



## Recycle Central Virtual Tour Worksheet – High School

Use this worksheet to accompany the Recycle Central at Pier 96 Virtual Tour. It will help guide you through the tour, check for understanding, and think critically about what you are learning.

### To Complete Throughout the Tour

- In which bin do the following items belong:

<b>Metal</b>	<b>Food waste</b>	<b>Hard plastics</b>	<b>Soft plastics</b>	<b>Clean/dry paper</b>
<b>Yard waste</b>	<b>Broken ceramics</b>	<b>Glass bottles/jars</b>	<b>Pet waste</b>	<b>Dirty/wet paper</b>

**Paper cups and cartons**

Compost	Recycle	Landfill
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
	4.	
	5.	

### Sorting Process – Paper

- Put the following steps in order to describe the process of sorting paper. Start by writing the number “1” next to which step goes first.

\_\_\_ Material is sent through the drum feeder to evenly distribute items on the sort line.

\_\_\_ Optical sorters use light sensors to identify non-paper items and use powerful blasts of air to send materials onto separate sorting lines.

\_\_\_ The paper stream is checked by quality control workers for any last contamination (items which don't belong in the blue bin).

\_\_\_ Paper is condensed into bales and sent to companies who will create new products with the material.

\_\_\_ Large items, metal hangers, plastic bags, and cords are removed by staff at the presort line to prevent the machinery from jamming.



\_\_\_\_ Materials pass through fiber screens, which bounce light 2D materials upward, while heavier 3D materials fall to a separate sort line.

\_\_\_\_ Blue bin material from homes and businesses in San Francisco is deposited on the tipping floor of Recycle Central.

### Check Your Understanding – In the Bin

- Paper accounts for about 80% of incoming recyclables at Recycle Central. Why is it important to only place clean and dry recyclables in the blue bin?
- What does RIC stand for, and what does it mean? Does a RIC indicate if something is or is not recyclable?
- Is it possible to sort items made from more than one material? What exceptions are there to this rule?

### Think Critically – Recycling Process

- While Recology utilizes cutting edge technology to best sort recyclable material, recycling still creates 10X more jobs than landfilling. How does Recycle Central leverage people power in the recycling process? What jobs do you think would be necessary at a sorting facility?
- In your own words, define “closed-loop” and “downcycled.” Which of the five materials accepted in San Francisco’s blue bin fall into each category?
- What special challenges are present when recycling plastic, and why doesn’t plastic ever have a closed-loop system?