

## WHY SHOULD WE COMPOST?

When we do things like compost or recycle we help make sure that the world doesn't get filled up with garbage. When we compost or recycle, the things we put into these bins get reused in different ways. When something goes in the compost it breaks down into soil and can be used to help plants grow. When something goes in the recycling, like a plastic water bottle or a piece of paper, the recycling process turns that thing we would have thrown away into new things, like new water bottles and sheets of paper!

To help understand why it is good to compost, let's investigate what happens when we throw something in the garbage. When we throw something into the garbage it goes and sits in a big garbage pile called a *landfill*. Anything you throw into the garbage goes into the landfill, even things that could be composted or recycled like food scraps or plastic water bottles!

### **Landfills are bad for the Earth.**

- When one landfill gets filled up, new trash has to be moved to a new landfill. If we keep making more and more trash pretty soon there will be nowhere to put it.
- Landfills are also bad for our lands and waters.
- When food scraps get into a landfill they release a greenhouse gas called methane. Greenhouse gasses contribute to something called "climate change." Climate change melts ice caps, taking away polar bears' and penguins' homes, raises sea levels, threatening both humans' and animals' homes, and contributes to wildfires, like the ones which burned people's homes in California. *Climate change makes the weather more extreme and unpredictable.* (Read more about climate change [here](#) and [here!](#)) Landfills also release "leachate," a toxic sludge or a harmful substance that is part liquid and part solid, into our groundwater. This toxic sludge can get into the water we drink harming us and the animals who live in our streams and lakes.

When we compost we don't contribute to the harming of our groundwater or the release of greenhouse gasses. Instead we can use compost to grow new plants!