

## Activity: How to Monitor a Compost Pile

### Topics:

- Basics of the composting process
- Data collection

### Teacher's Guide:

#### Activity Overview:

In this outdoor activity, students will explore the fundamentals of composting by monitoring and collecting data from an active compost pile. Students will make observations to identify factors that influence composting efficiency.

*\*This activity requires access to an active compost pile. Find a community composting site near you using this [map!](#)*

#### Prerequisite Topics/Knowledge:

- What is composting?
- How to set up a compost pile

#### Instructions:

1. Introduce the composting system used at the site
  - a. Examples: 1 bin system, static pile, aerated pile, 3 bin system, etc.
2. Lead a short discussion using the guiding questions below:
  - a. What types of information may people who compost want to know about their compost piles?
  - b. What should composters monitor during the composting process?
  - c. Why do you think it is important to monitor your compost pile?
3. Data Collection
  - a. Refer to the *Compost Pile Monitoring Instructions* and *Data Sheet* in the *Materials List* section for details

**Note:** This activity complements the *Composting Case Studies* activity from *The Practice of Composting* module. It is recommended that this activity be done before the case studies activity. However, it can also be completed on its own.

### Materials List

- Compost Pile Monitoring Instructions - Available [HERE](#)
- Compost Pile Monitoring Data Sheet - Available [HERE](#)
- Thermometer (16-inch backyard compost thermometer linked [HERE](#))