



## TAKE ACTION: WASTE LEARNING ACTIVITY

### ACTIVITY: COMPOST IN A JAR

*This experiment involves making your own compost in jars and recording the breakdown progress over two or more weeks.*

#### Curriculum links

Science: Making Sense of the Living World

Maths: Statistics

#### Success criteria

*Students have accurately recorded the progress of the compost mix*

*Students can identify what compost is*

#### Method

Before starting the experiment, decide what you will compost.

Select items from the following:

Vegetable peels and seeds, fruit peels and seeds, coffee grounds, eggshells, nut shells, any other vegetable or fruit scraps (kitchen compost), hay or straw, grass clippings, leaves, ashes, sawdust, wood chips, or weeds (garden compost).

Predict what will break down most quickly and what will take longest.

*Do not use dairy products or meat products in your compost jars and always wear gloves when handling the compost jars or bottles.*

1. Arrange newspaper over work areas for protection
2. Label jars with the material you will compost in them
3. Add the compost and soil into the jar in the following way: Put a layer of soil approximately 5 cm deep into each jar. Moisten the soil to the wetness of a damp sponge
4. Add 2cm of organic material and 1cm of soil and repeat as many times as possible in the jar. Finish with layer of soil about 3 cm deep
5. Measure the temperature of the organic mix in the jar and record
6. Measure the height of the mix and record
7. At 4 day intervals measure the height of the compost and the temperature and record your results
8. Graph and discuss the results
9. Form conclusions and compare these to your predictions. How will this affect your composting?

#### Resources

- A large clear plastic or glass jar for each group of students (without lids)
- Fertile soil (not potting mix)
- Organic waste (kitchen or garden compost)
- Water
- Ruler
- Thermometer
- Graph paper
- Hand lens
- Newspaper for desks
- Disposable gloves

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

[www.gw.govt.nz/takeaction/waste](http://www.gw.govt.nz/takeaction/waste)