

# Signs Of The Time

**OBJECTIVE:** To provide a better understanding of recycling and waste management symbols.

**MATERIALS:** packaging with environmental symbols, pencil or pen, HANDOUTS: **Status Symbols** (D42), **Today's Status Symbols** (D41)

**VOCABULARY:** Blue Box, depot, earth friendly, green, non-recyclable, legislation, packaging, recycling, symbol

## BACKGROUND:

Despite being easy to do, recycling can be confusing. The three-armed recycling symbol is at the centre of this confusion. Because there is no legislation for recycling symbols they appear everywhere. Besides the three-armed symbol, there is a symbol comprised of a black circle enclosing three arrows and another with the arrows encircling a number. Each of these symbols has a different meaning, yet most people see three arrows on a product and assume the product is recyclable; this assumption is wrong. Misunderstanding symbols is the major cause of non-recyclable items being placed in Blue Boxes or depots. When items that have the three arrows on them, in any form, are rejected by a recycling company, people become confused. By understanding what certain symbols really mean confusion can be avoided.

## PROCEDURE:

Before starting this activity you should be familiar with the Symbols section (D19-D20) of the Recycle chapter. The most commonly found symbols are illustrated and explained in this section.

1. Ask the children to bring three or four products or pieces of packaging to school. The products/packaging must exhibit recycling symbols or claim to be recycled, recyclable, earth friendly or green.
2. Divide the class into groups. Each group is to copy, onto a piece of paper, the words or symbols found on their products.
3. Give the students the HANDOUT: **Today's Status Symbols** (D41) or use it as an overhead. Now give each group the chart on the HANDOUT: **Status Symbols Chart** (D42) to complete. You may have to contact your recycler to get some of the information required for the chart.

## EXTENSION:

1. Have the class think of better ways to use symbols. For example, legislation stating where a symbol must appear.
2. Make a display for the school's recycling centre explaining recycling or waste management symbols and words.

# Signs Of The Time (cont.)

## **EXTENSION (cont.)**

3. Have a contest to design a T-Shirt that promotes recycling. The symbols and words the class have discovered could be used in the designs.

## **EVALUATION:**

1. Will the children take time to check for symbols on the articles they purchase in the future?
2. Ask each child to explain one symbol or word found on one of their products.
3. Have each student write an essay expressing their opinion of symbols.