**Program name:** A-Z: Ingredients for Compost Stew  
**Duration:** ~20 Minutes in class or homework over 2 days  
**Audience:** Kindergarten

**Theme(s):**  
We can find ingredients for compost at home and at school.

**Goal(s):**  
Practice identifying organic, compostable, and “brown” & “green” materials  
Review letters of the alphabet, practice spelling and alliteration

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<tr>
<th>Objectives- Students Will Be Able To</th>
<th>Educator verification method/success criteria</th>
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| 1. Understand what types of materials can be added to a compost pile and what should not be included | Only materials which can be composted are included on cards  
*Optional: make a second set of cards or a poster about what shouldn’t go in compost stew* |
| 2. Increase familiarity of letters of the alphabet and practice alliteration skills | As a class, students list at least one compostable material beginning with each letter of the alphabet. Students use alliteration when describing their found material. |

**Materials:**  
- Poster paper or wall board for recording student findings  
- Letter cards: A-Z. One index card for each student with one letter written on both the front and back  
- Let’s Learn About Compost video: [https://youtu.be/mRpvc6qqnMo](https://youtu.be/mRpvc6qqnMo)  

**Introduction:**  
After the compost lesson, revisit the [Compost Stew](https://www.oxbow.org/) video (and/or book) and review with the class what types of materials can be included in compost: plant parts and things made from them (for example: leaves as well as paper), food scraps from veggies and fruits, dirt and very tiny rocks, organisms like worms! Then review what should not go in compost stew: big rocks, plastic, metal, trash, meat & animal products and “compostable” cutlery (these can often go in industrial/curbside compost bins but are not suitable for home composting or worm bins).

**Activity:**  
1. Give each student a letter of the alphabet written on both sides of an index card for them to become an “expert” on. (If necessary, repeat easier-to-find letters and keep tricky letters (like Q, X, & Z) for students who are ready for the challenge, or do them yourself. Explain:  
   - Their mission is to find (or just imagine) a compostable material or “compost stew ingredient” either at home or at school, that begins with their special letter. Students can collect an actual sample to bring to class for a compost “show & tell,” or just write down the name of what they find on the card.  
   - After students find and record their ingredient, they think of a word to describe it that starts with the same letter and write that on the back of the card. For example: sweet/strawberry, green/grass, crumbly/cracker.

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Further options:
- Do this activity in Spanish! This may require selecting the letters of the alphabet that are most likely to be found at the beginning of words, for example: there are very few Spanish words that start with “w”.
- Students illustrate the material on the card, in addition to writing the name.
- Students take the card home and see what compostable material they can find; challenge them to explain composting to their family and include them in the alphabet search.
- Have the letter capitalized on one side and lower case on the other, for an added layer of writing practice.
- Have students identify whether their materials is a “green” (Nitrogen rich) or “brown” (Carbon rich) material.

2. In the classroom, once compost cards are filled out:
- Have all students, holding their letter card, stand up and move themselves into alphabetical order in a line.
- Starting with A, students take turns sharing what they found and the describing word, where they found it, and share why they think that material is indeed compostable.
- Extra challenge: can students line up in alphabetical order without speaking?

**Conclusion:**
Record all student findings in alphabetical order on a poster or wall. Continue adding more compostable materials & their describing words under each letter as students notice them at home or at school.

Bonus Fun! As a class, research different composting methods: piles, worm bins, curbside pickup. Explore the benefits and drawbacks of each- which could you have in your classroom? At home? If you’d like to borrow a worm bin from Oxbow (or another source) for the remainder of the school year, let us know!

**NGSS Connections:**

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<tr>
<th>Dimensions from Framework</th>
<th>What students are doing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science and Engineering Practices (SEP)</strong></td>
<td>Students describe how they know their found “ingredient” is compostable, based on what they learned from <em>Compost Stew</em> and class discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaging in argument from evidence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Crosscutting Concepts (CC)</strong></td>
<td>Students practice alliteration when describing compostable materials, repeating letters and sounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patterns</td>
<td>Students notice patterns in what is/isn’t compostable and use this to identify new materials to add to the list.</td>
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