

## ARTICLE 1

Worm World: Recyclers

19/6/01 2:52 PM



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**Nature's Recyclers**  
Worms are busy recyclers. Worms recycle food scraps and other organic material into vermicompost, or worm compost. Organic matter is stuff like dead plants, poop, and decaying animals. The nutrients in the compost made by worms help the soil to become rich and fertile. When soil is rich and fertile, it is good for growing healthy plants.

**What Worms do**  
Without the help of worms, every plant and animal that died and fell to the ground would stay right where it fell. Trees, leaves, fruit, nuts, dead animals and food would just keep piling up (you'd be living underground like us!).

**Worms make nutrients**  
But worms and other decomposers break down all this refuse. All those trees and leaves becomes rich soil for new seedlings to grow. And the cycle starts all over again! To learn more about how worms help break down dead plants and animals, check out Wendell's exclusive interview with [Eddie the Earthworm](#) or click here to go onto [worm bins](#).

*The Decomposers break things down into valuable nutrients that can be used by other plants and animals. Start with a old dead log or fallen leaves and you end up with rich soil for new seedlings to grow.*

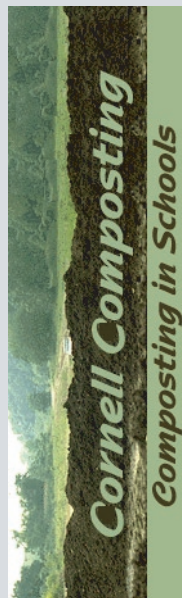
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## ARTICLE 2

Worm Composting Basics

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## Worm Composting Basics

by Jen Fong and Paula Hewitt

- [What is worm composting?](#)
- [Materials to use \(and avoid\) in a classroom worm bin](#)
- [Setting up a worm bin](#)
- [Containers](#)
- [Harvesting](#)
- [Using worm compost](#)
- [Biology of worms](#)
- [Successful vermicompost projects](#)

**What is worm composting?**

Worms eat food scraps, which becomes compost as it passes through the worm's body. Compost comes out through the worm's tail end. This compost can then be used to grow plants. To understand why worm compost is good for plants, remember that the worms are eating materials that are rich in nutrients. They turn them into nutrient rich compost.

**Materials to use (and avoid) in a classroom worm bin**

For millions of years, worms have been hard at work breaking down organic materials and returning nutrients to the soil. By bringing a worm bin into the classroom, you are simulating the worm's role in nature. Though worms could eat any organic material, certain foods are better for the classroom worm bin.

We recommend using only raw fruit and vegetable scraps. Stay away from meats, oils and dairy products, which are more complex materials than fruits and vegetables. Thus, they take longer to break down and can attract pests. Cooked foods are often oily or buttery, which can also attract pests.

Avoid orange rinds and other citrus fruits, which are too acidic, and can attract fruit flies. Try to use a variety of materials. We have found the more vegetable matter, the better the worm bin. Stay away from onions and broccoli which tend to have a strong odor.

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## Worm Farm

**Approach:** Station

**Level:** Year 8

**Focus:** Notetaking and summarising.

**Resources:** Two information cards about worms (opposite).

### Questions/instructions

1. Read the information which is circled on the two cards.
2. From each article, write down two useful pieces of information about worms and compost.

Article 1	Article 2
1.	1.
2.	2.

3. Use **your** pieces of information to write **one** sentence which tells about worms and compost.


		% responses	
		y4	y8
<b>Article 1 — 7 possible specific points</b>			
<b>note 1:</b>			
noted 1 point from article		82	
noted other valid information from article		10	
<b>note 2:</b>			
noted 1 point from article		71	
noted other valid information from article		15	
<b>Article 2 — 7 possible specific points</b>			
<b>note 1:</b>			
noted 1 point from article		85	
noted other valid information from article		5	
<b>note 2:</b>			
noted 1 point from article		78	
noted other valid information from article		7	
<b>Summary sentence</b>			
<b>pieces of information used (notes):</b>			
3 or 4		36	
2		32	
1		16	
used no relevant information		16	
<b>extent to which sentence captured main points of the 2 articles:</b>			
very high		14	
quite high		26	
moderate		29	
low		31	
<b>used single sentence</b>		73	
<b>Total score: 10–11</b>		27	
8–9		29	
6–7		21	
4–5		14	
0–3		9	

### Commentary

Students were generally successful in noting key points from the two articles, but many struggled to capture these key issues in a single sentence summary.