

Find out what happens to the things in your bin, and why it makes sense to recycle...

GO GREEN!

# What a load of RUBBISH!



Every two hours in the UK, we produce enough trash to fill up the Royal Albert Hall! All this waste we make comes from our planet's natural resources – and at the rate we keep consuming, we'll eventually use them all up. That's why we need to **reduce, re-use and recycle!**

## WHERE WASTE GOES!

Here's where your tat ends up...

### LANDFILL

Most of our rubbish is buried in **landfill sites** – there are around **330** of them in the **UK**. Bulldozers squash down each day's trash, and then it's covered with a layer of soil to help keep **rats and birds** out. The landfill is lined with thick clay and plastic to prevent poisonous rubbish juices (called **leachate**) leaking into water supplies. But rotting rubbish gives off a gas called **methane**, which makes our planet hotter, causing climate change. Bad news.

### INCINERATORS

Some kinds of waste can be burned in **incinerators**, which can generate electricity. This also transforms massive piles of rubbish into small amounts of **ash**. But even though burning rubbish can generate energy, it's not as much energy as is **saved** by **recycling** our rubbish...

## RECYCLING!

Before you chuck something away – **STOP and THINK!** Around **60%** of what ends up in the rubbish dump could be recycled! And most local authorities in the UK collect your recycling for you! Some ask you to **separate** all the materials yourself, while others let you put all recyclables in one bag. These **co-mingled** collections are taken to a **Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)** for sorting. We visited one to find out how our waste is sorted...

### WELCOME TO THE 'MRF'!

At the huge, hi-tech **Bywaters** Materials Recovery Facility in East London, whirring machines, massive magnets and workers are busy separating tonnes of rubbish into different materials, which are snaking around the vast warehouse on fast-moving conveyor belts.

Once sorted, these different materials – **steel cans, aluminium cans, cardboard, paper** and various types of **plastics** – are squashed into big cubes called **bales** using special machines, while glass is crushed. The materials are then **sold** to various recycling companies, both here in the UK and around the world, to turn into new products. So, not only does recycling make the best use of our **limited resources**, it's good business, too!

I CAN SEE MY OLD CAN OF POP FROM HERE!



Paul from the Nat Geo Kids team checks out the MRF machines!

Head to [recyclenow.com](http://recyclenow.com) for more cool facts and animations about recycling!

In the UK, we currently recycle **six billion** plastic bottles a year – that's the same as each person recycling **99 bottles**. Good work, kids!

Bales of different materials ready to go to recycling factories

## RULES OF RECYCLING!

We bet you lot already do your bit for the planet by recycling (top marks!), but if you put the wrong things in the recycling bin, the whole lot may have to go to landfill! Here are some top tips...

### DOs

- Rinse or wipe all food off containers before recycling! Smears of food or dregs of liquid can **contaminate** other 'clean' items.
- Scrunch tin foil into balls to make it easier for machines to sort!
- Leave staples and envelope windows in paper – these can be removed later!

### DON'Ts

- Don't rip paper into bits. It's easier to sort if whole.
- The thin plastic on top of food trays (called **cellophane**) can't be recycled. So rip it off first and put it in the rubbish bin!
- Usually, old clothes can't go in the recycling. Take them to the charity shop instead!

Check with your local council to see exactly what **can and can't** be recycled – it depends where you live!