a look at some of the things they usually threw into their bins—yoghurt pots, paper, leftover food—and discovered that instead of throwing them away there were plenty of other things they could be used for.



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Yoghurt pots could be used to grow seeds in, paper could be recycled to make new paper, and leftover food could be used to make compost for the garden. 'Remember, it only becomes waste when we can't find a use for it and throw it away!' said the teacher.

Catherine was very excited when she met her Mum after school. She told her all they had learned in school about reducing, reusing and recycling and how this would help the environment. They went to their local recycling centre to see what they could recycle. At home, with the help of her family, Catherine found new uses for some of their waste and separated the waste that could be recycled. On the same day the following week, Catherine was delighted to see that there was a lot less waste in the bin being put out for collection.

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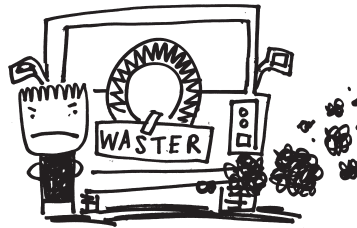
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Now try this:

- Read through the story again and underline all the places you see the word 'waste'.
- How many times is the word 'waste' used?
- In the story, is the word 'waste' always used to describe rubbish? What else is the word used for?
- People say that we live in a very 'wasteful' world. Having read this story what do you think they mean?
- Ask someone who grew up in a different place or time to you (maybe a grandparent, or a friend from a different place) if everything in the story would be the same in that place or at that time. What would be different?